



Philip Burnham, Jr.

JERUSALEM

"Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem"
Isaiah 52.9

Break forth into singing you ruins of Jerusalem,
Where shattered doors hang from their golden hinges
Let there be opening notes of redemptive sadness,
Where the ancient stones have fallen into despair
Let there be arpeggios of upended columns,
Where the brittle glass lies in shards of memory
Let there be broken chords of dissonant harmonies,
Where your altars, O Lord, have come to dust
Let there be ghostly canticles of psalms,
Where the light of candles has been extinguished
Let there be cadenzas of illumination,
Where the clay roof tiles have been torn away
Let there be a worshipful presence of birds singing,
Where the streets of the city have become impassible
Let there be an exquisite coda of silence.
And should the residents venture into these ruins
Let ascending choruses of angels lift them up
Lest they dash their feet against these stones of sorrow
As they break forth into singing for Jerusalem

My father, **Philip Edward Burnham, Jr.** a Bagel Bard and a contemporary Renaissance man, died peacefully at his home on June 13, 2018, surrounded by his loving family. His long, happy life was filled with romance and friendship, music and poetry. Born in Rochester, NY, Philip grew up in Concord, NH, attended the Groton School, graduated

from Harvard in the class of 1960, and studied government at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the London School of Economics. Following several years of service in the U. S. State Department, as vice-consul in Marseille, France, Philip took up his true vocation as an inspired and inspiring History teacher. Receiving a doctoral degree in Medieval Studies from Tufts University in 1972, Philip wrote his doctoral dissertation about cultural life in the Papal court at Avignon. He taught Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance history in public and private schools in New England for many years. The yearly Burnham Christmas card was a long-standing family tradition. Written in French and English and illustrated by Philip's first wife, Louise and their daughter, Elizabeth, many Burnham Christmas poems were published in the book *A Careful Scattering*. Philip also played the harpsichord, and especially enjoyed learning pieces by Bach and Couperin. Upon his retirement from teaching, Philip turned his attention to writing full-time, publishing six volumes of poetry from 2002-2016. In the summer of 2016 Philip met the poet and concert pianist Frannie Lindsay at a poetry workshop that she was leading at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education. They were married at St. James' Church in Cambridge in December, 2016. A posthumous volume of poems, *Romance in F*, will be published later this year. The poem "Jerusalem" was written in the time following that winter wedding. The psalm-like quality and rich images of destruction and redemption describe my father's joyful wonder that in spite of illness and age, he has found transcendent new love—truly, something to sing about.

--Liz Burnham

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