

REUNION

John Nimmo

Esau and Jacob
Oil on canvas, c. 1907
Michel Sauvenier

Four hundred men in orange march in from right.
Ten flocks of milk-white sheep meander left,
among them crimson camels, intended gift
to fast assuage old brotherly rage, despite
the trust lost through deceit. These twins would fight
for vengeance, or from fear, to splay their rift—
though it was yet so wide no quake could shift
it back in place. But here one forthright
kiss to wet the neck of Jacob's bowed head,
from Esau, with his arms spread wide in peace,
connects, unnerves, and startles all. Their dread
dissolves; it seeps into hoof-beaten grass
beneath the laid-down swords and random tread
of wives and servants, frenzied without cease.

"Reunion" © 2005 by John Nimmo