

# The Deronda Review

a journal of poetry and thought

Vol. VI No. 1 Spring 2015

5700

## SAFE INSIDE YOUR HOUSE

"And I come to Your altar, with joy  
and gladness, I praise You with my  
harp" (Ps 43:4)

I'm safe  
now. The walls  
around me, quiet,  
a space filled with vision and love  
rising

upwards.  
The heavens  
reign down upon me here.  
It feels good to contemplate  
the words

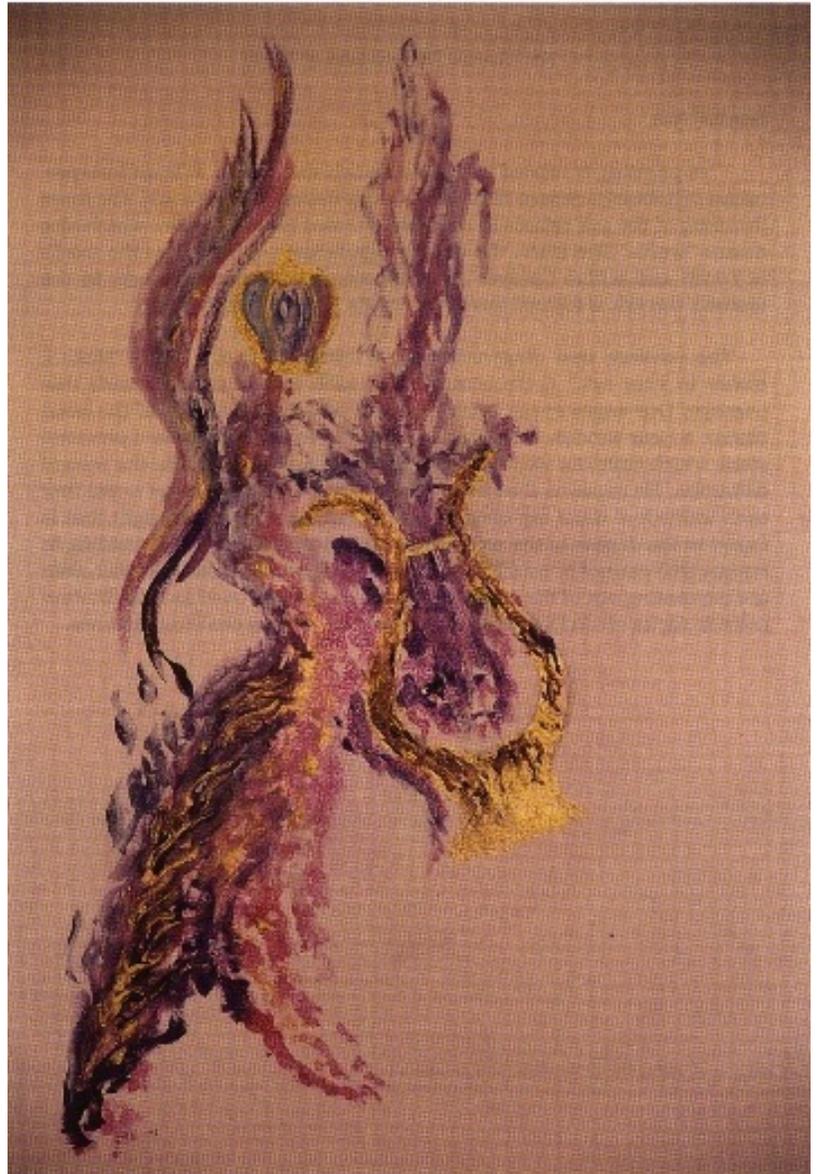
that flow  
from inside,  
what you placed there when  
I arrived here, and I cried out . . .  
It's time

to start  
and it's hard  
at first. Beginnings  
nothing that you expected, and  
slowly

I learn  
the venues,  
where my feet take me  
stepping carefully, and I know  
the way

to find  
You, to get  
to the gates, enter,  
let my voice burst forth, my heart  
run free.

—Zev Davis



*The Reclamation of Malchut By Finding One's Own Note.*  
Painting by Nechama Sarah G. Nadborny, from *The Twelve*  
*Dimensions of Israel.*

### ***In This Issue***

I. The Constancy of Renewal

II. Elements of Wonder

III. Tree Rings

In Memoriam: Ruth Blumert, Jack Lovejoy

IV. Meant to Heal

V. Nowhere Else to Build

VI. White Spaces

## CONTRIBUTORS' EXCHANGE

This feature was started to encourage dialogue among poets and readers. Below are titles of poetry collections by contributors, as well as URLs. Due to the fact that the magazine is now mainly web-based we no longer include addresses, but messages can be routed through the editors via the "Contact Us" form. \* indicates a page in the "Hexagon Forum" of [www.pointandcircumference.com](http://www.pointandcircumference.com). \*\* indicates a page in the "Kippat Binah" section of the same site.

Hayim Abramson, *Torah Secrets; Thoughts from the Sources* (in preparation)

\*\*Yakov Azriel is the author of *Threads from a Coat of Many Colors: Poems on Genesis* (2005); *In the Shadow of a Burning Bush: Poems on Exodus* (2008), *Beads for the Messiah's Bride: Poems on Leviticus* (2009), *Swimming in Moses' Well* (2011), all with Time Being Books.

Hamutal Bar-Yosef's multifarious publications are listed on [www.hamutalbaryosef.com](http://www.hamutalbaryosef.com). She has two books of poetry in English: *Night, Morning*, (Sheep Meadow Press, 2008) and *The Ladder*, (Sheep Meadow Press, 2014).

Mindy Aber Barad, *The Land That Fills My Dreams* (Bitzaron 2013).

Nechama Sarah G. Nadborny Burgeman is the author of *The Twelve Dimensions of Israel* (Ya'alat Chein, 1995), *Israel and the Seventy Dimensions of the World* (Ya'alat Chein, 2003), and *The Princess of Dan* (Menorah Books, 2014).

\*\*Esther Cameron (E. Kam-Ron), *The Consciousness of Earth* (Multicultural Books, 2004); *Fortitude, or The Lost Language of Justice: Poems in Israel's Cause* (Bitsaron Books, August 2009); *Western Art and Jewish Presence in the Work of Paul Celan: Roots and Ramifications of the "Meridian" Speech* (Lexington Books, 2014).

Eric Chevlen, *Triple Crown* (2010), *Adrift on a Ruby Yacht* (2014).

Robert Glen Deamer, Robert Glen Deamer's books include *Place-Dream and Other Poems* (1991), *The Black Riders and Other Poems* (1992), *Sugarloaf: Poems* (1995), and *Songs for Sugarloaf* (1997), all from The Mellen Press.

Courtney Druz, [www.courtneydruz.com](http://www.courtneydruz.com), is the author of *Complex Natural Processes* (2010), *The Ritual Word* (2011) and *The Light and the Light* (2012).

Ruth Fogelman, [www.geocities.com/jerusalemilives](http://www.geocities.com/jerusalemilives), is the author of *Cradled in God's Arms, Jerusalem Lives, and Jerusalem Awakening* (Bitzaron Books).

Yaffa Ganz is the author of over forty books for children and young adults.

Evelyn Hayes, <http://theracheltear.blogspot.co.il/>, *The Eleventh Plague: Twins, and Their Hearts Were Softened for More, and Other Poetry and Prose* (2002); *The Twelfth Plague: Generations, Because the Lion Wears Stripes* (2003)

Gretti Izak, *Orbits* (1999), *Don't Come Moon* (1999), *Between Panes of Glass* (2006), *Arctic Night* (2010), *Diary of a Journey* (2011), *About Jerusalem* (2012), *Ribs and the Silver Mirror* (2014), *Marking Time* (2014).

Pamela Laskin's most recent poetry books are *The Plagiariest* (Dos Madres Press) and *The Bonsai Curator* (Cervena Barva Press).

Constance Rowell Mastores, *A Deep and Dazzling Darkness*, Blue Light Press (2013).

JB Mulligan, <http://www.hawkwindcreations.com/jb%20mulligan%20page.htm>; a collection of his poems may be read at <http://www.hawkwindcreations.com/POEM-mulligan-collection.htm>

Susan Oleferuk, *Circling for Home* (Finishing Line Press, 2011), *Those Who Come to the Garden* (Finishing Lines Press, 2013).

David Olsen's works include three chapbooks, *Sailing to Atlantis* (2013), *New World Elegies* (2011), and *Greatest Hits* (2001) and a full-length book, *Unfolding Origami*, winner of the 2013 Cinnamon Press Poetry Collection Award (March 2015).

Ellen Jane Powers, [www.ellenjanepowers.com](http://www.ellenjanepowers.com), *Toward the Beloved* (Finishing Line Press, 2013), *Celestial Navigation* (WordTech Poetry, 2013).

Haim Schneider, *Betrachtungen/Reflections: Zweisprachige Gedichte für nachdenkliche Leute/Bilingual Poems for Pensive People* (Gefen, 2010)

Vera Schwarcz, *Ancestral Intelligence* (Antrim House, 2013), *Chisel of Remembrance* (Antrim House, 2009), *A Scoop of Light* (March Street Press, 2000), *Fresh Words for a Jaded World, and Selected Poems* (Blue Feather Press, 2000).

Steven Owen Shields, *Daimonion Sonata* (Birch Brook Press, 2005).

Michael E. Stone, *Selected Poems* (Cyclamens and Swords Press, 2010). *Adamgirk': The Adam Book of Arak'el of Sitwnik'* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

Sue Tourkin-Komet, Jersalem, *Outfront, Jerusalem and Outback, Bethelam*, forthcoming

\*\*Shira Twersky-Cassel, *Shachrur* (Blackbird), 1988; *HaChayyim HaSodiim shel HaTshipporim* (*The Secret Life of Birds*), Sifriat HaPo'alim, 1995; *Yoman Shira BeSulam HaGeulah* (*A Poet's Diary*), Sifrei Bitsaron, 2005; *Legends of Wandering and Return*, Sifrei Bitzaron 2014.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Shira Twersky-Cassel's "Autumn" and "The Language of Longing" are from her book *Legends of Wandering and Return*. Courtney Druz's "The Thought Cloud Stair" is from her book *The Light and The Light*. Haim Schneider's "Old Man on His Last Legs" is from his book *Betrachtungen/Reflections: Zweisprachige Gedichte für nachdenkliche Leute/Bilingual Poems for Pensive People*.

---

THE DERONDA REVIEW: Editor: Esther Cameron., [derondareview@att.net](mailto:derondareview@att.net). Co-editor for Israel: Mindy Aber Barad, [POB 1299, Efrat, Israel; maber4kids@yahoo.com](mailto:POB1299,Efrat,Israel;maber4kids@yahoo.com). Single issue \$7, subscription \$14, back issue \$5. For subscriptions and extra copies in Israel contact Yehudit Ben-Yosef, [yehudib@gmail.com](mailto:yehudib@gmail.com).

*I. The Constancy of Renewal*

## INSPIRATION FROM THE SNOW-FILLED POPPY FIELD

Return inside  
 The time has not yet come  
 to Blossom  
 The vacant, overlooked caverns  
 Await to be mined  
 Before the next flower springs forth  
 in form  
 --Nechama Sarah G. Nadborny-Burgeman

## DAYS OF SUN

There will be a day  
 when a feather will fall like an arrow  
 from an unlikely sky  
 a day when the cicadas hum  
 and the clouds rise majestic

There will be days, yes there will  
 when the frost etches forgotten scars  
 and the snowflakes fall heavy, slow and sad

There will be days of the peony, the poppy and rose  
 sensuous, insensible and full  
 the heartbreak hidden in the seed

And a day of sweet grass, cut and drying in the sun  
 the ditch of chicory and flax  
 some time to spend on the side of the road  
 sitting beside a friend, a dog, a child  
 yes, some such days  
 --Susan Oleferuk

## A NON-DIDACTIC SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

My moonflowers moved to my neighbor's side of the  
 fence  
 positioning themselves thoughtfully outside his front  
 door  
 my sunflowers likewise made a massive leap  
 and my phlox a dismissive creep  
 and I can see them thriving on his side lawn

In turn I now house an errant holly  
 a rose of Sharon  
 a neighbor's child  
 and a driveway that smells of mint jelly  
 the lessons, dear reader, are obviously too many

To avoid being didactic let's just say when it comes to  
 nature  
 the surprises are plenty

-- Susan Oleferuk

## SEPTEMBER SONG

The plain of the sky, mountainous with clouds  
 above the mountains  
 as remnants of the warm breeze slouch  
 toward the refreshment of autumn's  
 red-and-yellow fountains.

I could walk there, nearer to God  
 (maybe farther)  
 if at the end of each leg, I had a bird,  
 not these aching bone feet. I'd rather  
 soar, but I wasn't born to feather.

Still, there are avenues of sky  
 along the ground  
 for a man to travel, and I  
 can hear the songs that rise without a sound  
 and hover all around.

--JB Mulligan

## AUTUMN

That very day, like golden wings  
 the leaves shifted in the wind  
 endless chimes rang and parted from the pines  
 and from the season of love.

The eucalyptus cast twisting roots into the limbs  
 of the hidden stream to slake their thirst  
 into the roots of the rock arms of the mountain.

Beneath the shadow of the mountain the valley slept  
 deep in contemplation of that sirocco day,  
 the sun grew old, dimming into a polished pearl of light  
 and not one bird voice could be heard.

Pale gold, the trees were kindled by comets  
 of leaf and bud, blinded by the rising flames of autumn.

Day darkened and soon night rested upon his boat in  
 the stream  
 upon the flow of dark waters.

The halo of his hair, crowned with a garland of stars  
 became a corona of keen splendor.

For the soul, memory is an awakening  
 a voyage of pain and joy,  
 but it is not memories that the weary heart seeks.

Oarsman, he cleaved the gleaming river  
 as he would a burnished leaf.

--Shira Twersky-Cassel

## THE CRANES

Summer is gone, the time of flying kites  
and eating sweet corn on the beach  
the time of doing nothing  
and not feeling guilty.

Confronted with the pensiveness of autumn  
I start thinking how each day may be the last  
of my life and I am remiss of so much I meant  
to accomplish. Can I console myself with those  
who know mysteries that we are given second  
chances in future lives to correct our failures?

All this because when I opened the door  
and looked at the sky, I saw a flock of cranes,  
their white wings touched by the gold of the sun,  
making their way to other pastures.

They will be back in spring and like the seasons  
of the year that reassure us with the constancy  
of renewal, reveal the blessed never ending cycle  
of arrivals and departures.

--Gretti Izak

## NISHMAS

Through the open door of the shul  
Came the song of geese in flight  
Leaving behind brown food-famished fields  
For rich black streams, rivers and lakes south.

Before I could stop it, my heart,  
Peering out from beneath my tallis,  
Ran to the door and, leaning against the jamb,  
Beat in rhythm to the wings of the lead bird.

It returned only for Nishmas,  
Slowly at first, but settling then within my breast,  
Dreaming of wings as broad as the heavens  
Of water, woods, sun and moon.

-- Gershon ben Avraham

## WINTER NIGHTS

Sleep deep in winter night  
in the silence of hard cold  
drift into the womb of the earth  
and espy the stars and moon  
where every dog is a wolf  
and man large legend  
stepping across constellations  
like lighted bridges  
linking the lost, the gone, the forbidden  
we are hunters of brighter seasons  
but sleep down deep in winter's night now  
and read the signs hidden.

--Susan Oleferuk

## OVERNIGHT LOW: 7 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT

In the mix  
of tall White Pines,

slow brush of lynx,  
and whispers of passing antlers,

a coyote's gypsy song  
gives anthem to all that

I--removed--  
can never be.

--Cynthia Nankee

## WHITE CAT IN THE MIDST OF A SNOWFALL

Grace everywhere –  
on the field, in the air,

What is softest  
fashions vertical rows of prints

down an evolving canvas,  
like delicate Chinese lettering...

or perhaps,  
Braille for a world

that's slowly disappearing  
from sight.

--Cynthia Weber Nankee

## MORNING PRAYER

He left her lying warm beneath blue blankets,  
To trudge through snow to morning prayer, as  
Reluctantly as Adam leaving Paradise.

Light snow landing in his beard soon warmed, and  
Rolled like mourners' tears down his black coat's front.

Wrapped in tallis, his spirit moved through  
Fiery places. The windows crusted with snow,  
Could not contain his soul.

-- Gershon ben Avraham

TKHINE FOR TU BISHVAT

*Woman's Prayer for the New Year of Trees*

Will we be like the trees of the fields  
whose bounty to come is judged on this day?

Come, let us eat figs and pears with our wine,  
and feast on the flesh of plums and almonds!

From the fire of your mouth, *Elokim*,  
light the blessings for each tree  
that they may bear fruit in the year to come.

We plant key saplings and pray, *Baruch HaShem*,  
that no one take note against them.

May their bounty be known unto our children's  
children's generation, when our dust  
brings forth the wild grape to bloom  
and the orchard burns red with apples.

Spring rains will feed the earth, so too may we  
be nourished to bring forth honey like the sweet date  
palm.

Praise You, Giver-of-All-Things, who calls the soil  
from labor and gives us the Tree of Life. *Omayn*.

--Ellen Powers

THE CHRONICLES OF SPRING

When the roots of spring want to speak, when under  
the turf a great many old tales and ancient sagas  
have amassed; when too many whispers crowd  
the dark foundations—then the bark of trees  
blackens and disintegrates into thick scales—  
and the roots beckon, inviting us to go deeper.

Oh, we wouldn't have believed it had we not seen  
this world with our own eyes: the great breeding  
grounds of history, factories of plots, hazy smoking  
rooms of fables and dark texts written for the drama  
of evening clouds; the bottomless infernos,  
the hopeless Ossianic spaces, all those lamentable  
Nibelungs! Here are labyrinths of depth,  
warehouses and silos of things, lachrymatories,  
graves that are still warm; the litter and the rot.

Now at last we can understand the great and sad  
machinery of spring. Why she must be beautiful  
to embody all that has been lost. Why she  
must make up for all that heavy knowledge

with lilac blooms and flowering cherry.  
New greenery grows overnight and the sap rises  
as trees wake up with slender shoots, unburdened  
by memories (although their roots are steeped  
in ancient chronicles)...Behold your fields,  
your own estate--the meadows bright with clover.  
Fill yourself with the early morning light  
that grows from nearly nothing to an immensity.

--Constance Rowell Mastores

---

*II. Elements of Wonder*

**elements of wonder**

in the beginning  
it was all here:

air  
earth  
fire  
water  
vegetable  
animal  
mineral  
(even then  
plutonium, uranium,  
for better or worse)

wool, bone,  
skin, stone,  
straw for bricks.

plastic, nylon, silicon chips  
resident but not evident,

and we, ones who speak,  
transform, invent, create  
wonders from wonders

--I. Batsheva

**footnotes**

therein lie the details:  
 unspoken secrets,  
 whispered asides  
 that illumine meaning

light in the vessel  
 seed of the reason  
 heart of the enigma

and life's footnotes?  
 unsaid  
 unwritten  
 unbelievable

wherein does truth lie?

--I. Batsheva

**FOUR SIGHTED**

If for real were four dimensions,  
 Would we ever know?  
 Limited's our comprehension  
 To the *status quo*.

Up and down, from side to side,  
 We readily perceive.  
 Einstein claimed the fourth is time –  
 How many so believe?

H.G. Wells conceived a way  
 To future and to past.  
 Likewise *Star Trek* in its day  
 Through anti-matter blast.

Mainstream physics must depend  
 On holes, both white and black.  
 Constructs based on math pretend  
 Abstractions like are fact.

Couched as science, concepts such  
 Are sanctioned void of proof.  
 But one wonders, do these touch  
 On more of faith than truth?

--Ray Gallucci

**GEOMETRY**

"Teach me Your way, O Lord ..." (Psalm 27:11)

Can triangles imagine or conceive  
 A cone? Can circles understand a sphere  
 Or contours of a globe? And can a square  
 Attempt to comprehend a cube? Lines weave  
 Flat worlds of two dimensions to achieve  
 Some width and length, but cannot grasp the air  
 Of heaven. Lacking means to see or hear  
 A third dimension, hexagons believe.

O Lord of depth, do I believe? I fear  
 My faith is shallow, God; I sleep inside  
 A cave like hibernating bears that sleep  
 Throughout the whitest winter, unaware  
 Each snowflake is unique. How long and wide  
 Your snowfalls are, how fathomless and deep.

-- Ya kov Azriel

**SOME LAST QUESTIONS****What is the desert?**

*An expanse stretching from beyond corners;  
 a place of freedom for body, for mind.*

**What is its silence?**

*The breath of God,  
 the echoes of a billion years.*

**What are the bones?**

*Of skeletons whose flesh  
 fell away a thousand years ago.*

**No--what are the bones?**

*Animals that larger animals ate,  
 animals that died of starvation or thirst.*

**What is the moon?**

*A waxing silver plate,  
 puller of tides.*

**And the child?**

*Mother to the woman,  
 teacher of her parents,  
 her grandparents' crown.*

**And God?**

*I can only tell you what He is not.*

--Ruth Fogelman

From *The Hannah Senesh Set*

KINDNESS IN YIELDING

[Pesach Sheni]

At first, it is a second chance,  
 a first chance: not a duplication,  
 though each second seconds again,  
 meiosis not mitosis. You see I'm studying  
 how things grow, how days adhere together  
 into a path, a membrane for the chick –  
 I'm studying poultry – the egg and feather girl! –  
 I can; something – what? don't remind me  
 of before; this is not the place  
 I was. I am new, here. I am always  
 starting – each step in the land redeems  
 the end, counteracts chance, is first.

–Courtney Druz

---

### III. Tree Rings

YOUR BREAKERS

All that day  
 you called to me  
 and I groaned abysses

From the abysses you called  
 in waves of pain, in waves of hope  
 in waves  
 of hidden love.

And a song was with me  
 all that night  
 a song of pain  
 a song of the soul's roaring and raging and rushing...  
 a song that was your song.

A prayer to G-d, my life.\*

--Michal Zacut

\*Psalm 42:10.

THREE PETALS FOR INGA

I.  
*Twin Fires*

When the full and effulgent moon  
 Sends its silver beams to dive  
 Through the tall, dark trees, I soon  
 See the twin fires of your eyes –  
 That phosphorescence come alive! –  
 And I need not wonder why.

II.  
*Embraced*

We're each, in loving arms, embraced, and deep  
 Is pleasure, rolled beneath the moon's pale hue.  
 And as I drift upon the pond of sleep,  
 A piece of me awakens within you.

III.  
*After a Hard Day*

You stood silently in the grey hallway –  
 Forever enstamped upon my memory –  
 Glowing in cinnamon skin and azure eyes,  
 Your face chiseled into honest warmth,  
 With your soft hands cupped into a spoon,  
 Ready to feed me with undying love  
 That pooled from within you and strangely shined  
 Like a thousand fireflies come alive.

--Kjell Nykvist

## LOVE

If you forget your friends, if you revile them all,  
 You grateful ones, revile all the poets,  
 Your own, may God forgive you;  
 But always honour the soul of lovers.

For, tell me, where else does human life live,  
 Since now the slavish one, Care, rules and compels  
 all things?  
 For that reason too the god has long  
 Moved uncaring above our heads.

Yet, however cold and songless the year is  
 At the allotted season, still from the white field  
 Green blades shoot,  
 Often a solitary bird sings,

When gradually the wood stretches, the river stirs,  
 And already the milder breeze blows softly from the  
 south  
 At the elected hour,  
 So, a sign of the lovelier age,

In which we believe, uniquely self-sufficient still,  
 Uniquely noble and pious, Love, God's daughter,  
 Springs up over the brazen and desolate soil,  
 From Him alone.

Be blest, O be, heavenly plant, by me  
 Tended with song, when the aetherial  
 Nectar's powers nourish you,  
 And you are ripened by the creative ray.

Grow and become a wood! A more soulful,  
 More fully blooming world! Language of lovers  
 Be the language of the land!  
 Their soul the people's lilt!

--Friedrich Hölderlin  
 From the German: Robert Glen Deamer

## [5263] CHORDS OF LOVE

Chords of love are the key  
 as water bubbles move about  
 from the sea depths to the surface  
 struggling to reach the light.

On the top, personal prism shines  
 from white to his very own colors;  
 because even a hard life is a life  
 that is right to commemorate.

Outside, the sun touches and raps  
 and as any person I can flourish,  
 by transforming my unknown north  
 to a warm migrating south

Once at the beach I'll cross the bridge  
 and seek the villages of the soul.  
 Even in humble surroundings  
 endeavor to find my hidden treasure.

In the development of my story  
 I can uncover its delight to the light.  
 If I seek and search out I can find  
 how to make it an endless chain reaction.

--Hayim Abramson

## SHAPES AND SIZES

I live where  
 if I lose a little  
 I lose a lot  
 when I find a little  
 I find a world  
 hidden in the hollows of trees  
 beyond the bent paths of Indiagrass

I fear the fog  
 when the world is walled too small  
 and I bump into myself and bruise  
 yet in the mists  
 I sleep deeply in the blanket of the world  
 feeling the slight shifts  
 the steps of the seasons

Come sit with me and watch  
 the changing sizes of hidden worlds  
 but beware the shapeshifters of harmful intent  
 and know what I would rouse myself from dreamy  
 sleep to protect  
 know the ground I stand on  
 and what I can't lose.

--Susan Oleferuk

## MEDITATION ON SMOKING A CIGAR ON MY PORCH

May, 2014

In the darkness after twilight I sit puffing a cigar.  
 I can hear the distant rumble from the highway of the cars,  
 While overhead in silence, slow traversing from afar,  
 I see the dull red glimmer, wan, unreachable, of Mars.

I'll never see it closer; it's a place I'll never stand.  
 If Man should ever travel there, by then I'll be long dead.  
 My little place is puny; God's vast universe, so grand.  
 Who can see me sitting here, my stogie glowing red?

--Eric Chevlen

## RING OF A TREE

Climbing up the sky to where God lives  
 (when He's not at work?, when He needs to get away?),  
 towns and cities scatter on the earth's  
 rich velvet, gems and brooches, strands of pearls,  
 toward a lipstick sunset's firm delight  
 dissolving at the edges and above  
 to dark.

The radar tracks us, point to point;  
 we track our homes and jobs; the people there  
 track us and other people we don't know...  
 the sky grows dense with tracking, thickens, fills,  
 brims over and expands. A world is built,  
 a rock is a web, a continent a drop  
 of rain upon a web on a sodden lawn.  
 My life, I've cursed the tiny grit and scratches:  
 the stubborn doorknob, coffee's steaming spill--  
 without them, this would all collapse and spin  
 into a tightening vortex, serpent-world  
 swallowing itself into a knot  
 imploding into nothingness--then gone.  
 Up here, perspective spreads out like a lake,  
 "Hey stupid" echoes back to me, a faint  
 distinct indictment in the swelling black.  
 For once I listen to myself without  
 excuse, denial... just a hair on a dog  
 barking and racing across the autumn sky.

--JB Mulligan

## IMPORT

You sit in a bar in a port by a foggy sea,  
 which might be a pond for all you can tell. Beyond  
 the clouds of fog, which pile like tumbled boulders,  
 gather like hurricane waves, are glittering ports  
 you've never seen, that send you gems and casks  
 of honeyed wine, bolts of patterned silk  
 in pastel slabs, cuckoo clocks and watches,  
 ornaments and spoons - a universe  
 of objects reflecting light the way the shore  
 takes water in and spreads that same wave out  
 to every other shore this sea can touch.  
 You never get the package that you need.  
 Box after box and barrel after barrel,  
 time after time - you scatter clumps of straw,  
 toss away locks, draw the tarp aside,  
 and gaze upon magnificence and riches,  
 more than enough to make a person happy...  
 somebody somewhere else, perhaps, who waits  
 for treasures that you store in cobwebbed rooms,  
 write the items up on a storage log  
 that yellows in a drawer in an ill-lit office,  
 while they, somewhere, lift up your special thing  
 and sigh, and shove it high atop some shelf  
 in some dank basement where the vermin wait  
 to scurry out when darkness fills the room  
 while scuffed black boots pound stairs and streets  
 toward  
 a morning bar, where aging flesh descends  
 upon a creaky wooden stool, and minds  
 examine mounds of fog upon a sea  
 with eyes grown blind by all that same display.  
 The gulls cry out, unseen. The wine is thick.  
 Its clotted sweetness drowns another moment.

--JB Mulligan

## LIES THAT I TOLD MYSELF

Like a television character I declaim:  
 You deserve to be happy.  
 Don't let happiness pass you buy.  
 Leaning on the windowsill I see  
 he's there, on another sidewalk,  
 elusive, homeless.

Others hurry down the street,  
 each to their home  
 where their happiness dwells  
 and patiently waits.  
 Soon it will pour them a cup of tea and ask how it was.

--Ruth Blumert

**cold moon quits smiling**

O.K. The copies are sorted.  
Now what?

After the disasters  
my remaining poems are effluent

over-worked, over-edited, over-stylized  
barnacle free.

Beside me Hay'im claims  
friendship never grows stale:

May this good man live to one hundred and twenty  
still believing.

Before me Life beckons with promise  
only because I reject the alternatives  
try to reject the inevitable  
glacial chasm yawning

closing sun  
sore sky weeping light  
paling to the inbetween  
strange colors of ash and voluptuous blue green  
purpling peace

the omnipresent unexpected  
puckering in dream

triggered by no mirage  
an online photo of Sorbibor  
an avalanche of memories

Life crumbling  
beyond the reaches of words a not silence  
pounding  
the shuddering inner chill  
numbing beyond rage and comprehension

--Judith Issroff

**GHOST TOWN**

I found myself in a strange city  
the streets too wide, too empty, too meaningless  
I was confused  
that I had to leave my home  
unattached I stood, unsteady, no footing  
miles of losses behind me like the crumbs that would  
never lead me to return

I watched the finch fly through her familiar trees  
as I looked far for something to remind me of home  
but the past is a sad whisper on deserted streets  
ever out of reach  
each corner a wrong turn.

--Susan Oleferuk

**REFLECTIONS**

He sat in the barber's chair,  
reflected in the mirror,  
and the mirror  
opposite that mirror  
reflected the reflection,  
and that reflection,  
the reflection's reflection  
until he was lost to sight  
in the distant reaches  
of looking glass land  
that didn't exist  
in the space where  
he sat in the chair.

Mirrors are covered in mourning.  
No mirrors in synagogues.  
They either focus you  
on yourself, else  
perhaps threaten  
your here with their  
ever receding  
looking glass land  
of repetition.

--Michael E. Stone

**FRESH WATER**

I looked down waiting for water to show a ripple. It  
didn't. I was to cast my sins into the liquid but, at nine,  
I didn't feel sinful. I tried to think of anything that  
might have been really-really bad all year, but didn't  
think being mean to my older sister was a sin.

"Why are we here, again?" My mother took my small  
hand.

"Tashlich," my dad touched my cheek and answered.

"We're casting our sins into the water so we can begin  
our new year fresh."

Girls were forbidden to learn Hebrew in the shul we  
went to, but Tashlich had a Yiddish sound like when  
my mother spoke Yiddish to herself when she was  
annoyed. She wasn't angry here; she looked peaceful.  
How could she have any sins anyway? Only bad thing  
she did was give me a spoonful of castor oil every  
morning; I hate castor oil and she knows it!

As I grew, and stood annually by the water, I just  
couldn't come up with sins. I didn't envy, steal, cheat,  
gossip. My lies were 'white lies' intended so someone  
else wouldn't feel humiliated. Was that sinful? I wasn't  
greedy.

The High Holidays again, and I was nineteen still  
trying to find sins to cast. I wasn't wicked, never  
physically harmed anyone, never intentionally hurt  
someone's feelings, was not manipulative nor

deceitful. I'd never cheated on an exam, wasn't arrogant or filled with a stuck-up attitude. What would I 'cast'?

Twenty. Now I had anger and resentment. My forty-five year old father died on the living room couch and I couldn't make any sense of that. I had only turned twenty a month before; my younger sister had just become sixteen. My older sister, with her husband and infant daughter, sat on wooden boxes by covered mirrors and could not comprehend death being so quick and so permanent. Was anger and resentment in the 'sin' category or just the emotional upheaval one? Was confusion a sin? Was jealousy for others who had two living parents considered a sin? 'Why' had no answers. "A time to live" and then the time to die was not a comfort either.

Chronologically, my years ahead are few, but learning is ongoing. A friend told me that she and her daughter carry breadcrumbs to the water, for tashlich, and toss in their negative feelings as crumbs drop. Sin doesn't even come up. I imagined my real or perceived emotions that are not positive or constructive: I could 'cast' those away. I could try and 'cast' the hurt by words that do affect me as I pretend words don't wound. I could continue to attempt to accept what cannot be changed and 'cast' away unrealistic hopes. Because my friend shared her way of bending the ritual to make it accessible, my family and I could search for a peaceful year rather than look for something we each might have done that's classified as a sin.

Would the water ripple a smile as it notices our joyousness at a Book of Life?

--Lois Greene Stone

## BALLOONS!

Let's shout!  
 (not surprise, not happy birthday)  
 Thin round membranes of delight  
 Bright colors of hot air  
 "Celebrate!" they shout  
 Floating symbols of years rushing by  
 Of achievement

Rainbows of caring  
 Tie 'em together  
 Punch 'em, kick 'em  
 Pop 'em

Here, blow into one  
 Blow and blow until your heart  
 Is as full as the room  
 And your lungs foreshadow the emptiness  
 Of the day after.

--Mindy Aber Barad

## IN THE NURSING HOME

To Mom

She slouches in the chair  
 whose alarm will screech  
 when she gets up.

"What is this?"  
 she shouts  
 indignant  
 that this has happened--  
 the chair,  
 the bad food,  
 the hospital bed,  
 eighty-nine years of living,  
 and now her hands,  
 bruised walnuts,  
 can't crack open enough  
 to hold a spoon.

--Pamela Laskin

## JAY

i

Formerly, I was part of someone else,  
 but someone else has disappeared.  
 Even Death has disappeared.  
 Even the photographs that used  
 to hang upon the walls...  
 Perhaps I am in the wrong house.

ii

After the first death, they brought  
 me back absolved of my transparency.  
 Once again I cast a shadow, intercepted light.  
 A surgeon, his face just out of reach,  
 peered down at me and smiled.

iii

And there were evenings robed  
 in the colors of the deity, loose,  
 flowing, incontrovertible  
 in the silence of their streaming blues,  
 color of introverts; there I sat,  
 hands spread on my knees like a farmer,  
 quietly nursing my drink.

iv

My plan was to die in the spring  
 when the apple trees begin to bud.  
 Or maybe--just maybe--make it  
 into June. Ending or beginning,  
 who knows. In the hospital, my sons  
 attended me. It was the 24th of March.

--Constance Rowell Mastores

## IN MEMORIAM: RUTH BLUMERT, JACK LOVEJOY

In December *The Deronda Review* lost two long-time contributors: Ruth Blumert of Jerusalem and Jack Lovejoy of Chicago. Sadly and strangely, both of them departed on December 22, 2014 (the sixth day of Chanukah). Ruth Blumert was born in Haifa. She studied biochemistry and microbiology at Bar Ilan University and Hebrew literature in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. She published a number of books of poetry and fiction and also translated a number of literary works, including *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. She was awarded the Prime Minister's Prize and the Jerusalem Prize for literature.

Jack Lovejoy was a native of Chicago. He served in the US Navy, then returned to Chicago and taught at the Chicago Public Library, where the toughest kids were assigned to him. Later he managed a bookstore, and finally retired to write full time. He published several fantasy novels. When struck down by cancer he was translating Goethe, working on a historical novel and hoping to put together a collected poems.

Below and on p. 9 are the last few poems that Ruth published on [www.bananot.co.il](http://www.bananot.co.il). as well as a poem written in her memory by Iris Eliya Cohen. The last poem that Jack Lovejoy sent to us is on page 18. We hope soon to post on [www.derondareview.org](http://www.derondareview.org) collections of their poems that we have been privileged to publish. May memory be for a blessing, and may their work continue to inspire us. --EC

## LONGING

This evening I will lie down, facing the sky,  
I will look up at the stars and the cosmic dust,  
I will wait for a star to drop to my side  
with a slip of paper  
containing a detailed answer.

Till then I shall give myself up to the humming of the  
wheels.

\*

## I WROTE

I wrote a poem about death and destroyed it in the  
draft,  
but it comes back, tunnelling among cracks and  
crevices,  
under the threshold,  
climbing up the windows.

A troublemaking, incorruptible robot,  
mute and focused,  
deaf to cries and plots these many ages,  
indifferent to flattery and bribes  
from those weary of their lives' din.

On his wings  
and in his hands and in his knapsack  
are prophecies  
compared to which hurricanes are a smile.  
He gazes round him with his thousand eyes  
like a postman from a vanished kingdom,  
a kingdom plagued with thirst,  
a library of negatives.

\*

## THEY TOLD ME TO WRITE

about poetry, yet,  
and the shock caused the words  
to rush around inside me.  
I remained by myself  
and you--the land's pillars of salt  
--are desirous of watching  
the internal overthrow  
in the gaping, gulping pits  
whose existence you never guessed.

And my poem wallows amid its burnt-out brothers  
in my internal Moab and Ammon.  
Without any Qumran cave  
the words climb upward, scroll by scroll,  
darker than our eyes.

\*

## THE CONDEMNED CITY

Said the elders of the condemned city:  
Not our hands shed this blood!  
In truth, with all our hearts,  
We looked into it thoroughly.

What remains to be revealed  
is the whereabouts of that red cow  
that never bore a yoke  
and whose ashes  
will purify everything.

--Ruth Blumert  
translated by E. Kam-Rom

## LOST CREATION

How do we measure what was lost  
 Beyond the millions of the Holocaust?  
 Or judge the work of unborn men  
 From masterpieces that have never been?  
 Despite the subsidies and fortunes spent,  
 The gaps in culture grow more evident,  
 As texture fails and stitching parts  
 In every fabric of the arts.  
 The era that preceded this decline  
 Was lavish in creations truly fine  
 For it had disenthralled at last  
 The ghetto of the spirit which the past  
 Erected so inquisitors might thrive  
 On bondsmen mortified and half alive;  
 Emancipating an excluded caste,  
 Debilitated by envenomed laws;  
 A people with a legacy so vast  
 Its mere enumeration overawes;  
 A nation relegated to be thralls,  
 Behind de jure and de facto walls.  
 They plied the franchise of their new estate  
 To foster learning and create,  
 And both their women and their men of parts  
 Enriched the arts.

Beyond mere numbers or percents,  
 Their contributions were immense;  
 Disbursing sustenance and seeds,  
 Where genius flourishes and culture breeds  
 Like blossoms in the noonday sun,  
 Harmonious yet tolerant of weeds.  
 Enheartened by iniquities undone,  
 By manumissions newly won  
 And auspicious prospects of reform,  
 The times progressed along a garden path  
 Through clement weather and through storm;  
 Unmindful of the coming wrath.  
 A time of promise which forevermore  
 Would temper poverty and banish war,  
 Foredoomed instead to ashes and despond  
 By one psychotic vagabond,  
 Who lured the worst to worsen with a rant  
 Of charismatic evil steeped in cant.  
 The banners of perdition were unfurled,  
 And fiery rivers, raging for his sake,  
 Left ruination in their wake  
 Upon a passive world.

And though the desolation he begot  
 By vogue historians is now forgot,  
 And those of stunted probity deny  
 How many millions were condemned to die,  
 His psychopathic tirades spewing hate  
 Incited goose-step hordes to perpetrate,  
 Beyond atrocity, the gravest crime

Against humanity through all of time.  
 A crime whose echoes still persist  
 In scholarship the world will never see,  
 In triumphs of the mind our age has missed,  
 The science, music, art, philosophy  
 Of generations that did not exist:  
 A vital heritage lost by default,  
 Which never will enlighten or exalt.

-Jack Lovejoy

\*

Ruth is done, for the moment.  
 She is lying down, Ruth is, and settling in.  
 Ruth is getting up, standing up  
 Slowly Ruth is walking  
 Then hovering,  
 Flying, Ruth is, and ascending to  
 The gold of the land  
 Where there is crystal, rain,  
 Onyx stone,  
 A baby cloud of Tevet sees  
 How Ruth is finished,  
 Extinguished, and again  
 Kindled in another place

-Iris Elijah Cohen  
 Translated by E. Kam-Ron

## IF YOU MISS ME

If you miss me, see me standing on the hill  
 looking toward the river  
 I won't tell you what I'm watching  
 I know now  
 no woman will  
 If you remember, gather the apples for the deer  
 you know where and when  
 I have a heaven I see in my mind clear  
 it is climbing the hill in the fall  
 the path damp and gold  
 the sky I'll take though of any color  
 I was never one to look up  
 and I've mismatched much  
 so if you miss me search not in the heavenly sky  
 look for me instead amongst the trees  
 near the river  
 on the hill.

--Susan Oleferuk

## OLD MAN ON HIS LAST LEGS

Is there no one ready to stay behind,  
to keep pace with me,  
with my hesitating legs;  
no one ready to pay attention,  
to listen to my halting speech;  
no one ready to think with me,  
to lend a hand to grasp and grapple  
the balking thoughts.  
Truly, there is no with-you,  
no for-you.  
Each and everyone alone in his cell.

–Haim Schneider

## COMPOSITION 7

This is the room where Stephano died.  
This is the room. This. This.

The words of a dead man. His words.  
Words that whispered like spring  
by the river below. Words that walked  
in rain and storm. And here.

This is the bed that became an altar.  
The candles bloomed from his mouth  
as he sang away the shadows,  
the past, even death.

This is the desk where Stephano wrote  
his life story as though no ending would  
ever catch up.  
As though the ink began in a secret river  
redolent of all things living.

This is the room where we friends gathered  
to measure the real against our words,  
where we made poems out of air  
and blood and counted the wins,  
the losses.

This is the small space in the galactic dust  
where Stephano told his tales of pain  
and joy, how no single room can  
contain spirit's will.

This is the room where Mother Judith  
laid down and delivered her son  
to the light, the distance.  
This is the bed where he began.  
This. And this.

–Doug Bolling

## INVITATION TO MY BROTHER

\*

I invite you to come back now as you were in your youth.  
Confident, eager, quoting from Chaucer.

Let it be as though a man could go backwards through death,  
erasing the years that did not much count.  
Or that added up perhaps to no more than a single brilliant  
afternoon with Jeannie and the boys.

Sit with me. Let it be as it was in those days  
when wine brought our tongues the first foretaste  
of oblivion. And what should we speak of but verse?  
For who would speak of such things now but among friends?

\*

I see you again turn toward the cold and battering sea,  
as if it holds an answer to a question.  
Your body trembles a little.  
What year was that?

\*

Correct me if I remember it badly,  
but was there not a dream, sweet but also terrible,  
in which Eurydice, strangely, preceded you?  
And you followed, knowing exactly what to expect,  
and of course she did turn.

Come back now and help me with my own last days.  
Whisper to me some beautiful secret that you remember from  
life.

–Constance Rowell Mastores

from *The Hannah Senesh Set*

## ENDURANCE IN KINGDOM

With all his soul Akiva fulfilled the verse  
and laughed. But even Akiva was not Akiva,  
not as we know him. Laughter was a sign  
of a story overlaying its story,  
a teacher sitting in the back of his own classroom,  
hand in front of his face, laughing at himself.

The self felt needs the self feeling,  
the face needs the hand, the muscle skin –  
and which was Akiva? The sides of a leaf, water  
water falls on--no gap but the eye's  
quirk of continuity, its frame  
blinking seconds across the smooth stretch.

The particles strike their target while the wave  
keeps on going. Breaks and keeps going.

–Courtney Druz

## ON HOLDING MY MOTHER'S HAND AS SHE LAY DYING

O frail O crumbling vessel that once bore me to this port,  
 For now we part. Your part is played, played out,  
 Your poorer-now old produce,  
 Once your pride,  
 Long since poured out.

Your shards--oh how they shimmered!--  
 Disassemble, gather dust,  
 Diminish and recede and disappear,  
 As leeward still I sail these many years.

The night descends. I hear the salty water lap the shore,  
 And daily dawn discloses distance no man can transcend.  
 I bend, I bow to fate--  
 But hark!  
 But hear!  
 For even now the workmen, out of sight,  
 Begin to hew and carve the craft to carry me returned.  
 The remnants and the shards,  
 Restored and reunited,  
 Fit for portage then once more.

--Eric Chevlen

from *The Hannah Senesh Set*  
 FOUNDATION CENTO

*Son of man, dig now in the wall:  
 Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
 And from the nave build haunted heaven. Thus,  
 Who has no house now, will never build one.*

*Dig the grave and let me lie. Glad  
 As only they can praise, who build their days  
 As it has usual done — If Birds should build  
 birds build – but not I build; no, but strain,*

*And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field  
 to build A city and tower, whose top may reach  
 loud and long, I would build that dome in air,  
 of my youth, to build Some tower of song*

*O you dig and I dig, and I dig through to you,  
 And a small cabin build there, of clay  
 Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane  
 Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built*

--Courtney Druz

Note: A cento is a poem made of lines from other poems. Represented in this cento are Ezekiel, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Wallace Stevens, Rainer Maria Rilke, Robert Louis Stevenson, Hart Crane, Emily Dickinson, Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Shakespeare, John Milton, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Paul Celan, William Butler Yeats, John Keats, and Jeremiah

## IV. Meant to Heal

## DINNER DURING BLOOD SCRUB

"Can you feel it?"  
 Nothing at all

but for a catheter  
 in the jugular  
 aimed at the tip  
 of vina cava  
 (puts me in mind  
 of casa blanca)  
 in the right  
 atrium--

no floral respite  
 this. Instead,

all blood redirected,  
 guided in "pheresis,"  
 Greek for taking away,  
 a machine to wash  
 and separate.

Not darks from light,  
 but white cells  
 burdened with blasts,  
 a ballast operation,  
 bailing out viscous  
 muck slowly, unstick  
 refuse from lungs,  
 heart, brain...

while  
 the vegetable chili  
 stays warm on ICU tray.

To eat (and live) through  
 the unthinkable--

we do it  
 every day.

--Vera Schwarz

from Kick "It" Cancer Ongoing Poetry Series  
Genesis: March 2014  
by Sue Tourkin Komet

IT'S NOT LIGHTNING 12 March 2014 PM hours post-  
surprise diagnosis

It's not lightning,  
It's not thunder,  
It's not a tsunami.

Not fire,  
Nor ice,  
Nor fireworks.

It's only my cancer dancing  
Alive,  
Kicking up a storm

Dancing wildly  
Inside  
My

Beautiful  
Body.

\*

I HAVE "IT" March 13 2014 PM

I have "it"  
And  
"It" has me.

"It" sneaked in my back door,  
Ever so quietly.

But I'll fight "it"  
To my death  
And I'll live "it"  
In my life.

I'll kick "it" as  
It kicks me  
I'll punch "it" as  
It punches me.

I'll hate "it" as  
It hates me.

And I'll love "it" as  
It  
Loves (or: "it" leaves)  
Me.

THIS BURNING BUSH IS 30 April 2014 5:00  
am to 6:00 am

This Burning Bush is  
This dawn-light in me  
This day-light in me  
The dusk-light in me  
This moon-light in me.

This Burning Bush is  
This cancer in me  
The chemo-t in me  
The pain, the strain,  
This drain on me.

This Burning Bush is  
The nausea  
The numbness  
The "nothingness"  
In me.

This Burning Bush is  
This fire in me,  
The will-power in me,

This spit-fire in me,  
The desire in me,  
This life in me.

This Burning Bush is  
The quiet agony  
The sublime secrecy  
The overt ambivalencies  
And others' widespread decencies.

The Burning Bush is  
Moshe Rabbeinu's  
And  
Am Yisrael's  
Eternities.

The Burning Bush is  
My mortality  
And  
My  
Immortality.

The Burning Bush is  
All of you  
And all of me  
For all's  
Eternal eternity.

This Burning Bush  
Is this poem *in* me  
This poem *out* of me  
For a brief moment in eternity.

And The Bush  
Will  
Not  
Be consumed.

\*

ONE-BY-ONE, MY BEST 7 May 2014 early morning

One-by-one, my best  
Girl-friends,  
Lady-friends,  
Insist

My hair-cut's  
Cute.  
And I  
Resist.

I insist

No, No, No  
It's not so  
Cute.

It's the  
Cancer-cut  
It's the  
Chemo - hair-cut.

They all mean well  
They all mean good  
But for me if I could  
I would not have had it cut.

I can't get them all  
To shut up  
They all think  
It's so cute, my cut.

For me, it's basically,  
The darling sweetsy cutesy lovable beautiful and cute  
cancer-cut.

\*

THE SIDE-EFFECTS or THE LAST SUPPER? 7 May 2014  
late morning

My singular Jerusalemite daughter  
Successfully and obsessively  
Planned months in advance  
For her thirty-fifth  
Birthday ... dinner party.

The Master of The Universe  
Successfully and obsessively

Planned priorly  
And simultaneously

For the onset  
And the drama  
Of my cancer  
Debut.

We had  
The successful  
And stressful  
Dinner party

At a glorious setting.  
All Sabra First-Cousins  
Of my daughter's generation  
Traveled up to Jerusalem

From *Beersheva* and *Tel Aviv*  
*Modi'in* and *Ma'aleh Adumim*  
*Chashmona'im*  
And points beyond ... in-between.

While I at The Table  
Long and horizontal  
Pseudo-secretly battled  
The many side-effects of my "chemo,"

Noting retrospectively  
That each of my three nephews  
All born in The Land of Israel  
Bear strong resemblance

To "what's-his-name"  
... Not to name him ...

Of the infamous fable  
Seated at that historic table

Surrounded by his disciples

At the  
Last Supper.

Let's have an "Encore!"  
...Not of the cancer...  
But of The Dinner,  
"Next Year in Jerusalem!" --  
Not the  
Last Supper.  
Not The Last Supper.

--Sue Tourkin-Komet

## DREAD OFFERING

We sat watching the entry,  
that led to the sanctum,  
the chamber of mystery,  
where knives are wielded.

You lay on the altar,  
fearsome sacrifice, beloved.  
priests cut with sharp knives,  
their acolytes assisting.

Outside we awaited  
saving word, or dread.

The high priest in green,  
brought word of solace,  
her heart beats well now  
We've tipped the balance.

Not death but life  
is now in the omens.

--Michael E. Stone  
February 14, 2005

## FIRST HEALER

The scrapes and bruises that beset a child  
Are soothed away with smiles and honey tea;  
The little hurts are smoothly reconciled,  
And then another playground sets us free,  
And soon the passage of our youth forgets  
Its broken bicycles and injured pets.

Not that the loss of friendship or a slight  
May cut as deep as any pain we know,  
And leave our hearts abandoned through a night  
Of disenchantment in worlds below  
Through earthly joy and happiness and peace  
Seem more a vision as our lives increase.

Dreams and ambitions on which rest our lives  
Are less consoling with elapsing years,  
And little to renew them still survives  
Among our days to mollify their tears  
Though sufferings are more than we have known,  
We find in anguish we are not alone.

Some grievous tracts of body now rebel,  
We lose our courage, our philosophy  
Which opens wide the very gates of Hell  
To voids as blank as hopelessness can be;  
And yet I learn true healing is divine,  
When I can say, O Lord, that I am thine.

--Jack Lovejoy

## CROSSROADS OF THE SOUL

This is Neshama business:  
an envelope of water, a mother's womb  
lined with grandmothers' tears.

One grandmother brimmed with terror  
as iron doors slammed in the gas chambers,  
her last *Shema* prayer hurled forward in time.

The other weeps more reticently after the war,  
secreting her husband's art, candelabra  
sketches shadow a grandchild  
he never knew.

Into this capacious capsule of tears  
a rock is cast, like Truth in midrash  
flung into muddy depths, so a man  
brimming with lies may break  
into this world in need of  
redemption.

From salted water and coarse loam,  
a shard of soul gains shape:  
The Master Cutter calibrates  
each blow carefully,  
each high pitched rotation  
of the bruited reveals a facet,  
one more angle luminosity  
to break the carapace,  
body's grasping.

The first blow is miniscule,  
a hammer falls as they bury  
my grandmother and I laugh  
and laugh until a kind woman  
leans into my shame-filled face:  
"It's all right, you loved her well.  
There will be time later to learn  
The darker songs of mourning."

A couple of decades later,  
Nehemiah the sculptor opens the door  
of a Colorado barn: half-crafted trunks  
of mahogany and teak helped me to mourn  
art sketches mildewing  
in the attic back home.

Another two decades  
until I face the Rebbe--  
I stand soul-naked  
before the bluest eyes.

The corridor of destiny grows  
less obscure, hammers  
keep striking, each diamond facet  
glistens but does not blind.  
How to bend into each blow's blessing?

In darkness one night, I glimpse  
a crossroad of Neshamot--  
all our gems floating upstream  
to the Golden Menorah  
facing the Temple Mount.

Only diamonds can cut  
diamonds, only earth-worn  
souls may ignite the seven flames,  
as light spills upward  
from down-turned flower cups,  
each held by arms toughened  
by this longest exile.

Whoever said that fire and water  
quench each other had not tasted  
the hope that tears seed.

--Vera Schwarcz

#### CLOSURE

Mourning still--  
Why, I ask, the passage of years,  
the contentment of the now,  
the joys and blessings of a good life,  
should have brought closure.

Insensible and defiant as a child's  
tantrum, the pain still festers.  
In the sound of a woman's voice,  
which I don't recognize as my own,  
a memory how she dared not weep,  
for if she did, there'd be no way to stop.

Inhabiting the gentle terrain of womanhood  
stands a wild passionate core, hard-hitting, harsh,  
protesting, death-questioning, resisting to be consoled.

Imagining the fragile bones of a child in my arms,  
I nurture the wound that does not heal, noting how  
the blue angel of consolation denies opening her gates,

my refusal to heal considered ungodly.

--Gretti Izak

#### THE FAST OF THE SEVENTEENTH OF TAMUZ

The breaking of the Tablets took place on the  
seventeenth of Tamuz, the date when the walls of  
Jerusalem were breached by the Romans. All these  
breaks have to be healed.

Sfat Emet 4:157f

Today the walls are broken  
walls of Jerusalem  
shattered pieces of gray white rock  
soaring toward the Negev desert  
toward the green hills of Galilee

Today the Tablets are broken  
Commandments in pieces  
*Thou shalt not* on the tower of Babylon  
*Murder* beneath the cedars of Lebanon

Today G-d's heart is broken  
Tears from the upper heavens  
falling into the abyss at the bottom of the sea

Who will repair the breaches in the walls  
sift through white sand  
dig through black earth  
travel up and down this so worn land  
gather Holy debris

Who will find pieces of the Law  
Wander the whole earth  
searching for slivers of light  
gather them ever so gently  
prepare for their return  
to the Holy Ark

Who will comfort the heart of G-d  
cherish the tears  
hidden deep in the ocean  
rising to the seventh heaven

When will the healing  
finally come  
to this city  
broken  
in this world  
and the Other

--Gila Landman

## ALONG WITH THE GATHERED

*I will gather still more to those already gathered.*  
Isaiah 56:8

A dream  
I stand at  
the edge of a mountain  
let go and  
drop, breaking  
into smaller and smaller  
pieces even before  
I reach the ground  
But there is no ground  
only the falling  
and the crumbling

The Tablets too  
were let go  
from the side  
of the mountain  
shattered into  
tiny fragments  
but a gatherer  
appeared  
picked up each  
precious fragment  
placed it in a velvet-lined urn  
sealed the urn  
and brought it  
to the Holy Ark

I need  
such a gatherer  
to wait  
with open arms  
reach out for my  
fragments  
in love  
place each one  
gently  
in a vessel  
a holy place  
so the falling  
may be over  
and I can come  
home

-- Gila Landman

## ORDINARY THINGS

I like to do ordinary things  
like baking a lemon cake  
cooking corn on the cob  
hosing down the dusty patio on a hot summer day

I like to do ordinary things  
like folding laundry  
sweeping the floor with a horse-tail broom  
watching an orange sun rise over the Kinneret

I like to do ordinary things  
like having a hot cup of Bambu in the morning  
eating a bowl of cornflakes in my garden  
while watching the fishing boats peacefully glide over  
the lake

I like to do ordinary things  
like polishing my nails  
smoothing lotion on my skin

I like to do ordinary things  
especially after the death of a child

--Esther Fein

\*

## PROOF COIN

I began, not a problem, but a solution  
percolating from the molten mantle  
into fracture, crack and fault.

I cooled and precipitated into veins  
perfusing the Mother Lode. Eroded  
from the high country and sluiced

from alluvial dross, I was purified  
by the refiner's fire and forged  
in a mirror-polished die. Obverse

and reverse and milled edge attest  
to my minted worth. Destined  
by my satin finish to remain unspent

and uncirculated, I'm encircled by  
a bezel and suspended over your heart.  
Once legal tender, I'm meant to heal.

--David Olsen

## GRACE ON THE METRO

*Paris*

It's not as noisy as the New York subway  
or London tube, but in her agitated state,  
the gliding train still seems cacophonous.

She'd managed a seat near the doors,  
but latecomers jostle for space and block  
the exit, foreclosing any thought of flight.

She smells a harried working crowd,  
feels the crush of purposeful urgency.  
Every sense seems under assault.

Her view is hindered by other passengers,  
but she sees a man who steadies himself  
with hand on rail against stops and starts.

He's looking at her, but not as a predator.  
Seeming to understand her distress, his gaze  
conveys protective watchfulness.

Liquid brown eyes gentle and reassure her.  
When she reaches her stop, she's almost calm.  
In full control she minds the gap.

--David Olsen

## THERE IS NO HEALING

People talk about healing after Charlie Hebdo.  
That's an insult to the dead.  
There will be no healing.

Murder is an open wound that repeats itself  
In a corner of space  
Like a permanent invisibility in a missed  
Opportunity.

How can you heal the dead or the living  
Who are attached to them?

That's a mere trick to satisfy the survivors and  
Put gauze on a wound  
With the bullet still in it

--David Lawrence

## AS WHITE AS SNOW

after an account there were no casualties  
reported in the Syrian Civil War in the wake of  
the recent snow storm – 2015

Little miracles happen sometimes, flash  
before me. Snow falls, rain pours, and it's cold.  
Heaven's gone insane, all of the cache,  
little miracles happen sometimes. Flash  
winds call as combatants hold back, crash,  
good soldiers, stand, so stark and so bold.  
Little miracles happen sometimes, flash  
before me. Snow falls, rain pours, and it's cold

outside. Where almost nobody goes, it's safe.  
Hot soup, warm tea, a pillow to rest, serene  
dreams of days, of a tranquil, quiet life  
outside. Where almost nobody goes, it's safe  
to watch the small white flakes as they weave  
a pattern. When the storm ends, it stays clean  
outside. Where almost nobody goes, it's safe.  
Hot soup, warm tea, a pillow to rest, serene,

I can walk about, hold out my hand,  
reacquaint myself with someone I know  
from across the fence. Explore, expand,  
I can walk about, hold out my hand,  
his arms, the words he speaks, how grand  
the clouds, our breathe creates condense they show .  
reacquaint myself with someone I know

see the sheen of the white, reflect the day.  
Why must we defile this perfection, look  
at the berries that peek at us, they say,  
"See the sheen of the white, reflect the day..  
that's red enough for me, and sweet. Let's play  
as if what divides us was a closed book.  
See the sheen of the white reflect the day--  
Why must we defile this perfection, look.

--Zev Davis

... even a simple match can make me warm.  
... even a single hand can quiet a storm.  
Be sure: a tender song can change a world,  
And light, you know, was made by a word.

--Miriam Kitrossky

### V. Nowhere Else to Build

#### IN A MIND'S EYE

Safe behind the window glass of a country inn,  
I study the bees gathered at red spikes blazing  
across the lawn. Spinning clouds carelessly shroud  
the neighboring castle, ghostlike. It is early morning  
in Konigstein and a pale young man, too young to remember,  
confidently offers me foaming *kaffe mit milch*  
on a silver tray. The English guest politely  
prefers a tisane, cheerfully wishing me a good day.  
I picture my family snug upstairs, asleep  
under thick white comforters, shuttered against the sun.  
It is the unctuous manager, suddenly at my table,  
who sounds the alarm in my head. I laugh out loud  
to scare away danger upsetting the early morning's  
fragile balance. Insects feel spied upon, give up  
their red flowers. Clouds drift away. The castle,  
now perfectly revealed, is even more mysterious--  
like the early hours in a Saxon village, unpredictable,  
unknown. My coffee is cold and tasteless. I race upstairs  
to awaken the others, to hurry them away. I fear  
exposure. There is no time to waste. We must move quickly.

--Virginia Wyler

#### TORQUEMADA: IN SITU

She breathes in deeply sucking her bruises into her body  
each breath curls in the full of the sun not quite whole  
not frail a lost puzzle piece mis-placed shrugged off sets gaps  
in her puzzled face why eyes trick eyes in noon glare  
smudge the landscape speck the lid's corner I rub  
at the fringes torn satin dress in twirl great-grandmother's  
relics  
uncovered laced black *mantilla* pulled wide round the tiny  
girl's neck  
*la chica* memoirs unlocked rooted distress so distant  
so hoary whispers and echoes *auto-da-fe* ungodly  
disciples savage Inquisitors The Grand Inquisition scribed  
told and mourned bodily jointly ours the twelve tribes  
Conversos Marranos hands tied lips gagged foreplay  
inflamed  
Isabella The Final Expulsion The Final Solution badges  
of yellow omens of terror fire *Der Fuhrer* massacres  
mass acres ever forever undying massacres holy  
revulsions scapheaps my heirlooms my cup runneth over  
I carry my story I carry my shadow barely aware  
storm amid sun my universe hovers lodestars to darkness  
squalls at the door-jamb brutal *tormenta* I inhale deeply  
I must keep small.

--Virginia Wyler

#### BORN TO THE MELTING POT

When a fire heats a vessel,  
a melting down process ensues,  
removing most distinguishing features,  
creating a uniform substance of sorts.  
The vessel's a melting pot  
like the Hillside Homes of my childhood--  
the first US housing project funded  
by federal monies  
to melt down Americans.

When a fire blocks all exits,  
allowing no escape,  
whatever is true metal  
is branded bright  
in sonnets, odes and free verse  
music, rhyme and metaphors  
to vanquish the sight, smell, the feel  
of terror's katyushas and slit throats.

When a fire ignited from within  
burns its way out,  
desperate to release a thrust of energy,  
scathing in its heat,  
the fire soars  
from the Sabbath candles  
to a lighter place with panoramic vision.

--Leah LJ Gottesman

#### STORY-TELLER

No tree, no leafy bush,  
but endless sand and rock stretch  
towards infinity.  
No scorpion, snake or desert fox  
scurries through the sand or over the rock.

Sometimes in the evening we come  
with tambourine or drum  
and gather near the center of the camp  
and sing songs of yearning,  
songs celebrating our new freedom.

And in the center of our circle,  
with a colorful wrap around her shoulders,  
and her deep eyes dancing from face to face,  
Miriam tells stories of our fathers  
and of the promise that awaits.

Transfixed, we sit on a woven mat  
spread across the sands, our eyes  
on the prophetess, our ears  
clinging to the intonation of her voice  
and to the gems that leave her lips.

--Ruth Fogelman

## CIRCLE OF RETURN: ON THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

**I. Ruth Reminisces**

What made me marry someone from a strange land?  
I struggled when my family cut me off –  
*he's not one of us,*  
and when my friends vanished, one by one.

I never felt happy in the palace,  
did not relate to gods of wood or stone.  
*There must be more to life,* I thought,  
for no idol created the stars, the moon, the sun.

Could be that's why I married Chilion;  
somehow he held a key to higher goals.  
Or did I marry him to get close to his mother--  
a woman of silent strength?

While Chilion taught me the laws of Israel  
I struggled with years of childlessness,  
*maybe next month,* he always encouraged me,  
but he left me – a widow without child.

Widowhood in Moab means you are no longer a  
person.  
Naomi alone supported me, sharing my loss,  
and continued teaching me the ways of Israel,  
reminiscing on life in Bethlehem.

Was it hard for me to pack up, pick up and leave  
my country, my birthplace, my fathers' home?  
Emotionally, I had long ago left,  
little by little, until no roots remained.

A voice within, like the sound of a candle's flame,  
whispered, *Arise, go with Naomi.*

**II. Naomi Remembers**

Heaven knows I didn't want to leave Bethlehem,  
despite the harsh famine –  
to go to a strange land  
with monstrous gods  
and profane tongue,  
stealing away at midnight  
so neighbors would not see or hear.

Oh, the journey through the night,  
the steady plod of donkey hoofs,  
rumble of wagon wheels on rubble paths  
and howl of jackals in the hills.

My Elimelech – when did he ever listen to me?  
Oh, the struggle of gagging my tongue  
and follow my man.

And the boys? They dared not argue,  
especially when he spoke  
of taking us to a place with food.  
His arguments made sense:  
*Why should we stay,  
pay such prices for wheat  
when there it's cheap?  
Should your mother go out,  
searching for wild mallow  
to cook?*

The boys shook their heads,  
looked down at their feet  
and at the barren earth  
whose wide cracks, like open lips,  
screamed for rain,  
and the boys did not insist  
on staying in Bethlehem  
with their friends.

Oh, the struggle of living among strangers--  
their eyes shot disdain  
when we passed them on the way;  
their lips curled in a sneer  
as they mocked  
the G-d of Israel, the Law of Israel.

And now,  
alone  
I return  
with Ruth.

--Ruth Fogelman

## THE UNDERSTUDY

A courtyard without doors is where you never go  
unless you lose your way or long to hide  
alongside brick-stacked buildings that cast  
their dusky shadows before the light recedes.  
A Moabite Princess emerged there in the Bronx--  
a stage for me alone, a teen declaring vows,  
pronouncing Naomi's will her will, Naomi's home her  
own,  
until Ruth lured me to the lights.

I've moved since then; I've entered center stage  
in fields where youthful David grazed his herds,  
in fields of a shepherd's flute, the glare, the outreached  
vines,  
the sound of my name in Hebrew verse through wine-  
soaked heat.

But given the script of a redirected heart,  
No Ruth can star without the "Goel's" part.

--Leah LJ Gottesman

## WHISPER

Whisper under the olive trees  
And the birds will sing

Distant tambourine  
Carry it everywhere  
They will come

From behind spidery silken threads  
And thin green blades

And they will delicately peck at the words  
And form their own  
In a cacophony of Hodu.

--Mindy Aber Barad

## OVER THE OCEAN

What I seek  
Is not over the ocean  
But under an olive tree

My beloved is the expectant sky  
Awaiting its first clouds  
The bubbly dark ones  
Whose job it is just to quench

The answer is just beyond my lips  
A taste away from pure immersion  
I anticipate the encompassing  
The flow around me and within

Not over the ocean  
But from the replenished spring  
That nourishes the olive tree.

--Mindy Aber Barad

## DESERT MOUNTAINS

Mountains, dark, stark  
Viewed from above  
Rocky facets, sharply cutting the air  
Resting on a relentless, wrinkled expanse,  
A vast tan desert landscape  
Etched by dried streams.  
Powerful sculptures by the world's master.

--Don Kristt

## LANGUAGE OF LONGING

The great and sequestered light  
moves through us in tremors of longing,

yearning, ardor and great stirrings  
of languish and we are sick of love.

Raindrops beyond number, each contain a world  
ten thousand windows of spectrumed light.

to awaken the flowering fruit of the brave Caper  
likened to Israel, it thrives undaunted among sharp rocks,

stamens, petals and fruit berries, strong  
scented spider flowers  
to intoxicate pollen bearing lives.

When it is time  
how shall I part from this parched and beloved land  
so sorrowed of longing  
from this scented earth that languishes with desire.

After winter rains earth stirrings can be heard.  
A kiss of dew brings forth new song.

--Shira Twersky-Cassel

## FOR THE SAKE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

A cry is heard in the heights  
Wailing, bitter, bitter weeping  
Rachel weeping for her children...  
She refuses to be comforted  
For her children who are gone.  
*Jeremiah 31.15*

Rachel, continue to weep  
In the wide open spaces  
In the clefts of the rock  
On the heights of lofty mountains  
In deep cavities of the earth

Weep for the dead who could have lived  
Weep for the living who could have died  
For all of us who live holding our satchel of death  
Terrified to let it down  
To drop the burden and release the mangled bodies  
Unclothed, cold, exposed to wind and rain

Weep for the children  
Alone and hungry  
Crouching, whimpering, in desolate fields  
Weep for the mothers, hoarding bread  
For the children they see only in dreams  
Weep for the kingdom of dreams  
Ripped open, ravaged, laid bare

Weep, mother Rachel, weep bitterly  
 And comfort us  
 By refusing to be comforted  
 --Gila Landman

Naftali Fraenkel (16, from [Nof Ayalon](#)), Gilad Shaer (16, from [Talmon](#)), and Eyal Yifrah (19, from [Elad](#))

### A CRY

Words are gifts from G-d but sometimes  
 there are no words.  
 They are consumed in the cauldron of fire  
 which burns in the heart.  
 Rage, revenge, the desire to destroy -  
 these too have their place.  
 Amalek must be erased.

But surrounding the burning fire in my heart,  
 lies a suffocating blanket  
 of sadness and sorrow  
 so heavy  
 I cannot breathe.

Help us Hashem.  
 Give us the wisdom to be wise,  
 to do what should be done.

Not forever shall we be sheep.  
 Judah is a roaring lion, destined  
 to sanctify Your name.

Empower us  
 to sanctify, protect and avenge  
 Your People and Your Name.  
 Embrace and comfort us  
 In our time of sorrow.

-Yaffa Ganz

### WE PROMISED

for Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaer, and  
 Eyal Yifrah hy" d

So, when we prayed, you were already sleeping.  
 We searched for you -- you were already home.  
 A joyful innocent smile, magnified  
 Above the stage, will remain with us, and also  
 The song we sang and will keep on singing.  
 We'll keep awake. We'll not let the enemy divide us.  
 And with this we'll keep on raising you, our sons.

--E. Kam-Ron

[UNTITLED]

Dove of Israel,  
 a torn-off leaf in her mouth,  
 wishing that "the sword will not pass through"  
 As He is compassionate so you.  
 The disciples of the priests desire peace.

Dove of Israel, bathed in blood.  
 Pure lamb surrounded by wolves,  
 We were born with no choice of birthing-stool.  
 Sweet nectar was poured out like water,  
 The level of blood rose up to heaven.

We returned to Zion beaten and bruised  
 We were almost cut off from our root in G-d  
 The leprosy has spread in the land without restraint:  
 Cruel robbers seek blood,  
 lie in wait for us within and without.

Our land is desolate for them  
 They will take no compensation for it  
 We are a thorn in their side,  
 In their hearts are thoughts of violence and burning  
 Our blood will water the capital.

We wrote "peace" on a white flat.  
 We gave them our sanctuary,  
 sovereignty and territory--  
 we became like Achan.  
 Dens of vipers they secretly dug.  
 They repaid us with a sharpened cleaver.

If they were wise they would understand this:  
 The tears of mothers bereaved of sons  
 The tears of joy of the mothers of suicide bombers.  
 Peace brings war.  
 But war brings peace.

Let us begin by separating and end by joining.  
 Let us stiffen our neck to a mighty people.  
 Let us remove from our necks the yoke of the hairy one.  
 He will return vengeance to His enemies  
 and the land will atone for His people.

The One who dwells in the burning bush will make your  
 light shine.  
 Mashiach ben David will redeem Zion.  
 G-d will dwell in the tents of Shem.  
 We shall put on the diadem, the candelabrum and the  
 olive tree.  
 I, G-d, in its time will hasten it.

--Elyakim Hirschfeld  
 from the Hebrew: E. Kam-Ron)

## SO MUCH CLOSER

After the Har Nof Massacre 5875

"I will be sanctified by those that cling to me" (Lev. 9:3)

They were closer to You, they spoke, how can it be that innocent souls whose lips that called Your Name each day, and nothing else. They fell to a fire of them that spread, profane

thoughts wrapped with gilt edged exteriors, so pure

it seemed, guile deceived as sanctity, ah yes with the ring a sharp sword meant to bless the wounded with words that fall. It was a cure

perhaps, at the perimeter, at the cusp of where they sought to touch, a kiss, to somewhere else the space between the gaps

to Eternity, it was their time to clasp hands, to touch the Endless plane, all of this, all at once fill the gaps, take hold, and grasp.

--Zev Davis

## TO AMERICA, ON THE EVE OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

I loved you once, America; and still that love, perhaps, is not quite dead in me, could I but see you as you were until you fell to folly--brave and proud and free.

I dwell with friends to whom you are untrue and, proving so, your deepest vows unsay. Could you still hear a voice that summons you back to yourself, though from so far away?

--E. Kam-Ron

## SHIRA B'SHAMAYIM

July 24, 2014

I sing to Hashem because He is in command  
I sing as He hurls rockets into the sand  
Protecting His people in their holy land.  
I sing, He is exalted, Master of War.

I sing to Hashem as He deflects prime-evil.  
I sing as He battles for wrong's upheaval  
Pressuring terrorists to tremble and cease  
I sing; He is author and architect of peace.

We're united in song, Shira B'Shemayim  
No longer despair, Yes, emunah, we share.  
Accepting His edicts, the good He depicts.  
We sing to Hashem, our Father in Heaven. He writes the song.

Shira B'Shemayim , Shira B'Shemayim, Shira B'Shemayim

His right hand is raised to make Amalek fall  
His right hand is raised against violence and brawl  
Disabling the fighters against mankind.  
His right hand is keeping the predators behind.

His right hand is an iron dome  
Knocking down evil, protecting each home  
Mother Rachel cries for her children  
The nation as one prays for shalom

We're united in song, Shira B'Shemayim  
No longer despair, Yes, emunah, we share.  
Accepting His edicts, the good He depicts.  
We sing to Hashem, our Father in Heaven. He writes the song.  
Shira B'Shemayim , Shira B'Shemayim, Shira B'Shemayim

Sing because vengeance is His  
Sing because blessings are His  
Sing with gratitude for His miracles  
His salvation is elevation; our manifest destination.

We're united with Hashem and His highest order  
Up from slavery, sacrifice, abuse, misuse,  
Love, not hate; Trust not fear; Law not disorder  
Good not evil, Life not death. Peace not war. Heavenward.

We're united in song, Shira B'Shemayim  
No longer despair, Yes, emunah, we share.  
Accepting His edicts, the good He depicts.  
We sing to Hashem, our Father in Heaven. He writes the song.  
Shira B'Shemayim , Shira B'Shemayim, Shira B'Shemayim

--Evelyn Hayes

## SUNDOWN FRIDAY

The trees up on the ridge  
sharp silhouetted,  
sky sundown pink,  
translucent evening.

On the flat roofs below  
a horde of white cylinders  
and solar panels,  
and deformed derelict  
television antennas.

All at rest. No movement.

In the street's sudden quiet,  
the siren marks the start.  
The week's burdens shed  
in the tranquillity.  
Shabbat.

--Michael E. Stone  
31.1.14

## [5353] EREV YOM KIPPUR

Before sleep I forgave;  
and the heart is cleansed  
today, this very morning  
a new beginning

This errant Jew did decide to settle in  
Oh yes! the house in Israel is stronger  
My home like and unlike your own  
with love to mountain, valley; and city.

The day to day calls its humming song  
as I hear Israel's ancient music to settle in.  
I am instruments, a humble trumpet  
side by side to the big *Shofar* of the *geulah*.

Yes! the heart brims with happiness  
for God's bounty  
His signs everywhere in sweet fruit  
and the dark *galut* far across the ocean.

Surely I say that problems are challenges  
Ahoy! I keep the ship's course to its north.  
I have taken provisions for the way  
and a *siddur*, to expect the unexpected.

-----  
-Hayim Abramson

\* Inspired by Esther Cameron's poem  
"TO AMERICA, ON THE EVE OF THE DAY OF  
ATONEMENT." key words: Beginning, valley,  
signs, instruments, home, unexpected.

## HOW GOOD IT WOULD BE

How good it would be...as you had envisioned,  
for just we three - Viv, Iris and Les -  
to get together almost 50 years later...  
and wiser.

How good to host you within my garden  
where fruit can be plucked from trees  
whose branches reach closer to the ground  
than those in the Bronx that had cracked  
the cement beneath apartment windows...  
and glimpse a path once taken by our forefathers

or sit beneath the pergola on the Hill of Evil Counsel  
where the counterpointed landscape of golden Jerusalem  
would tease us to consider our piece in the puzzle  
while we sang to our hearts' delight.

How good it would be to share the twilight  
descending on the Western Wall and inhale  
the scent of prayers and tears with an aftertaste  
so sweet, so pure that toddlers scamper from their mothers  
to locate the source to which doves duck  
in overhead stone shrines while we would withdraw  
in reverse, facing what's past.

I wouldn't let you go until we all spend an overnight  
on nearby HaMalach Street, emerging into the softness  
of its pre-dawn breeze like winds of tranquility  
in the Garden of Eden that would sprinkle our reunion  
with moonshine and gently quell  
the dissidence of our heartbeats.

--Leah LJ Gottesman

from *the Hannah Senesh Set*  
FOUNDATION IN KINDNESS

Every stone we carried built a city  
and every stone we smashed planted a field.

Every word we spoke built a name,  
and every word we refused to speak established it

in kindness. There is nowhere else to build  
and no other words to say or to leave out

in this arrangement, built as a week of weeks,  
and lost as words to *count our days...How long?*

You thought I said. We are all prophets now  
though blind and dumb, nearing the end of the jetty

where the waves are crashing. Listen to their word  
*and the work of our hands, establish for us;*

*and the work of our hands, establish it.*

-Courtney Druz

## VI. *White Spaces*

### Above and Below the Surface of a Lake

G-d leads me into wider and wider fields,  
 some far from home, wider fields  
 of flowers, of pleasant grasses upon which  
 to lie, to watch the hovering clouds

with wandering eyes, with careless eyes at peace  
 with all I see, I watch the clouds,  
 I follow G-d, I follow all the clouds,  
 I lie down in the green meadow,

I cast a drowsy eye up to the heavens;  
 consider how much a heaven  
 is the earth.

---

*Is the earth  
 a heaven? How much? Consider  
 the heavens I cast a drowsy eye up to,*

*the green meadow I lie down in,  
 all the clouds. I follow G-d, I follow  
 the clouds, I watch with all I see  
 at peace; with careless eyes, with wandering eyes*

*to watch the clouds hovering, to lie  
 upon pleasant grasses, of which flowers of  
 wider fields, some far from home,  
 in wider and wider fields, lead me to G-d.*

-- Steven Shields

### CIRCUMNAVIGATION

Everything is a circle  
 No edge  
 from which to fall.

A mandala  
 A Sufi in the center  
 round of white skirt  
 Whirling  
 Spinning  
 Like the  
 Moon  
 and sun  
 Illuminated circumferences  
 Circadian rings of light  
 Cross over  
 And over  
 the great round earth.

Like the  
 deep round sound of the  
 drum, or the  
 singing bowl struck awake

its overtone  
 Resounding  
 Like the echo  
 In a canyon

Tell me,  
 Where do we  
 Start or stop?  
 Tell me,  
 where is the beginning  
 or end  
 of the ocean?

-- Anda Peterson

## EVENING SERVICE

1. *Creation*

Light contracts onto the horizon  
leveling shadows as it goes nowhere  
by day or dark. Song created  
its departure. Your own voice, unsure  
of those first few words.

2. *Revelation*

You extinguish seven bayberry candles  
arranged on your coffee table.  
Their wax vapor intercedes for the length  
of your sleep.

3. *Unification*

Are you sure the fire is nothing  
but the sky's atmosphere grazing  
in the unlight of our turning?

4. *Adoration*

The yellow jasmine twists around  
stones piled at the garden's edge.  
You leave its scent in the open window  
to untie the words of your dream.

5. *Redemption*

They all fell out of the shifting  
smoke-blue stratum. Who is here  
to rekindle them as an azalea  
reclaims its broken leaves each spring?

6. *Direction*

It must have been the hush of the crickets  
that woke you, unsounded stillness, or--  
the undertone of the waking wood dove.

7. *Expiration*

When you take down the citron from  
its persistent branches, do it in the thorned light  
of the crescent moon. There is no need to search  
for the mourner's song -- all the names are lifted  
into the green crown of evening.

--Ellen Powers

## SOMETHING INSIDE ME/ZEV DAVIS

"Light shines in the darkness for the Righteous, that are  
kind and merciful, and good" (Ps.122:14)

I step  
ever slowly.  
My eyes peer through the dense  
atmosphere, deep, yet I can sense  
something

Can't say  
what all it is.  
Nothing seems to stop me.  
I feel that somewhere there is a light  
in spite

of what  
is not there, yet,  
it is all so clear. Yes,  
I must be doing something right,  
Perhaps.

Never  
sure about that--  
I mind my p's and q's,  
pause and think before I act, and  
watch out

both ways.  
Listen, careful  
of what I hear, discern  
words that I hear and absorb them.  
Let them

show me,  
and I wonder . . .  
this is no miracle,  
always there guiding me, a voice  
within.

--Zev Davis

## THE INTRINSIC IDOL

To be alone with oneself,  
though there are people in the environ,  
and a lack of necessary challenge, curiosity, or allegiance,  
with which to work a matter out  
in the community,  
or in oneself  
and the allure,  
of that lickerish allure,  
in its purpose:  
specifically, the world's wound,  
being incarnate in the self, also,  
with a modern nominality's  
withdrawal of the sacred, thereof  
and for meddling with one's religiosity, within.

--Lee Goldstein

BEHIND THE *KOTEL*

"Hear the voice of my supplications when I call out to You, when I lift  
my hands towards Your sacred Sanctuary." (Psalm 28:2)

Obstructed from our sight, You wait behind  
This wall of stone, my God, and watch me write  
These sticks of words which hopefully ignite  
A constant flame whose warmth You feel behind  
    This massive wall I can't surmount. Behind  
    This wall--on our side of the wall--Your light  
    Is barely seen, so only from the height  
    Of prayer we glimpse the other side behind

The wall, where You are found. But will the wall  
Transform, allowing us to reach You there  
Behind this wall which has no door or gate?  
    Behind this wall, which may become a shawl,  
    A drape, a bridal veil, a thin veneer,  
    You wait for us; with outstretched arms You wait.

--Yakov Azriel

## PSALM 23 REVISITED

1.

"A Psalm of David. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." (Psalm 23:1)

The Lord, my Shepherd, brings me to a field  
Where flocks that He has gathered safely graze  
And eat the tender grass His servants raise,  
Protected from gray jackals by His shield.  
    The Lord, my Shepherd, plays His flute, revealed  
    To those who seek the tune of faith and praise,  
    For when His flute is played, the heart obeys  
    The soul's most sacred yearnings, long concealed.

I shall not want, for God has taken me  
To quiet, peaceful streams; and in this hour  
Of overwhelming grace, His flute is heard.  
    I shall not want, for now my soul can see  
    His staff, allowing me to sense the power  
    Of the word of God, the fullness of His word.

2.

"He brings me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters."  
(Psalm 23:2)

How often had I lost my way, and been  
A stray among red snakes that lisp'd my name  
And fed me dust. Until my Shepherd came  
And offered food without the thorns of sin.  
    My Shepherd is the Keeper of the inn  
    Who searches for His guests among the lame,  
    The faint, the stragglers who have walked with shame,  
    The mute, the maimed, the famished and the thin.

And every guest is treated like a king;  
 Within His inn, the water tastes like wine;  
 The fruit is picked from gardens in the east;  
     The bread is baked by Levites who can sing  
     The Shepherd's songs, and Sabbath candles shine  
 As lodgers eat the Shepherd's Sabbath feast.

3.

"He restores my soul; He guides me in straight paths, for the sake of His name."  
 (Psalm 23:3)

Before the dawn, before the morning light,  
 Before the Shepherd's stars are swept away  
 By sun-beamed brooms and all the glare of day,  
 A sudden, inner flash of inner sight  
     Invades an inner eye with inner white,  
     Inscribing cloud-like words unstreaked by gray  
     Upon an inner sky. I read, and say  
 The words in prayer: *How close is God tonight.*

How close is God, as close as breath, how near  
 Is God, like wind upon my hair, like air  
 Inside my lungs. The lantern of His name  
     Reveals my Shepherd's paths; I have no fear  
     Of hungry, stalking wolves, for He is here,  
 And more than here, the Light inside the flame.

4.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,  
 for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

In the valley of the shadow, shrouds are worn,  
 For lethal germs of leprosy infest  
 The air we breathe, the food that we digest,  
 The water that we drink. Yet though we mourn  
     Beside our graves, avowing man is born  
     To grieve, feel pain and die, our lives are blessed  
     By grace: the wife with whom we build a nest,  
     Our children's wings, the down that's never shorn.

How great this grace, for we, the deaf, can hear  
 The Shepherd's music play while lanterns burn  
 To give us light, though we are blind; the trance  
     Of faith will seize our limbs and persevere  
     Until our crippled, palsied legs shall learn  
 To dance the dance of God--to dance--to dance--

...continued

5.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed me with oil; my cup runneth over." (Psalm 23:5)

Master of heaven and earth, for Whom the stars  
Of countless galaxies are merely dust  
And ice, insignificant specks of rust,  
Why do you dress my wounds and heal my scars?  
Master of heaven and earth, for Whom the bars  
Of space and time are blown away in a gust  
Of wind, why do You steer my ship in trust,  
Repair its tattered sails and broken spars?

Master of heaven and earth, why this grace,  
This overflowing cup of wine? And how  
Can I repay You for Your Shepherd's rod,  
Your staff, the gentle shining of Your face,  
The table You prepare? To You I bow,  
To You I raise the cup and drink, my God.

6.

"Surely goodness and grace will follow me all the days of my life; and I shall sit in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23:6)

The Shepherd's key has opened wide the gate  
To gather in the wise with books they wrote;  
The righteous come, and prophets who devote  
Their lives to God, the noble and the great.  
But who am I to enter gates? I wait  
Outside the Temple court, and watch a goat  
That guards a mended, many-colored coat  
While Temple-priests and Levites celebrate.

If only I could be a voice that sings  
With those who dwell within the House of God,  
Or hold the coat to see if it might fit,  
Or stroke the Shepherd's goat that plays with kings;  
If only I--but look, the Shepherd's rod  
Has cleared a space inside, for me to sit.

--Yakov Azriel

In this world of Hidden Face  
What we do is hide our faith,  
Tuck it into folds of smile,  
Dust with accent of exile.

What our soul seeks is truth  
But, too sweet for wisdom tooth,  
Truth will have to stay aloof,  
And reject all hints of proof.

We will ramble in the wood,  
Try to catch a glimpse of Good  
While here, behind a tree,  
All its glory is mocking me.

--Miriam Kitrossky

## LIGHT 27: A PRAYER OF TWO POETS

**King David:**

El is my light and my salvation  
whom shall I fear?

El is the stronghold of my life  
of whom shall I be afraid?

**Dina:**

When did You give me my expansion  
When did You tell me "be" and I "was"

When did You offer me your first word "love"  
And I became love

When did You allow me to know You were You, and I was I

When did You tell me "you will know" and I "knew"

When did You place me "here" and "everywhere"

**King David**

One thing I ask from El,  
this only do I seek:

that I may dwell in the house of El

all the days of my life,

to gaze on His beauty

and to seek Him in his temple.

**Dina**

What can I give You back, if all that I am, You are  
How can I thank You if not with my tears of adoration

I am here far away, lost in cold sidereal travel

but You are still my central sun

my spirit burns

because it was never hidden, never disguised, never  
covered

**King David**

I will sing and make music for El

My heart says of You, "Seek his face!"

I will see His goodness

in the land of the living.

**Dina:**

I want to remain in memory as I really am

The essence, the center, the tenderness

The being who utters all the words without words

Who enriches all space with the music of silence

And adores Him who sits in his throne of All-Nothingness

--Dina Grutzendler

## WITHIN AND WITHOUT

I look about me, clarity and light,  
softness, kindness intertwines with sparks  
that fly into this atmosphere. No trite  
growth of verbiage. I know it works

in this luscious space, as I delight  
where the colors flow, push back the dark.  
I look about me, clarity and light  
softness, kindness intertwines with sparks

ignite sensations inside me, all the bright  
things, bring out the fire, raise a quark,  
and yet another, combines, a flame embarks  
on an adventure, body and soul in flight,

I look about me, clarity and light  
softness, kindness, intertwines with sparks.

--Zev Davis

## AN APOLOGY

to F.W.

How the wrongs done to you  
have filled your lungs with God.  
Your wrongs, my wrongs,  
fill our pages.

We cannot  
speak the name of *What Is*  
without letting our breaths  
go out—

Still,  
Light continues to attend  
the white spaces between  
our words.

--Ellen Powers

## ARCHITECTURAL PLAN: FIRST DRAFT

A well of cool water murmurs in the center of the garden  
 And seventy lecterns surround it,  
 All made of solid wood from the Tree of Life  
 And on each is an open book, made of recycled paper from the Tree of  
 Knowledge.

The whole world is pervaded by a fragrance of citron  
 And seventy girl students are hovering,  
 The head of each is ringed by a crown of cloud  
 Where she keeps her best ideas in crystalline clarity.

And seventy spouts reach from the well to their feet  
 As if strewing sundry scents  
                                   and minnows  
                                   and verses  
                                   and the gold which is good.

And above them four sukkot give shade  
 Like canopies of date-palm and cedar in the courts of our G-d.

And at evening seventy campfires are lit in a circle:  
 Black fire dances with white fire  
 And all the matriarchs dangle from the thatch like a feast-day mobile  
 To explain what was hidden and stopped to the winds of the time.

--Tamar Biton  
 from the Hebrew: E. Kam-Ron)

## ANTICIPATE

We sit on the edge  
 Is it time?  
 Could we rush to the edge  
 Push it?  
 When will it be, exactly?  
 Are we sitting the right way?  
 How do we choose our position  
 Our stance  
 Some stand while others run  
 Those ahead call out  
 Pull us with them  
 There are so many paths  
 And at the end  
 We will be asked  
 "Did you anticipate this?"  
 The correct answer is  
 "...and toiled towards it."

--Mindy Aber Barad

from JERUSALEM

Footsteps, birthpangs  
 yeast in the soul, whole  
 worlds in shreds

Gog v' Magog then  
 Eliyahu ha-Navi

ben Yosef ben Dovid

but first empty tefillin  
 one more chaos to come

\*

Herding her deadstock  
 little lost thoughts

shellshard, klippos, whole  
 world of shards

what light is lent me

\*

A man stands. A man cannot stand  
 in the landscape around him. Light  
 escapes him

loss is his name & the fullness thereof

ludicrous loss  
 undersong of our language

In the end build a name there, home  
 perfect in ruin

sounding the Name

\*

Conceal me in Your tent's  
 concealment

even Your hiddenness hidden

all but Your hiddenness  
 hidden from me

\*

Tikkun chatzos

midnight north-wind  
sings thru the harp

hung over the bed so they rise  
for the hour the heart poured out

till nothing left

thrown then & thrown  
again & again

endworld to endworld

then again thrown

\*

Small psalms fill the mouth  
& the one

breath stopped  
that would have pushed them out

\*

Vaporous certainties  
eyes in a box

icons, idols  
disciples of screens

the becoming-machine of Edom

no-road to no-throne

\*

Two doors to two chambers now  
spin them now install seven more

sevenfold interopening

inonunfolding

\*

Innerness Even-stone  
holds the whole singularity

earth blooms around it

first circle clarity second  
dimmer third nearly opaque

-sJakob Stein

CAESURA

How is it words lift and sail,  
drown among the silences.

I hear you Gertrude Stein,  
your vast shadow echoing  
along the rue and through  
the texts of soul.

How far to the next beginning.  
How far can moon move the sea

even as we stand here making  
a grammar from all the  
empty spaces.

--Doug Bolling

THE THOUGHT CLOUD STAIR

The moment when you pass through the next curtain belongs to  
you.

The second month effects a natural transfer, a de-ritualized  
evolution.

The hall you now find yourself in seems mirrored; its contents  
are multiplied throughout all the facets of perception.

You don't need to tell me anything; just hold me in your  
thoughts.

If you look down the unfolded lengths you will see what I see.

The walls are not mirrors, only burnished gold leaf softly  
glowing.

There are no mirrors or sequential dissections; there is really  
one of each, each time.

\*

It is a mild radiance, I hope it enters you.

One by one the gaps are entered, the wicks lit.  
What we each are are parts of the array.

\*

I won't silence you here; don't silence me.

Your hem-bell falls and rolls, calling like starlight.  
Do you know how many centuries will pass before I dig it up?

Do you even know how faintly far this incense permeates  
beyond the veil?

--Courtney Druz

## INDEX OF CONTRIBUTORS

Hayim Abramson 8, 27  
Yakov Azriel 6, 30  
Mindy Aber Barad 11, 24, 34  
Hamutal Bar-Yosef 36  
I. Batsheva 5, 6  
Gershon ben Avraham 4  
Tamar Biton 34  
Ruth Blumert 9, 12  
Doug Bolling 14, 35  
Nechama Sarah G. Nadborny-Burgeman 3  
Eric Chevlen 9, 15  
Iris Eliya Cohen 13  
Zev Davis 1, 21, 26, 29, 33  
Robert Glen Deamer 8  
Courtney Druz 7, 14, 15, 27, 35  
Esther Fein 20  
Ruth Fogelman 6, 22, 23  
Ray Gallucci 6  
Yaffa Ganz 25  
Lee Goldstein 29  
Leah LJ Gottesman 22, 23, 27  
Dina Grutzendler 33  
Evelyn Hayes 26  
Elyakim Hirschfeld 25

## WRITTEN ON THE PATH IN NACHALIM

Sometimes I get the urge to go into politics,  
the last thing I seem to be cut out for,  
but it comes to me, like the urge to crochet an afghan  
-- you know, a granny afghan, all those patches  
each with its own center, its own color scheme,  
all of them stitched together in such a way  
that there seems to be an overall design.  
That is, I think of putting people together  
the way you put words together in a poem.  
This is a wild idea I have harbored  
for upwards of forty years now, though I've yet  
to convince anyone it might actually be done.  
For one thing, who's going to draw the overall design?  
And then, for people to be fitted into it,  
they'd first have to consent to be picked up.  
I keep thinking someday it will just appear to everyone  
in the sky, on some clear morning after rain,  
and then gently settle down, until we're all in it  
(with the Temple in the middle, of course!).

—E. Kam-Ron

## SONG OF THE LADDER

When you climb up the ladder  
You see more

When you climb up the ladder  
You remember what matters  
To everyone.

When you climb up the ladder  
You see more and more and more.

And from there you spread a blanket  
Over everyone.

—Hamutal Bar-Yosef  
tr. E. Kam-Ron

Friedrich Hölderlin 8  
Judith Issroff 10  
Gretti Izak 4, 19  
E. Kam-Ron 25, 26, 36  
Miriam Kitrossky 21, 32  
Sue Tourkin Komet 16  
Don Kristt 24  
Gila Landman 19, 20, 24  
Pamela Laskin 11  
David Lawrence 21  
Jack Lovejoy 13, 18  
Constance Rowell Mastores 5, 11, 14  
JB Mulligan 3, 9  
Cynthia Weber Nankee 4  
Kjell Nykvist 7  
Susan Oleferuk 3, 4, 8, 10, 13  
David Olsen 20, 21  
Anda Petersen 28  
Ellen Powers 5, 29, 33  
Haim Schneider 14  
Vera Schwarcz 15, 18  
Steven Shields 28  
Jakob Stein 34  
Lois Greene Stone 10  
Michael E. Stone 10, 18, 27  
Shira Twersky-Cassel 3, 24  
Virginia Wyler 22  
Michal Zacut 7

