The people wanted soldiers

so hope might come as curse,

to smash the occupation –

but change turned up as Verse:

the poetry of yeasting,

the parabolic sword,

no match for *Pax Romana*\*

and yet this Lamb still roared.

Although it claims possession

of mind and heart and soul,

the Empire’s grip has limits –

it can’t control the whole:

the surplus lives as Poem

for those with ears to hear,

resisting final closure,

declaring what is near:

This dream of re-creation,

this threat of life set free,

disturbing tame religion,

confounding how we see:

it won’t succumb to cliché

where purities abound,

but glimpsed in seeds’ potential,

it ruptures solid ground.

Where empires grow by violence,

where systems blame the last

and close down other futures

by editing the past,

the Poem can’t be silenced,

though quietly it dies,

and dances through the fissures

to teach us how to rise!

Graham Adams (2021) … prompted by the conversations during the Empire module

*Potential tunes: Thornbury, Cruger…*

*\*Pax Romana* is ‘the peace of Rome’ secured through military violence; if it’s easier to replace this with ‘crucifixion’, the meaning still works.

Verse 2, last line, could be: ‘revealing what is near.’