

Samson

By Marcus Lander (1993)

*And Israel sinned against the Lord
Who forsook them to their foes,
To vex and try them by the sword
And prove them with many woes.*

*And God beheld his children's tears
While under bondage forty years.
With their oppressors there was power
Until the Lord's appointed hour.*

*Thus said the angel to Manoah's wife,
"Thy barren womb shall bring forth life,
You'll bear a son - a Nazarite,
A judge of Israel, a man of might."*

*"Be sure to eat no unclean thing
And taste no wine nor heady drink,
And when this happens as I've said
Beware you never shave his head."*

*So Manoah offered to the Lord
A kid with flour - and oil poured
Upon a rock, and as the flame to heav'n climb'd
The angel mounted up on high.*

*And so at last it came to be
That God fulfilled this prophecy.
Thus was Samson born in Zorah
To the family of Manoah.*

*The child grew, became a man
And wandered in the camp of Dan,
Between Zorah and Eshtaol
Along the west of Israel.*

*But Samson loved a Philistine maid
And thus his parents he dismayed:
They knew not this was God's design
To free them from the Philistines.*

*Then Samson went to stake his claim,
And so to Timnath's vineyards came,
A lion attacked him as he went,
But by God's Spirit its flesh he rent.*



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*He seized the beast about the mane
And on his own he overcame.
He left it dead upon the floor,
Thus Samson slew the predator.*

*And Samson liked the woman well
And so soon after it befell
That he went up to wed his bride,
But on the way he turned aside.*

*And found the carcass of his prey
Just as he'd left it, there it lay,
But 'neath the velvet of its hide
Some bees had made a nest inside.*

*Then Samson took the honey sweet
And also made his parents eat
But told them not from whence it came.
T'was underneath a lion's mane.*

*At the feast before his guests
Samson set the following test:
"Out of the eater came forth meat,
Out of the strong came something sweet."*

*"Just seven days I give to you
To solve this riddle, but if you do,
Then thirty sheets and equal raiment
I'll give to you to act as payment."*

*"But if you fail to do this task
Then from you all the same I ask.
Accept this challenge if you dare
But if you'd rather not - forbare."*

*For three long days they wracked their brains
But got no further for their pains,
At last to Samson's wife they went
And asked her what the riddle meant.*

*When she replied she did not know
They threatened her and bade her go
And by some devious means find out
What the riddle was about.*



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*But if she'd be a faithful wife
They'd burn her kin and take her life.
Frightened by their awful threat
She went to Samson quite upset.*

*And begged that he would nothing hide
But everything in her confide.
Told him she would look a fool
If he would not tell her all.*

*And when he saw her so distressed
Then he at last to her confessed;
He told her all, kept nothing back,
But loosed old Felix from the sack.*

*Then she went to tell the guests
The long-awaited answer to their quest.
So just before the evening fell
The same to Samson they did tell.*

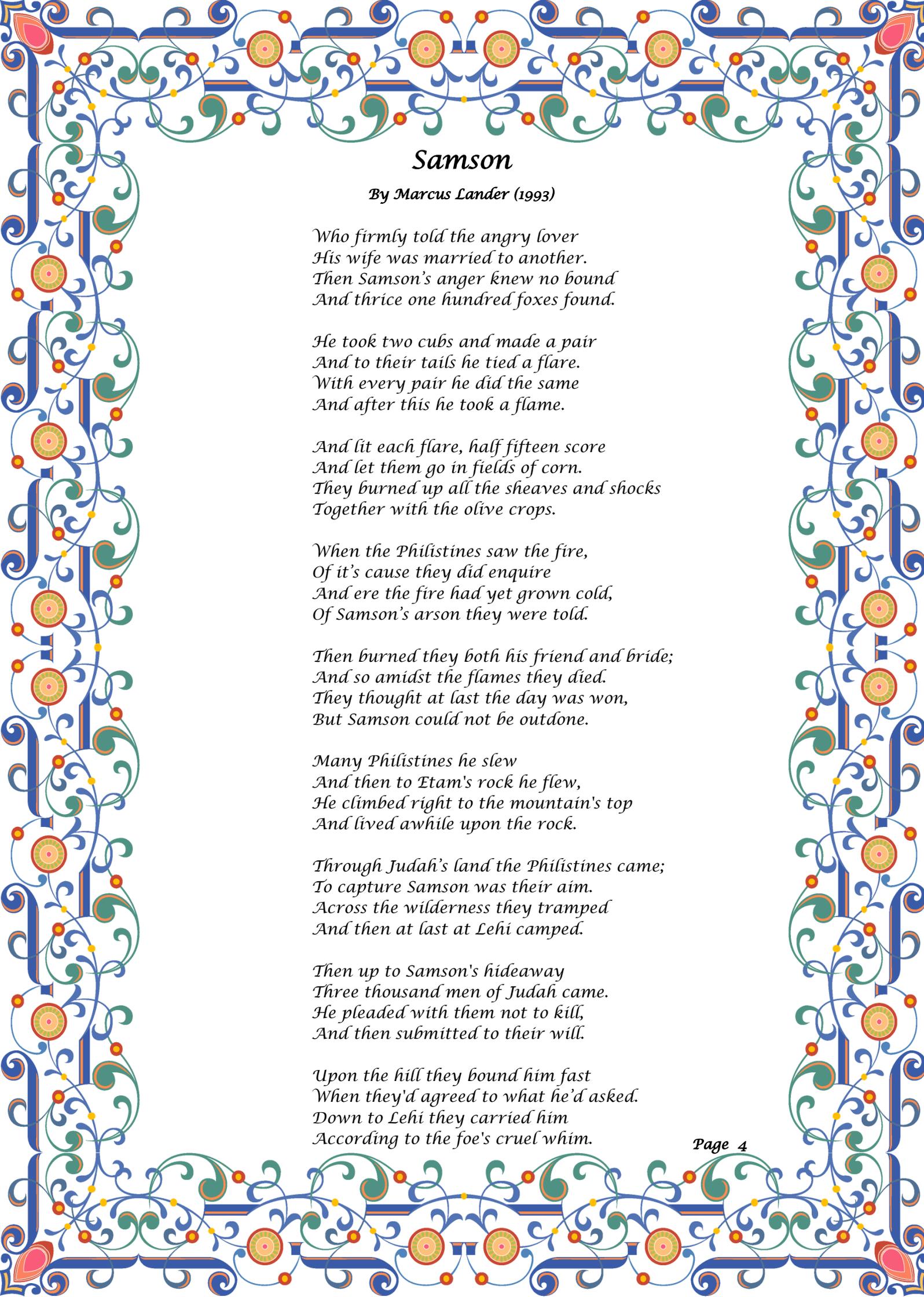
*Then Samson flew into a rage.
Just how he felt is hard to gauge.
He said, "If you'd not made my heifer plough,
I know you'd still be guessing now!"*

*He leaves the feast with angry words,
Then at his side his sword he girds,
In Ashkelon he slays some men
And takes their robes, one score and ten.*

*Then Samson gave his guests the spoil
And left the wife who'd been disloyal.
Back to Zorah Samson went,
But to return was his intent.*

*But when he'd gone, his wife was wed
Unto another man instead.
Then Samson's passion once more burned
And so to Timnath he returned.*

*For his wife he brought a kid
For he forgave her all she did
But who should meet him at the door?
None other than his father-in-law.*



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Who firmly told the angry lover
His wife was married to another.
Then Samson's anger knew no bound
And thrice one hundred foxes found.

He took two cubs and made a pair
And to their tails he tied a flare.
With every pair he did the same
And after this he took a flame.

And lit each flare, half fifteen score
And let them go in fields of corn.
They burned up all the sheaves and shocks
Together with the olive crops.

When the Philistines saw the fire,
Of it's cause they did enquire
And ere the fire had yet grown cold,
Of Samson's arson they were told.

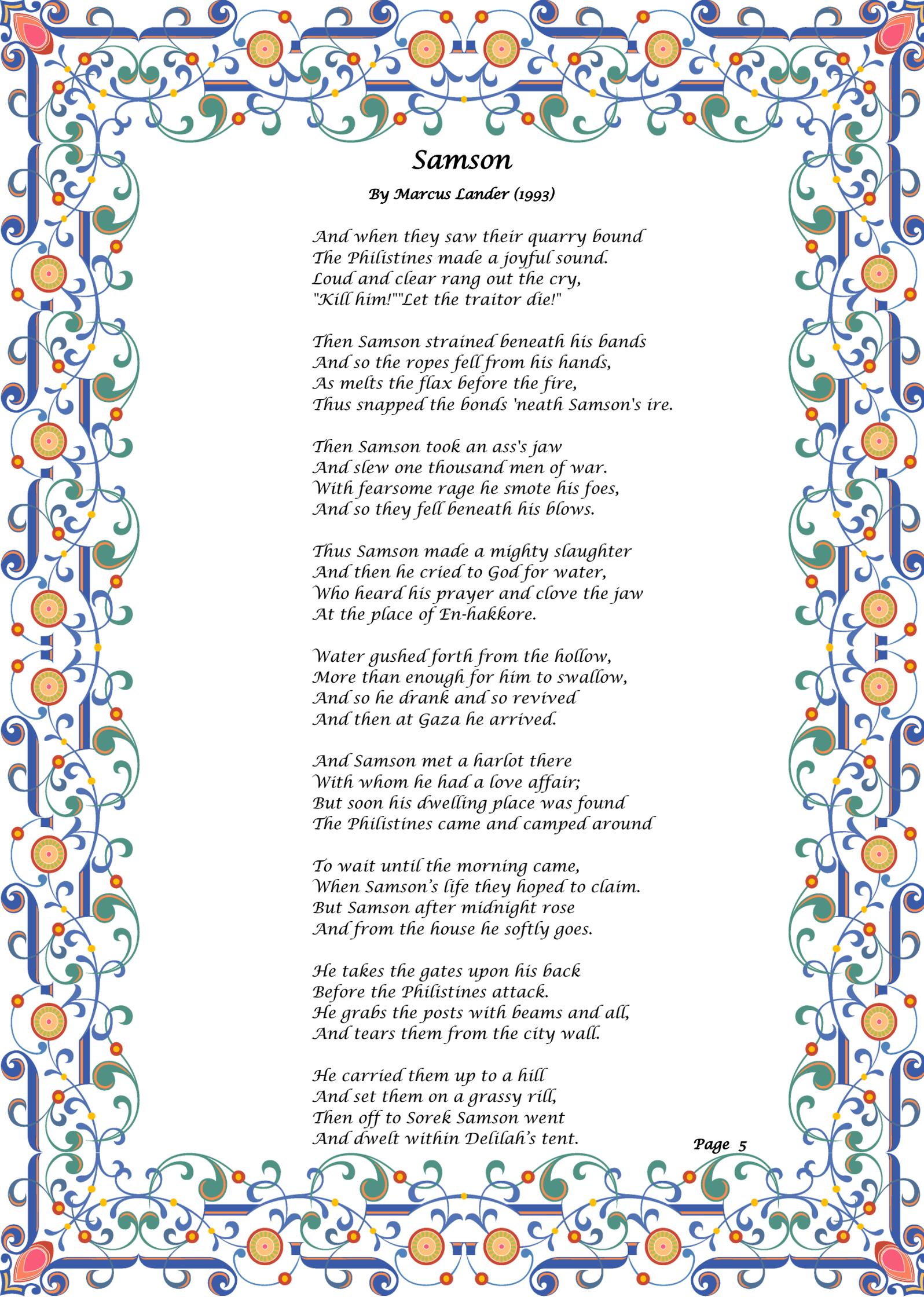
Then burned they both his friend and bride;
And so amidst the flames they died.
They thought at last the day was won,
But Samson could not be outdone.

Many Philistines he slew
And then to Etam's rock he flew,
He climbed right to the mountain's top
And lived awhile upon the rock.

Through Judah's land the Philistines came;
To capture Samson was their aim.
Across the wilderness they tramped
And then at last at Lehi camped.

Then up to Samson's hideaway
Three thousand men of Judah came.
He pleaded with them not to kill,
And then submitted to their will.

Upon the hill they bound him fast
When they'd agreed to what he'd asked.
Down to Lehi they carried him
According to the foe's cruel whim.



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*And when they saw their quarry bound
The Philistines made a joyful sound.
Loud and clear rang out the cry,
"Kill him!" "Let the traitor die!"*

*Then Samson strained beneath his bands
And so the ropes fell from his hands,
As melts the flax before the fire,
Thus snapped the bonds 'neath Samson's ire.*

*Then Samson took an ass's jaw
And slew one thousand men of war.
With fearsome rage he smote his foes,
And so they fell beneath his blows.*

*Thus Samson made a mighty slaughter
And then he cried to God for water,
Who heard his prayer and clove the jaw
At the place of En-hakkore.*

*Water gushed forth from the hollow,
More than enough for him to swallow,
And so he drank and so revived
And then at Gaza he arrived.*

*And Samson met a harlot there
With whom he had a love affair;
But soon his dwelling place was found
The Philistines came and camped around*

*To wait until the morning came,
When Samson's life they hoped to claim.
But Samson after midnight rose
And from the house he softly goes.*

*He takes the gates upon his back
Before the Philistines attack.
He grabs the posts with beams and all,
And tears them from the city wall.*

*He carried them up to a hill
And set them on a grassy rill,
Then off to Sorek Samson went
And dwelt within Delilah's tent.*



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*The Philistines let out a groan
When they saw their prey had flown,
But soon they hatched another plan
To try to catch this lustful man.*

*The Philistines to Delilah stole
And offered money for Samson's soul,
Delilah consented for a fee
To join them in their treachery.*

*Fifty-five hundred silver coin
They'd give to her, their side to join,
And on her victim's feelings play
And so find out where his strength lay.*

*So Samson fell to sinful living
And gave away his strength to women,
His substance to the bane of kings
Which only ever heartache brings.*

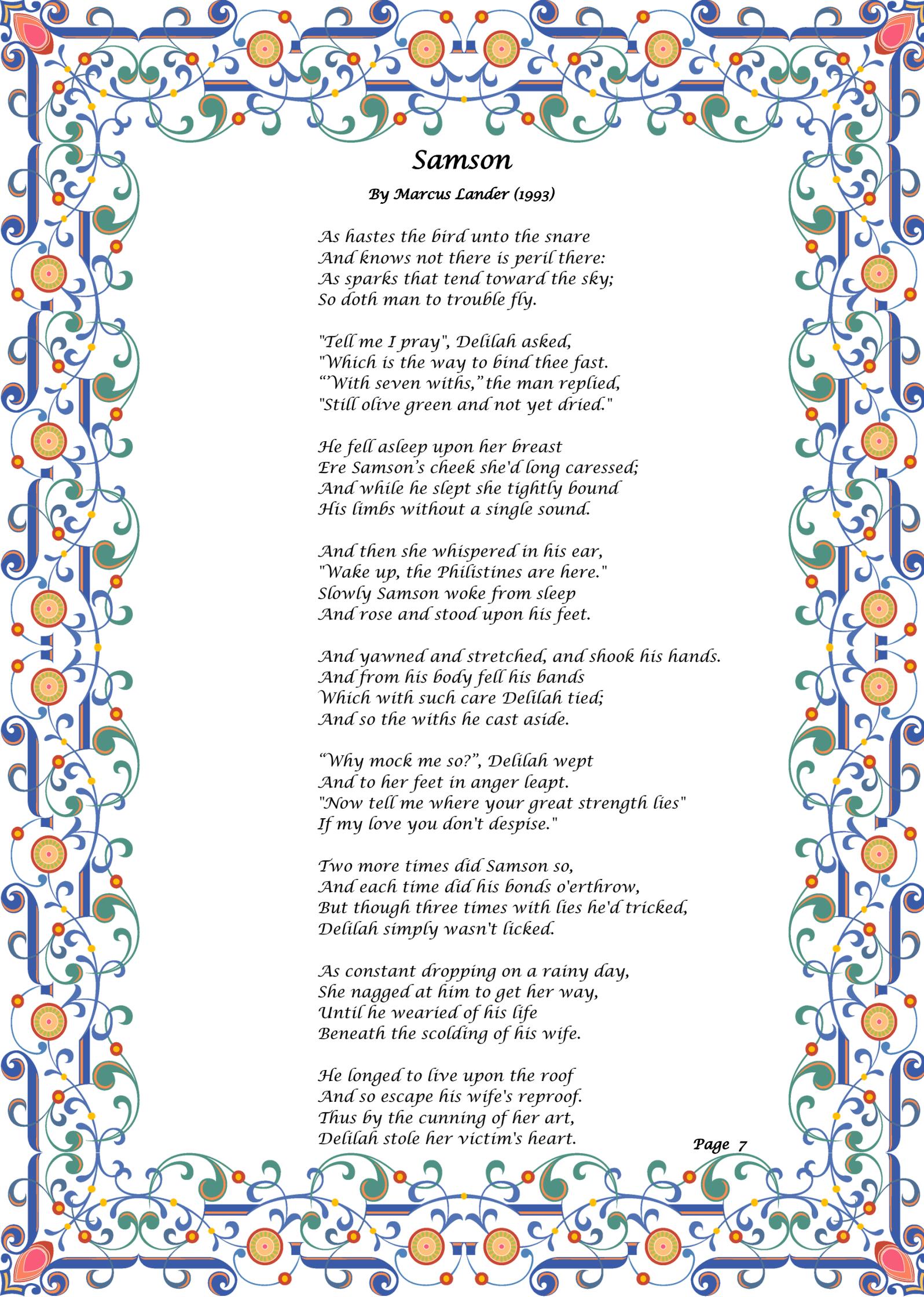
*He knew not that he'd sink to hell
If he succumbed beneath her spell.
More bitter than the pangs of death
Is she whose heart is snares and nets.*

*Enchanted by her lovely face,
Her soft sweet voice and gentle grace,
He failed to see the hidden danger
In this dark-eyed, black-haired stranger.*

*He saw the serpent's shining eyes
With all their power to hypnotise
But 'neath her beauty she had vice
And venom of the cockatrice.*

*As the serpent so the lizard;
Beware the dagger in thy gizzard.
Behind the charm there is a chain
For those who will not think again.*

*Like the poison's emerald hue
Beauty can hide peril too;
And though the chalice may enthrall
All those who drink will taste the gall.*



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*As hastes the bird unto the snare
And knows not there is peril there:
As sparks that tend toward the sky;
So doth man to trouble fly.*

*"Tell me I pray", Delilah asked,
"Which is the way to bind thee fast.
"With seven withs," the man replied,
"Still olive green and not yet dried."*

*He fell asleep upon her breast
Ere Samson's cheek she'd long caressed;
And while he slept she tightly bound
His limbs without a single sound.*

*And then she whispered in his ear,
"Wake up, the Philistines are here."
Slowly Samson woke from sleep
And rose and stood upon his feet.*

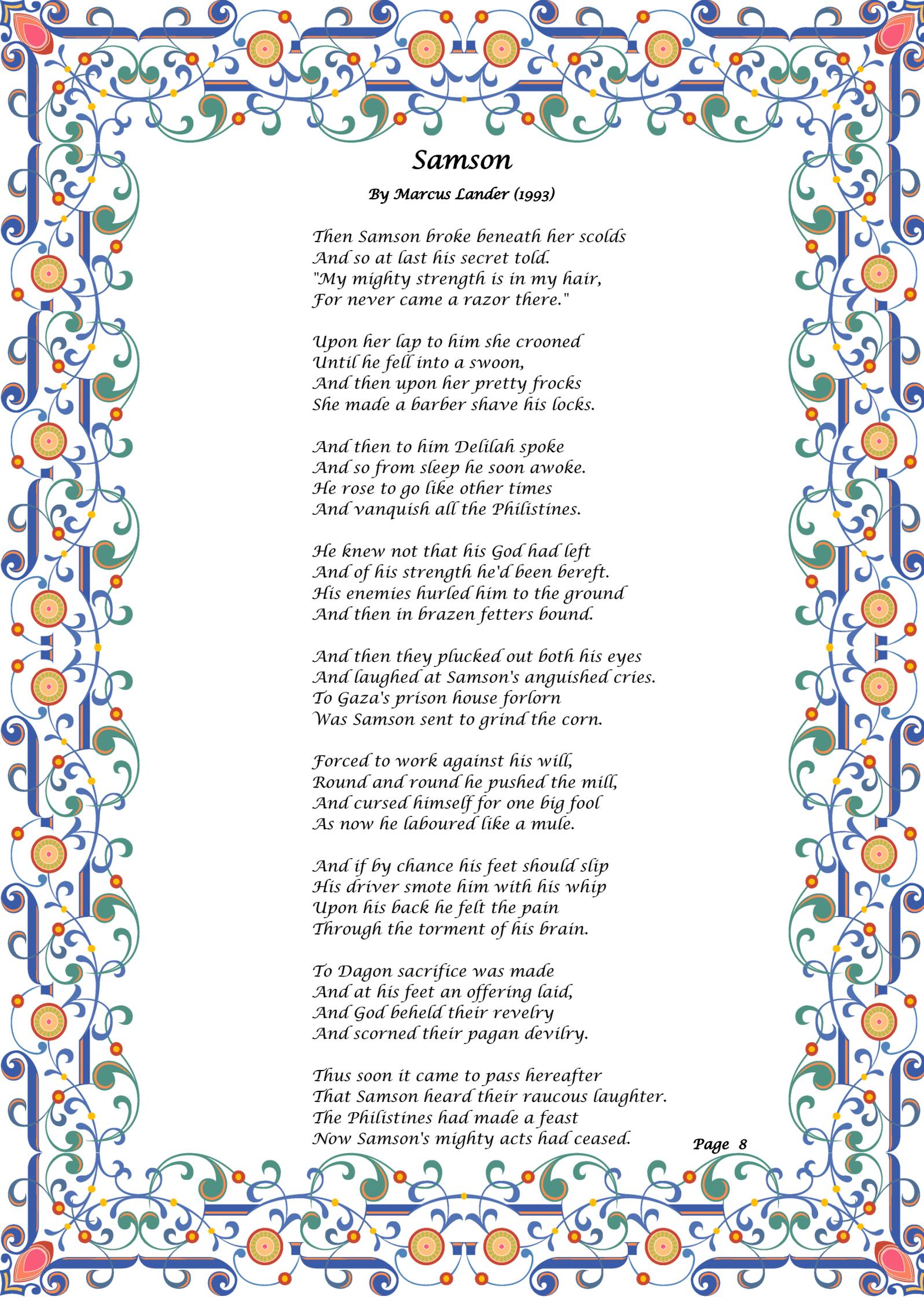
*And yawned and stretched, and shook his hands.
And from his body fell his bands
Which with such care Delilah tied;
And so the withs he cast aside.*

*"Why mock me so?", Delilah wept
And to her feet in anger leapt.
"Now tell me where your great strength lies"
If my love you don't despise."*

*Two more times did Samson so,
And each time did his bonds o'erthrow,
But though three times with lies he'd tricked,
Delilah simply wasn't licked.*

*As constant dropping on a rainy day,
She nagged at him to get her way,
Until he wearied of his life
Beneath the scolding of his wife.*

*He longed to live upon the roof
And so escape his wife's reproof.
Thus by the cunning of her art,
Delilah stole her victim's heart.*



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*Then Samson broke beneath her scolds
And so at last his secret told.
"My mighty strength is in my hair,
For never came a razor there."*

*Upon her lap to him she crooned
Until he fell into a swoon,
And then upon her pretty frocks
She made a barber shave his locks.*

*And then to him Delilah spoke
And so from sleep he soon awoke.
He rose to go like other times
And vanquish all the Philistines.*

*He knew not that his God had left
And of his strength he'd been bereft.
His enemies hurled him to the ground
And then in brazen fetters bound.*

*And then they plucked out both his eyes
And laughed at Samson's anguished cries.
To Gaza's prison house forlorn
Was Samson sent to grind the corn.*

*Forced to work against his will,
Round and round he pushed the mill,
And cursed himself for one big fool
As now he laboured like a mule.*

*And if by chance his feet should slip
His driver smote him with his whip
Upon his back he felt the pain
Through the torment of his brain.*

*To Dagon sacrifice was made
And at his feet an offering laid,
And God beheld their revelry
And scorned their pagan devilry.*

*Thus soon it came to pass hereafter
That Samson heard their raucous laughter.
The Philistines had made a feast
Now Samson's mighty acts had ceased.*



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*Then someone had a wicked thought,
"Bring Samson here to make us sport"
And so before the gathered throng,
Their foe in chains they brought along.*

*Of their foe they made ill use;
They heaped and piled him with abuse;
To Samson was no mercy shown,
But they forgot, his hair had grown.*

*Three thousand men, both knaves and Lords,
Sat drinking out of golden gourds;
And on a parapet of wood
In regal dress Delilah stood.*

*He could not see her with his eyes
But still he heard her mocking cries:
"Look! There the mighty Samson stands
With iron chains about his hands."*

*Then to Jehovah Samson prayed
As through the hall, his way, he made;
And with each hand he grasped a pillar.
In concentration bowed the killer.*

*And God looked down on Samson's plight
As he strained with all his might;
And filled him with his Spirit's power,
And gave him strength in this last hour.*

*The pillars fell, the house collapsed;
And all within to silence lapsed.
Thus Samson died beneath the rubble.
His days were short and full of trouble.*

*Their shrieks and cries rent through the air,
Then fell a deathly stillness there.
In halls where shouts of mirth once reigned
There came the stillness of the slain.*

*Cashluhim's sons of Ham's accursed seed
Lie slain by Samson's final deed.
Crushed beneath the scattered stones
Lie Samson's victims' battered bones.*



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*His family came for his remains
And laid them in his father's grave;
Between Zorah and Eshtaol
There lies the judge of Israel.*