The Israeli After ’73: Three Poets Reflect on Life after the Yom Kippur War

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Acknowledgements & Dedication

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Prologue

"**Let the words"**
Let the words work on you/let them be free/they'll enter you they'll come inside/makers of forms upon forms/they'll start up in you that same experience/let the words act on you/do with you as they wish/making forms new in the word/they'll make of the thing yours/the same thing exactly/because they are the thing they'll make /really understand they'll liven up/for you that experience and its/interpretation that's like nature/because they are nature and not an invention/and not a discovery/but real nature/they'll make nature a thing in you/like giving a kind of life to the word/let the words do to you"
---Yona Wallach (Translation: Linda Zisquit)

My initial idea for this thesis just over a year ago was to write up a comparison between the different generations of Hebrew poetry, starting with the Medieval *piyuut* and continuing on through modern day poetry, focusing specifically on the major societal shift in Israeli culture immediately following the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Blessedly, my advisor Dr. Rechnitzer mentioned that this is too broad a topic to use for a thesis – that this in fact would make more of a compendium than a rabbinic thesis – and suggested that I narrow the scope specifically to the era after 1973, using the war as a fulcrum for the major changes about to occur within Israel. These changes were monumental in scope and are still being felt to this day.

The good news is that, even without writing the compendium spanning the generations of Hebrew poetry, the shifts were evident, as that is the sheer beauty of Hebrew language poetry. Because the language itself spans so many generations, constantly and consistently shifting, altering, changing, and adapting to meet the needs of the society utilizing it at the time – both inside and outside the land of Israel – Hebrew poetry reflects a language of real paradox; a language both modern and ancient simultaneously. Thus, the words that a Modern Hebrew poet utilizes to reflect and document the issues and concerns of their day will also reflect the issues and concerns of many generations past at the same

time. In this way, Hebrew poetry is very Talmudic in its style: representative of a hopefully unceasing conversation between generations.

This beautiful paradox is only enhanced by Hebrew's semi-exclusive spot as the language of the Torah, representing a level of divinity with which few other languages grapple; the struggle then is how to create and maintain a modern society with a holy language, when every single word has a context. A fantastic example is Tamir Lahav's frequent usage of the word שמים within his poetry: this word means 'sky,' but it is also the term for the 'heavens,' giving this term and the poems in which Lahav places it a much different weight. Lahav knows that words like שמים will never have just one singular, secular meaning; they will always reflect the tension between the sacred and the profane.

With this thesis, I seek to demonstrate how these three poets utilize this tension to reflect the immense changes precipitated by the Yom Kippur War. While they write on similar themes and issues, each poet gives them their own unique gloss and perspective, reflecting the incredible plasticity and fluidity of the Hebrew language, while cementing its status as the language of the divine. So truly let the words form you, just as these master poets have let themselves form and be formed by them.

Introduction – The מחדל ("Failure"): The Yom Kippur War and Its Societal Impact

In his recent book, *Like Dreamers: The Story of The Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation*, author Yossi Klein HaLevi describes vividly a trip that he and his father took to Israel in June of 1967, just a few weeks after the Six-Day War. Prior to the trip, he recalls the two of them sitting in their Brooklyn apartment anxiously listening to the news of what seemed to spell impending doom for the young Jewish nation. Even the United States, "Caught in an increasingly hopeless war in Vietnam, offered little more than sympathy," he writes. Then all of a sudden, as if miraculously, in six days, Israel pulls off an almost insurmountable victory against its enemies. In documenting the celebratory trip he and his father took, HaLevi depicts an Israel in euphoria, celebrating in the wake of almost assured devastation and destruction:

> The Israel I encountered that summer belonged to the paratroopers. The photograph of the three paratroopers at the wall was everywhere. The radio played a song sung by a paratrooper named Meir Ariel about "Jerusalem of iron, of lead, and of blackness," an attempt to remind a euphoric nation of the price of victory...The Protector of Israel had regained His will. It was possible for a Jew to pray again[1].

The photo to which HaLevi refers is of three paratroopers – Zion Karasenti, Yitzhak Yifat, and Haim Oshri – standing at the Kotel, having completed victoriously their battle to reunite Jerusalem and return it to the Jews for the first time since the exile 2000 years prior. Their faces show a combination of pride, exhaustion, relief, and awe. To this day, it has become one of the most iconic images of that war, the expression on the faces of the paratroopers exemplifying in many ways, the feeling of the rest of the Israeli public. Fewer than 20 years after gaining independence, and only a few more since the cataclysmic shock of the Holocaust, the young country faced yet another existential threat from the

[1] Yossi Klein HaLevi, *Like Dreamers: The Story of the Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation*, Harper (October 1, 2013)

north and the south, and yet it was triumphant. The years following, as Dr. Susan Hattis-Rolef wrote, were "the good years…economic prosperity, domestic tranquility, and the absence of *major* external threats to national security created an impression that things were under control[2]." This was the era of בטחון עצמי ("self-confidence"), a level of national self-confidence that was sparked by the success of the Six-Day War and the joy brought from having a once again reunited Jerusalem. The enemy had been suitably routed, and finally the Israelis could let their guard down, enjoy their country, and live as Jews in their land.

In just 6 short years, these 'good years' would draw to an almost immediate and jarringly abrupt halt as, once again, these enemies that Israel had considered defeated and gone rose up and surprised it on its holiest day of the year, altering the country in ways that still reverberate to this day. What happened during this 3-week war that shook the culture of a nation down to its core? What made this War of Atonement so deeply traumatic that it is alternately referred to as an 'earthquake' and a 'mishap?' Perhaps the answer lies in the ביטחון-עצמי (self-confidence) itself, as The Agranat Commission, established on November 21st, 1973 – less than a month after the official ceasefire between the Israelis and the Egyptians – in order to investigate the function of the IDF and the responsibility of the Knesset and the Israeli officials, pointed out deep holes in the preparedness of the IDF in the prospect of an attack from Egypt. Specifically, Israeli intelligence operated under certain harmful assumptions, including:

> The IDF's notion that Egypt will not attack without gaining aerial superiority that will paralyze the Israeli Air Force and enable bombings within Israel, as well as Syria's lack of motivation without an attack on the Egyptian front.[3]

As such, when intelligence came in from both the Egyptian and Syrian fronts that seemed to describe possible attack from both the northern and southern fronts, the data was largely ignored and

[2] Susan Hattis Rolef (1999) The domestic fallout of the Yom Kippur War, Israel Affairs, 6:1, 177-194,
[3] http://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/agranat_eng.htm

disregarded as unimportant or unworthy of mobilizing reserve units. Thus, as the Commission states, the IDF was caught completely off guard by the Egyptian breach of the Bar-Lev Line on October 6th and the Syrian attack on the Golan Heights on the same day. The 'self-confidence' felt by the Israeli society immediately before this attack was both unwarranted and incredibly dangerous. Avidan noted those who sought security from the government, the IDF, and the other forces within whom the Israeli society is supposed to put their trust will not find it], as the Agranat Commission unfortunately described. The initial publication of the Commission's report, April 1st, 1974, did not implicate Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan or then-Prime Minister Golda Meir in any of the failure of responsibility, placing the bulk of the culpability on the IDF and its intelligence gathering capabilities. However, the Commission added to the increasing cynicism and disappointment felt by the Israeli public following the apparent catastrophes of the war[4].

With that shift came a number of important and fascinating consequences, including a societal shift rightward[5], resulting in the 1977 election of Menachem Begin as Prime Minister of Israel, thus elevating the right-leaning Likkud Party to head of the Parliamentary Coalition for the first time in Israel's almost thirty years. While the rise of the Likkud Party may not have been a direct function of the Yom Kippur War four years earlier, the growing cynicism with and disappointment in the leadership of the country during the war, including Prime Minister Golda Meir and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan –

[4] Many of the documents and testimonies of the Agranat Commission have just recently been opened, as the 40 year statute of confidentiality has now passed. In one provocative conversation between then Prime Minister Golda Meir and her interlocutor, MK Yigal Yadin, Yadin presses Meir about her refusal to launch a pre-emptive air strike, inquiring: ""Could the prime minister also be thinking that we're close to an election, the labor party says it's quiet and everything is good and suddenly you have to crash the image?" Meir, American born and raised, responds incredulously, "I don't speak enough Hebrew to find the right words to deny that. Not only was that not said, it was never implied, and I'm ready to swear on that. Unthinkable." See, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4429179,00.html

[5] It is important to note that the concepts of 'left' and 'right' in the context of Israeli Parliamentary government are incredibly different than the American understanding and usage of the terms. Most of the country still shared much of the economic tenets of the Labour Party, but expressed a great disillusionment with its leadership. As such this shift was a function less of an ideological commitment than a statement condemning the disappointment in the corruption, laziness, and malaise in the previously longstanding institution of the Labour Party.

both of whom had resigned their posts prior to the 1977 election – was a strong contributing factor. With the victory of the Six-Day War just six years earlier, Israeli society was basking in a level of national pride and conquest that was readily apparent in much of the cultural output of that era. Songs like "Jerusalem of Gold," documenting the monumental reunification of Jerusalem, reflected an era of great joy and gratification. However, the victory of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 produced work with a darker, more cynical, more traumatic voice, as Israeli poets reflected the fear, disappointment, loss, and doubt that plagued much of the Israeli population[6]. Prime Minister Begin tapped into these anxieties in many of his speeches both during his campaign and in office, frequently relying on Holocaust rhetoric to describe the persistent victimization of the Israeli people and the ever-present specter of enemies surrounding the fragile country[7]. Begin, himself a survivor of the Holocaust, presented himself and the Likkud administration as the anti-Labour option, promising to work to unite those who felt let down and alienated from the ruling Labour party's ideologies, including Mizrahi ethnic minorities, working class communities, and the burgeoning religious bloc.

As such, with this thesis, I seek to demonstrate how these poets reflected major shifts in Israeli society as a result of the Yom Kippur War]. This War in particular sparked a schism from the time prior to the war to the time after. Each of these poets tackle the issues of Israeli masculinity, gender and sexuality, the allure and the danger of collective memory, and how the tension between Jewish ritual, tradition, and text and modern Israeli rituals and iconography is reflected in the Hebrew language. Whether bending the normative structures of the Hebrew language (along with its deeply gendered bias), the traditional gender roles of the Israeli society, or how an event is remembered – or in some

[6] See Hanoch Levin's *The Labour of Life*;
[7] Begin's Minister of Education Zevulun Hammer was the first to mandate Holocaust education in Israeli public schools. He also commissioned a textbook on teaching the Holocaust that presented it as completely singular catastrophe for the Jewish people, ignoring the plight of the countless other ethnicities and communities who perished, and separating the Holocaust from the rest of World War II.

cases forgotten – both personally and collectively, Yona Wallach, Tamir Lahav, and David Avidan each demonstrate a mastery in translating the collective woes and anxieties of a troubled and deeply wounded nation into powerful, heartrending, and moving words. Each of them understood the power that words can have in capturing not only an emotion, but how that emotion is felt, remembered, and shared with others, as well as the power that emotion can wield. Through the medium of poetry then, a history is unfurled; none of these poets would claim that it is the premiere – or exclusive – history to be portrayed, which makes their works that much more captivating and is one of the major themes that they all tackle. Nonetheless, through their words, we catch a brief glimpse of how the Israeli society made – and continues to make, 40 years later – sense of such a deep trauma.

I start with Wallach's poetry as a means of framing how the subsequent two male voices respond to the same themes. Three of her more well-known poems are presented, analyzed, and commented upon as a basis for providing both context and grounding for the themes discussed in the subsequent chapters. These chapters can be read as an indirect response to the messages in Wallach's poetry, demonstrating how so many of Israeli poets are in dual conversation with the issues and concerns of Israeli society and with each other, constantly responding and dialoguing through numerous works and finding new and different ways to tackle important issues and themes.

Chapter 1 – Yona Wallach: Let The Words…

Perhaps no other poet, male or female, has raised as much controversy and garnered as much praise in such a short time, as Yona Wallach. In just a scant 41 years on this earth, Wallach managed to subvert some of the major narratives of Israeli society, Jewish tradition, linguistic and grammatical form, and normative gender-based behavior. As Zafira Lidovsky Cohen states in the beginning of *Loosen the Fetters of Thy Tongue, Woman*, Wallach "passed through this earth like a living thunderbolt.[8]" Her poetry, much like her personality, was often difficult, abrasive, and challenging, while also showing an almost childlike playfulness and curiosity. In the same poem, Wallach could describe a shockingly brutal sexual act while upending a time-honored and religiously mandated ritual act. Or she could tearfully mourn the death of the son she never "got to finish," paralleling the great King David's woeful cries over the loss of his own son.[9] Thus was the magic and the mystique of Wallach: equal parts unnerving and mystifying; outrageous, and sly.

Wallach was born in the central Israeli farming village of K 'far Ono on June 10th, 1944 to parents who had arrived as young Zionist pioneers in the 1930s. She lost her father to the War of Independence at the age of four, becoming as Cohen describes "one of the young victims of Israel's agonizing history.[10]" Despite being an exceptionally bright student, Wallach's rebellious nature appeared early, and her provocative attire and quick wit frequently landed her in trouble with the adults and elders of the community. As a result, at the age of 17, she moved to the more cosmopolitan Tel Aviv and enrolled in Tel Aviv's Avni Institute, the largest and most renowned institute of art and artistry in the city, and one of the most renowned in the world. Through connections made at the Institute, Wallach's literary star began to rise, and her first works were published in Israeli literary magazines like *Akhshav* and

[88] Cohen *Loosen The Fetters*, 1, quoting Wallach herself from the poem "מצטיירת לי תמונה"
[9] "Absalom" *Shira*
[10] Cohen, *Loosen Thy Fetters,* 6

Yediot Aharanot. Slowly, her fame – and infamy – grew, although much of the praise for her subversive and somewhat abrasive style came after her death from breast cancer in 1981, at the young age of 41. In typical Wallach fashion, however, she continued to write, and conduct interviews, literally on her deathbed; she was a woman whose voice needed to be spoken, and heard until she could not speak the words any longer.

I included Wallach in this thesis for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is imperative to include a female voice in the poetic responses and reflections of the fallout of the Yom Kippur War. As I will note throughout this chapter, the role of the Israeli woman in post '73 society shifted tremendously as a result of a number of important factors, including the rise of the protest movement, a growing economic downslope brought on in no small part by the war itself and an overall breakdown in the previously held national trust in the government following their mishaps during the war. As Hanna Herzog describes in her essay "Women in Israeli Society," "only a calamity of that war's magnitude could manage to impel the issue of women's inequality into the awareness of a group of women.[11]" However, despite the tremendous successes and gains women made as a result of the innovations that followed the Yom Kippur War, the yawning gap of inequality between the genders did not dissolve. Consequently, the female perspective on these gaps, along with the evaluation on the societal underpinnings endemic to Israeli culture and Jewish tradition that spawn such inequality, must be heard.

Most importantly, I chose to include Wallach because her work speaks to the same themes emphasized within the poetry of both Avidan and Lahav, but in a manner that pivots completely on her gender. While both Avidan and Lahav touch on the themes of masculinity, gender normativity, the shattering of the myth of the Zionist Israeli narrative, and the double-edged sword of nostalgia, Wallach

[11] Hanna Herzog "Women in Israeli Society" *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*

does so on a meta level; as Cohen notes, she never directly addresses any of the major political or social upheaval as other poets of that era. The poet Dahlia Ravikovitch, to whom Yochai Oppenheimer devotes an entire chapter in his book *הזכות הגדולה לומר לא*, (*The Great Honor to Say No)*, which documents the history and usage of political poetry in Modern Israeli society, would have been a somewhat easier choice. Throughout her incredibly long tenure as a beloved and well-respected poet, Ravikovitch responds and reflects directly on much of the political and societal turmoil within Israel, focusing much of her energy on some of the same themes that Wallach explores, while taking Israeli society to task for its treatment of those directly affected by its chauvinistic approach to war[12]. As the author Yitshak Laor noted about her "evil was always defined for her through the eyes of a child." As such, what made Wallach that much more appealing was her ability to tackle the same issues, but subtly, and obliquely, critiquing the major issues of Israeli society without naming them specifically.

Wallach also writes about the unfortunate duality of powerful/powerless, however in Wallach's poetry the binary is far more fluid. Wallach utilizes and owns that fluidity; the characters in her poems switch in and out of genders – a subtlety that is represented only in the inherently gendered language of Hebrew – elevating these systems of language, gender, sexuality, power, and masculinity to the point of absurdity, and then toppling them. Ravikovitch's sense of honor and duty in representing the unheard and the broken demonstrates that she is equally as fearless in calling out systems that need to be fixed. However, what drew me to Wallach was that her poetry not only topples, dissects, upsets, reconfigures, and oftentimes shatters the issues that were topical within Israeli society in her time, but that she focuses on the systems that cause them: gender, sexuality religion, language, chauvinism and masculinity, and myth versus history. By focusing more broadly on those systems, rather than what has

[12]While Ravikovitch has a number of poems that are in conversation with the Yom Kippur War, she is best known for her poetry protesting the First Lebanon War of 1982, and the strong anti-war sentiment within both her poetry and demonstrated in interviews

resulted from them, Wallach shows that these issues are not specific or contingent to major catastrophes like the Yom Kippur War but endemic to the society as a whole.

The three Wallach poems that I chose reflect different periods of her career, demonstrating both the arc of her writing and the different ways in which she tackles the aforementioned themes. All were written after 1973, and all reflect the shift in Israeli culture that followed the war. In each, she reveals the previously sacrosanct Israeli narrative to be both fluid and vulnerable, reflecting the vulnerability and disappointment felt by so many after the catastrophic events of the Yom Kippur War.

One of the most well-known, and arguably most controversial aspects of Wallach's poetry is her usage of highly sexualized language and imagery in ways that other poets – male and female, both contemporary and precedent - had not done. As Yair Mazor notes in his essay "The Sexual Sound and the Flowery Fury: The Role of Yona Wallach in Contemporary Hebrew Poetry," Hebrew poetry has a strong history of introducing highly sexual and erotic imagery; one need only take a brief glance at the biblical text *Song of Songs*, with its unabashed allusions to passionate carnal yearning, intense sensual acts, and the genuine appreciation of both the male and female nude form. While latter rabbinic interpretation sought to categorize the palpably sexual relationships described in the poetry of *Song of Songs* as relationship between the people Israel and God,[13] the imagery is difficult to separate from its likely original intent of love poetry. In the medieval era, poets including Abraham ibn Ezra and Yehuda HaLevi[14] frequently shifted between poems of deep religious yearning and poems of intense love and lust, often blurring the lines between the two.

[13] See Talmud Sanhedrin 101a, Song of Songs Rabbah 1:13
[14] See "Marriage Song," "My Sweetheart's Dainty Lips" 92 Poems of Yehuda HaLevi

What separated Wallach from this narrative however, as both Cohen and Mazor document, is how she so completely and confidently subverts normative gender assignation, practices, performance, and sexual roles within her erotic poetry. Cohen writes that

> [Wallach's poetry] is a battle for self-definition in which Wallach employs the erotic imagination as an explosive poetic tool not merely to confront women's realities but primarily to examine the ways in which the world can truly be different[15].

In other words, while some the imagery presented in these poems may initially come across as violent, pornographic, and even grotesque, its purpose is to upend the societal norms that most people take for granted. Her goals were to present women coopting traditionally male roles in order to both highlight the absurdity of the gendered nature of those roles in the first place and to challenge society's complacency in continuing to maintain and foster them. Mazor writes that this style was in some ways a dialogue with Dahlia Ravikovitch[16]; Wallach's blunt style in stark contrast to Ravikovitch's more "subdued, understated tones.[17]" Indeed, in poems such as "For the Love of an Orange," "Sparks of Light," and "Intoxication,[18]" Ravikovitch presents deep yearning and desire, but in a fashion far more in line with the aforementioned narrative of erotic imagery in Hebrew poetry, which is fitting, given that Ravikovitch's poetry was rich in biblical and other traditional allusions.

Both poets contend with the infuriating dynamics of power inherent in the male/female relationship; Ravikovitch continued to explore this dynamic of power and chauvinism as it was demonstrated by the state in some of her latter, politically minded poetry, while contemporaneously,

[15] Cohen, *Loosen the Fetters,* 133
[16] Ravikovitch's poem may itself be a response to Haim Nahman Bialik's poem "בשל תפוח" which somewhat chastely portrays a man's lust for a girl as if she were an apple growing in an orchard. The poem, made into a song by well-known Israeli singer Shlomo Arzi, demonstrates how easily men could reference their sexual desires, while not being seen as controversial. Thus, "אהבת תפוח הזהב" is a cutting, yet subtle, rejoinder that women too can write desirous poetry. Wallach clearly agrees with Ravikovitch, yet her response to Bialik is more akin to that of a hatchet than a pen.
[17] Mazor, "The Sexual Sound and the Flowery Fury: The Role of Yona Wallach in Contemporary Hebrew Poetry," *Modern Judaism* 16 (1996)
[18] See also "Tirzah's Dreams," *A Hard Winter*

Wallach chose to delve deeper into the masculine/feminine gender paradigm. As Cohen explains, Wallach "does not confront Israeli social and cultural hypocrisies…or expose the shallowness of 'myths' Israelis live by.[19]" Rather, she opts to highlight the hypocrisies of supposed 'gender norms' and how damaging they can be to the society. It is important to note that while Ravikovitch and Wallach were indeed contemporaries, Ravikovitch's works garnered her substantially more acclaim than Wallach during her time, In her notes on her translation of Wallach's seminal publication *Wild Light*, Linda Zisquit points to an interview of Wallach by Hillit Yeshurun, the editor of the monthly Hebrew poetry journal *Hadarim*, in which Wallach rather pointedly criticizes Ravikovitch for not "[being] involved enough in sex. She's not revolutionary enough…she isn't a feminist[20]."

Zisquit also highlights Wallach's usage of sexual imagery as an attempt to demonstrate the possibilities for deep, spiritual transcendence and even ascendance inherent within sexuality and sexual acts. In this way, perhaps ironically, Wallach aligns herself with the rabbis who endeavored to interpret Song of Songs as man's relationship with the Divine, attempting to ferret out spiritual, holy union in the carnal. Wallach uses these poems to castigate a society obsessed with the compartmentalization of sex, God, transcendence, male, female, and passion; to Wallach, they are acutely conjoined, oftentimes in the throes of deep passion, but for powerful spiritual ascent. As Zisquit writes, "like the Biblical word for harlot, *kedsha* (from the root קדש, meaning holy), she combines holiness and shocking sexuality[21]."

In each of these poems, Wallach toys with issues of male hegemony, the dynamics of male and female sexuality, and the gender roles arbitrarily – and often violently – assigned to men and women.

[19] Cohen, *Loosen the Fetters* 73
[20] *Hadarim* Fall 1984. Ravikovitch responded cleverly to this critique with her poem "Finally, I'm Talking" written after Wallach's death. The poem is a sort of eulogy to Wallach, but also a pointed critique at the hypocritical praise she received following her death, from the mainstream and literary press that had ignored and alienated her so many years prior.
[21] Zisquit, Linda, Translator's Note to *Wild Light*, xxviii, 1997

She uses language of extreme violence and perverse sexuality as provocation, but not exclusively. As the reaction to many of her more intense poems demonstrates, viewing and reading Wallach exclusively as a 'shock poet' is not only reductionist, but displays exactly the kind of misogyny that Wallach seeks to bring to the forefront. Wallach uses these poems to hold a mirror to Israeli society and reflect back the contradictions and hypocrisies that many refuse to see, such that even if, as Cohen explains, Wallach does not directly address the major issues facing Israeli society at the time of her writings, her usage of such stark sexual language is political in and of itself. This is evidenced in an interview that Wallach did for the now defunct Israeli journal מוניטין to discuss the publication of her poem "תפילין" ("T'fillin) in which the interviewer, Dani Dotan, states "As a woman, you are exceptional…" while interviewing Wallach. She corrected him: "I believe that as a man, I am very exceptional[22]."

Simply by foregrounding the inherently gendered nature of the Hebrew language, Wallach demonstrates the less than equal status women have in Israeli society; her poems frequently shift perspective from male to female without announcing which gender is currently speaking. Often, she will show women coopting traditionally male roles or actions – as seen in "תפילין" (T'fillin) – with the only signifiers being the Hebrew pronouns, making translation into English a particular challenge.

תפילין – "T'fillin[23]"

Come to me
Don't let me do a thing
You will do it all for me,

[22] *Monitin* 59
[23] Part of a series of poems within the book אור פרא that all start with the line "כשתבוא אלי," or "When you come to me…" See also "When you come to sleep with me, come like a policeman" "…like God" Translation mine, with assistance from the translation in *Loosen the Fetters of Thy Tongue*, Zafira Lidovsky Cohen

Everything
Everything that I will start to do
You will do instead of me
I will lay t'fillin
I will pray
You will also lay t'fillin for me
Wrap them around my hands
Play them for me
Pass them delicately all over my body
Rub them in me well
Arouse me everywhere
Make me swoon with the feeling
Pass them upon my clitoris
Tie them around my waist
So that I come quicker
Play them within me
Tie my hands and feet
Do things to me
In spite of my own will
Turn me onto my belly
And stuff the t'fillin in my mouth [use the specific horse terms, emphasize the violence involved]
Ride me, I am a horse
Pull my hair backward
Until I scream in pain
And you are sated
Following this, I will pass them about your body
So that there is no secret to my intentions
Oh, such cruelty that will be on my face
Slowly, I will pass them all along your body
Slowly, slowly, slowly
I will pass them all around your neck
From one side, I will turn them all around your neck
And from the other side, I will tie them to something steady
Something particularly heavy, something spinning maybe
I will keep pulling and pulling
Until you breath departs
Until I strangle you
Completely with the t'fillin
That string along the stage
And throughout the astonished audience

This poem in particular highlights Wallach's desire not just to subvert the usual masculine/feminine paradigms so acutely present in Jewish tradition – and as a result so overtly present

in Israeli culture – but, as Alicia Ostriker points out, also to "steal the language[24]" of men altogether. By appropriating *t'fillin* (the leather phylacteries utilized in traditional morning-prayer services) for such blatantly sexualized use, Wallach eroticizes and openly mocks the practice. As a result, as Zafira Lidovsky Cohen writes, "it is certainly not surprising that '*T'fillin*' caused an unprecedented public uproar in Israel at the time it was first published in 1982.[25]" In fact, as journalist Maya Sela notes in her article in *Ha'aretz* commemorating the 30th anniversary of the poem's release, the poem sparked such an outcry that then-Deputy Education Minister Miriam Tasser-Glaser claimed in a newspaper interview that "Wallach is simply disturbed. An animal in heat who writes a poem like this and then publishes it ... It is a dark wave ... anarchy.[26]" Indeed as recently as 2005, Wallach's former partner Yuval Rivlin attempted to block usage and distribution of this and much more of Wallach's poetry on the grounds that its "explicit sexual content, in the eyes of Rivlin's rabbi, was better kept under wraps.[27]" In a 1999 interview with the weekly Jerusalem כל העיר, Tassa-Glaser stood by her inflammatory remarks against the poem claiming:

> I have no objection that an artist will write whatever he wants, but it is wrong that such a poem will be published with the support of the Ministry of Education. A poem that takes a symbol—a sign (אות) model—and reduces it to a level of…I don't want to repeat this word. This poet wouldn't write this way about the Masbachah (worry beads) of the Arabs or the Cross. Today maybe things have changed.… Look at the way they talk on TV.… But in spite of it there is limit…"In the poem she calls herself a horse. I only interpreted her images. If she can do it, so can I.[28]

Numerous publications mention the traditional poet Zelda's – a onetime close and personal friend of Wallach's – reaction to the poem's publication in the Israeli poetry journal איתון, with Zelda claiming that, upon receiving a copy of the poem, "I thought…I wish I had died. Never will I be able to touch a

[24] Ostriker *Stealing the Language* 140
[25] Cohen *Loosen the Fetters of Thy Tongue, Woman* 142
[26] Maya Sela, "Thirty years after Yona Wallach's 'Tefillin' was published, the poem and photo remain as provocative as ever" *Ha'aretz*, 15 June 2012
[27] Merav Yudilovitch "Poet's Work Blocked from Public" *YNet*
[28] כל העיר, p. 59.

piece of paper on which this thing was written[29]," resulting in Zelda's cessation of sending any more of her works to the journal. It is worth noting that in all of the various retellings of this legend, Zelda's traditional Orthodoxy is always referenced, as if to contrast with Wallach's secularity, further underscoring the jarring nature of the cooptation of sacred ritual objects for seemingly profane acts. No poem in Wallach's canon has caused such a stir but also so deeply represents her desire to upend societal gender and sexual norms, ritual practice, belief in and connection to the Divine.

Wallach highlights – and then subsequently subverts – the fact that this act is seen as one of the ideal representations of Jewish maleness for the traditionally observant Jewish male, a representation by virtue in no small part to the ritual's longtime prohibition[30] for female practice. As such, Wallach utilizes the act of laying *t'fillin* as a means to demonstrate the paradox that Jewish masculinity can only be defined in the negative: traditional Jewish males are defined by actions that their female counterparts *cannot* partake in. The distinction is inherent within the word itself: the word *t'fillin* comes from the Hebrew root פלל, which is used to mean 'to pray,' but also means 'to discern' or 'to discriminate,' thus *t'fillin* are the ultimate discriminatory tools (man v. woman; Jew v. non-Jew). There is a certain level of defensiveness inherent within this paradoxical definition; it is as if, Wallach claims, Jewish "maleness" is so precarious that Jewish males must keep a specific border around it at all times, making sure that it is not infiltrated by outside forces, lest it shatter, causing the Jewish male to lose his definition, ideology, and meaning. Thus the entirety of Jewish tradition that defines male-centered ritual practice as the normative practice is, as Wallach claims, a house of sticks, continuously built up and fortified in order to keep certain people and actions in, while scrupulously leaving others out. This is a

29

30 While there is no specific Halakhic language prohibiting women from laying t'fillin, traditional communities have been adamant in their refusal to allow women to practice the ritual. Only recently, and in primarily progressive communities have women begun to reclaim the practice.

theme that continues in much of Wallach's poetry, as she emphasizes that a concept, term, or ideology defined by what it is *not*, rather than what it is, is not sustainable and is subject to scrutiny.

This poem demonstrates an unprecedented attack on an exceptionally gendered ritual of Jewish masculinity, as opposed to Israeli masculinity. Thus, in addition to displaying the absurdity latent within the rigidity of male-centered Jewish tradition, Wallach offers a much more subtle critique of the Israeli portrayal of masculinity, a concept usually seen as deeply contrasting to the traditional Jewish perspective. During the initial creation of the Jewish state, early Zionist leaders sought to distinguish the new Israeli masculine paradigm, with their emphasis on redemption through the cultivation of the land and defense of the borders, from the previous iteration of the Yeshiva-stuck Jewish male. The Hebrew male was strong, secular, and driven, where the Jewish male was mired in the religion of the past. The Hebrew male was in charge of his own destiny, literally building a country from the ground up, while the Jewish male was stuck in the diaspora, helpless to the whims of those in control. These contrasts were vital towards maintaining and promoting a new Israeli identity, one that would encourage both self-reliance and communal egalitarianism.

Where Jewish tradition based itself on a male-centered hegemony, thus creating an almost immovable hierarchy, the new Israeli society was supposed to forge a new dynamic of gender parity. Men and women both served in the burgeoning defense forces, founded the kibbutzim, and, at least on the surface, demonstrated a somewhat unprecedented equality. However, as I discuss later in this chapter, more often than not, the women in Israeli society still inhabited regimented gendered roles. Thus, by utilizing a specifically Jewish ritual, rather than more ostensibly "Israeli" signifiers – a military gun, a uniform, farming equipment – Wallach demonstrates with this poem that the so-called

'egalitarianism' that was sought and displayed was a ruse, and that the gender dynamics of the Jewish tradition are still quite prevalent within Israeli society[31].

The ritual act of 'laying' *t'fillin*, is in itself already fraught with deep symbolism and significance. Drawn from a literal interpretation of the biblical requirement to "bind them [the Mitzvot] as a sign upon your hand, and they will be a sign for you between your eyes,[32]" the *t'fillin* are leather straps attached to two small boxes (each containing ritual prayers), one of which is placed in the middle of one's non-dominant arm and then tied tight with the leather straps and the other at the top of one's forehead, literally between the eyes. The ritual is to be performed as part of the early morning-prayer service, and the *t'fillin* are to be wrapped tightly – so as to leave marks – around the arm. Because of the deeply intimate nature of the act – a direct representation of the eternal bond between man and God – and its performance early in the morning, highlighting the hazy transition between sleep and full wakefulness that connotes the morning rituals, there are already erotic undertones to the act of laying *t'fillin*; according to Ruhama Weiss-Goldman, this may partially explain why the act of laying *t'fillin* has been historically designated to men alone.[33]

The language of the prayer recited while wrapping the leather straps around the finger speaks to the intimacy inherent within the relationship between man and God, as the text – a quote from the biblical text Hosea – reads like a marriage vow, in which the man vows to "Betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to

[31] This poem stands in contrast to the Hebrew poet Avraham Shlonsky's earlier work "עמל" (*Toil),* which also utilizes imagery of *t'fillin*, but as a description of the winding "palm-paved roads" he and his fellow Zionist pioneers had begun to build and form in Palestine in the early 1920s. Thus Shlonsky's usage of the *t'fillin* imagery served both as a cultural touchstone for the predominantly Ashkenazic, Eastern European Jewry that populated and cultivated Palestine at the time, and as an opportunity to connect past tradition with innovation, cultivation, and land.

[32] Deuteronomy 6:8 (translation mine)

[33] For more on the complicated relationship between women and Halakha, see "The Feminist Contribution to Halakhic Discourse**:** *Kol Be-isha Erva* as a Test Case" by Tamar Ross

Myself in faithfulness, And you will know the Lord.[34]" Thus the act of laying *t'fillin* becomes distinctly gendered, but to which actor the traditional roles of 'bride' and 'groom' should be assigned are somewhat confused: Is the man reciting the prayer the groom, while God is the bride? Is it the other way around? As such, the act itself is rife for the level of satire and sexualization that Wallach utilizes in the poem. Perhaps understanding the gender ambiguity within the Hosea text recited during the practice, modern Israeli society has gone to great lengths to hyper-masculinize the act of laying *t'fillin*, as Ruth Tsoffar notes that in times of war and crisis, Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Jews will give *t'fillin* to soldiers as they enter off to war, adding another level of significance and complication to the practice of laying *t'fillin*[35].

The poem starts out with the (presumably female) speaker entreating for her (presumably male) lover, in a position of longing, yearning for her lover's touch. For the next few lines, the speaker remains confident, yet submissive, imploring her lover to "lay the *t'fillin* for me, wrap them on my hands[36]." Wallach's female voice is strong, in command, but begging for her lover to act on her behalf. She wants to be pleasured, she knows exactly how it should be done, and she beseeches her partner to act in a way that will bring about such pleasure. The poem continues with the female speaker asking to be tied up in the *t'fillin*. Wallach uses this imagery to underline the complicated relationship that women are relegated to have with ritual specifically and with society in general. She wants to engage this complication; she seeks to not only bind herself in *t'fillin*, but to be enveloped within it, to be immersed in it in such a way that her connection to it and with it is more than, higher than, greater than that of a man. If the physical act is representative of the spiritual intent – rendered as כוונה, ("intent") in Hebrew

[34] Hosea 2:21-2
[35] Ruth Tsoffar, "STAGING SEXUALITY, READING WALLACH'S POETRY," *Hebrew Studies* 43 (2002). Tsoffar also notes how *t'fillin* are now also utilized as a marker of Jewish nationality, as witnessed by representatives of Chabad seeking out Jewish men in large public squares and venues to fulfill their daily requirement to wrap *t'fillin.*
[36] The imagery here calls to mind the homoerotic nature of Hasidic men assisting other men in performing the ritual.

– then asking to be tied up in *t'fillin* demonstrates connectedness on a much higher plane, Wallach contends[37].

The poem continues as Wallach's female voice becomes almost animalistic, pleading to be used like a horse, as the *t'fillin* is used to tease her and tempt her until she reaches climax and "I scream in pain." Here, Cohen contends that Wallach "implores him to arouse, hurt, enslave…for his pleasure and gratification alone, and with absolutely no regard for her feelings.[38]" However, I would argue that Wallach's female is completely in control the whole time, and rather than seeking to pleasure her partner with no regard for her own satisfaction, she solicits him to pleasure her, only then moving on to his needs. In this way, and by so blatantly utilizing a ritual object so fraught with sexual undertones, Wallach is attempting to upend the traditional laws of sexual practice between husband and wife, which state that a woman must have sufficient sexual pleasure in the marriage but places the onus directly, and exclusively, on the male. This is an ironic sort of liberation via binding: the woman gains freedom only by taking control of how submissive she will be to the dominant culture. In many ways, this is representative of the awkward state in which women are placed societally, ritualistically, and religiously, both in the state of Israel, and in Jewish practice. Tsoffar claims this is Wallach's attempt to "utter a radical prayer against the exclusion of women in Jewish/Israeli ritual and culture,[39]" understanding that such liberation comes through literally binding oneself in leather, in coopting and exaggerating traditionally male practices.

[37] This imagery plays with the oft-used rationale used to explain why women are exempt from specific, time-bound Mitzvot, which claims that they are essentially 'holier' than their male counterparts, and do not require such commandments.
[38] Cohen, *Loosen the Fetters* 142
[39] Tsoffar, 101

As the sexual acts shift to the female acting upon the male, the female still maintains her control over the male, as she lures and tempts him in the same fashion that she asked of him a few verses earlier. Tsoffar writes that the line about tying the *t'fillin* to "משהו יציב," ('something stable') refers to the morning prayers, אמת ויציב ונכון וקים הדבר הזה עלינו ("True and certain and stable and enduring is this word unto us") which thank God for the eternal nature of God's word to the Jewish people. The irony is that this stability is used to bring about the death of the male character, as, much like Yael and Sisera[40], the female lures the male into a state of sexual ecstasy, only to end his life. With this final scene, Wallach shows the passive male at his most emasculated, having drawn his death from the selfsame ritual that is supposed to bring him closer to God.

While the death may have initially seemed shocking upon first read, in some ways it can be seen as almost inevitable, as at no point in this act is the man given any voice, agency, or power of his own. The man is completely submissive, his actions dictated by the dominant female until his final breath, which only she can allow to be released. The consequence for the male's complete passivity and submissiveness is of course, death, as if to imply that there is to be no true parity between the genders without some level of ultimate consequence or systemic breakdown. Wallach understands that the Hebrew language – and by extension the traditions and rituals of Judaism – cannot ever allow for the 'equality' that others sought and fought for. There will always be distance; there will always be a power dynamic, and so long as the traditions persist as they are, there will be no change.

The last two lines of the poem, however, are perhaps the most jarring, as they highlight the cruelly voyeuristic nature of the sadomasochistic acts. By strangling her male protagonist in front of the 'astonished audience' Wallach indicates that we the readers are as intimately involved in the acts as the

[40] Judges 4:21

woman performing them. As Tsoffar indicates, there is no such thing as an innocent reader of this text; in reading this text, the reader becomes actor, producer, sexual partner, and subsequently murderer. As a result then, the poem can never be separated from the author, its reader, and the enormous controversy that followed its publication. The poem already teetered on the pornographic – thus justifying to a certain extent the frenzied response to its publication – but the last two lines verify and applaud this reading. Thus, Wallach is not just seducing her male partner but seducing the reader as well. Was this 'astonished audience' watching the whole act? Were they complicit in the final act, or were they indeed 'astonished' by how it ended? If indeed there are parallels with this text and the doomed narrative of Yael and Sisera from the book of Judges, is the reader lured into this state of ultimately fatal sexual ecstasy, just as the male protagonist is?

If the reader is just a spectator, does that make the reader less culpable? In ending the poem by chillingly emphasizing the performativity of this ritual – a somewhat paradoxical nature, given its intimacy – Wallach demonstrates that there is no such thing as ritual, language, or even sexuality in a vacuum. All of these require not only an audience, but a community, a means, and an interest in transmission. As such, as 'astonished' as the audience may have been in such a macabre and ghoulish act, they are no less complicit in its occurrence, since they had not previously spoken up or denounced any of the seemingly cruel acts. In this way, Wallach not only anticipated the severe criticism she received from this poem's publication, she preemptively castigates it, by stating that they are no less responsible for the gender-based caste system that society has produced and the warped definitions of masculinity that come as a result. If anything, she claims, the breathless force with which this poem was denounced should be turned towards those structures and systems, rather than the attempts to critique and subvert them.

עברית – "Hebrew[41]"

English has all the possibilities for gender
Each "I" – in effect
Is every possibility of sex
And every you (feminine) is you (masculine)
And every "I" is sexless
And there is no difference between you (feminine)

[41] Translation mine

and you (masculine)
And all things are 'it,' neither man nor woman
You don't have to think before referring to sex
Hebrew is a sex maniac!
Hebrew discriminates between good and bad
It bears no grudge, it gives privileges
With an account longer than the exile
In the plural, priority is given to the 'hes'
With great subtlety and secrecy
With the singular, all opportunities are equal
Who says that all hope is lost?
Hebrew is a sex maniac
It wants to know who is speaking
Almost an image, almost a picture
What's forbidden in the Torah
At the very least, to catch a glimpse of the sex
Hebrew peeks through the keyhole
Like I did to you and your mother
When you were bathing in the shack
Your mom had a huge ass
But I never stopped thinking
That the days passed like the passing of showers
You remained a thin and soapy girl
After that you plugged up all the holes
Filled up all the breaches
Hebrew peeks through all the keyholes
The language sees you naked
My father never gave me permission to see
He always turned around when he peed
I never really caught a good glimpse at him
Always, he hid the sex
Like how the plural hides the woman
Like how the crowd is masculine in gender
Like how the word is both male and female
There is nothing quite like those sweet things
Hebrew is a woman bathing
Hebrew is a clean Bathsheba
Hebrew is an idol that does not defile
She has tiny beauty marks, and birthmarks
As she matures, she only grows prettier
Her judgment occasionally can be a bit prehistoric
Neuroses such as this are for the better
Tell me in the masculine, tell me in the feminine
Every childish "I" is an unfertilized egg
It is possible to pass over sex
It is possible to give up sex
Who can tell the sex of a chick?
The man who nature creates

Just before he is marked with a conjugated verb
Memory is masculine
Creating sexes
Procreation is the main thing
For she is life
Hebrew is a sex maniac
And whatever those feminists mention in their complaints
Who seek stimulation outside the language
In an intonation that interprets all of the things
Signs only of a male and a female in a sentence
These will give crazy sexual connections
On every female a sign, on every male a sign
When every verb and conjugation pattern is marked
What does the man do to a woman?
What does he get in return?
What power she has over him
And what mark is given to the object
And to an abstract noun and to particles
We will get a sort of sex game of nature
An emotional event like a young forest
A game of the general forces of nature
From which all details are derived
General signs for all events
That can possibly happen at one time or another
Look at what body the language has, what dimensions
I will love her now without the cover of tongue

Wallach continues to explore these themes of the prospectively destructive power dynamic inherent within language, ritual, and tradition in her poem "Hebrew" from her collection *צורות.* The poem takes to task the blatantly gendered nature of the Hebrew language, which, as Wallach proclaims in the very first line of the poem, English lacks. English, according to Wallach, is a language free of such restrictions and "has all possibilities for gender;" one need not be bound to any specific gender, sex, or structure when one speaks. As Cohen notes, one can state "I am a poet" without doubly announcing that they fit into a specific modality or construct[42]. In contrast, Hebrew requires that the speaker announce their gender, immediately separating out the male speaker who would state "אני משורר" from

[42] Cohen, *Loosen Thy Fetters* 189

the female speaker who would state "אני משוררת." Such a distinction – present in all forms and conjugations of verbs – Wallach contends, serves nothing but to emphasize the already present gender-based hierarchy in Israeli society. To Wallach, there is no such thing as 'separate but equal' either in language or in societal interactions; duality innately leads to hierarchy, as the masculine gender construct in most instances is the norm from which the feminine construct deviates. For example, since there is no such construct in the Hebrew language as "it," words that would not be inherently gendered in English at all are, as Cohen notes, doubly gendered in Hebrew, both in the declaration ("זה" for masculine, "זאת" for feminine) and in the noun itself ("ספר" is masculine, while "תמונה" is feminine because of the "נה" at the end, which produces an "ah" sound, the traditional marker for a feminine noun in most instances). As a result, since the masculine form is considered the standard in most cases, the "ah" (or in some grammatical constructs the addition of a "ת" at the end of a word) 'feminizes' that word, and in doing so deviates it that much more from the norm.

Nowhere is this more present, according to Wallach, than in the standard plural construct, where, even if addressing a room full of women and only one man, is masculine ("אתם משוררים" if addressing a group of mixed male and female poets; "הם שרים" if addressing a group of mixed male and female singers). This construct demonstrates that, according to grammar, one male is fundamentally more powerful, more influential, more intrinsically connected to the language, than any number of females; as Wallach describes "the plural hides the female." Hebrew automatically oppresses women, in a manner of oppression so stark, yet so innate to the entire base of the language, that it just seems like a given; as if to say 'of course the male voice is heard louder and more instinctively; this is how it has always been,' since as Wallach notes 'memory is masculine,' a stinging play on the 'masculine' nature of the term זיכרון, meaning memory. To Wallach, the historical narrative of the Hebrew language, and consequently the entirety of the Jewish tradition, has defaulted to telling the narrative of the Jewish

male. Whether in the retelling of the narratives of the Patriarchs,[43] tales of biblical heroism and triumph, rabbinic legislation and folklore, and many other aspects of the traditional canon, women's voices have historically been left out and ignored. If their voices are heard at all, it is within the lens of their relationship to men, as wives, mothers, caregivers, servants, and prostitutes.

The state of Israel was seen by many as an opportunity to halt this extraordinarily misogynistic trajectory, demonstrated by the early *halutzim*, or pioneers, tasked with creating the burgeoning state, the Socialist ethos of equality under the yoke of the necessary work to be done. However, as Hannah Herzog points out in her essay[44] "Women in Israeli Society," "the Socialist nature of the kibbutz movement" disguised the gendered structure that actually existed within the kibbutz, as women were still relegated to roles like washing, cooking, harvesting, and taking care of the children. Thus even when egalitarianism was being propounded to the outside world, women's voices were still only heard in specific, functionally gendered means. While the 1949 Defence Service Law[45] requires that "A calling-up officer may, by order, call upon… a female person of military age who has been found fit for service and who is of any age from eighteen years to twenty-six years inclusive," only after a prolonged legal battle were women allowed into pilot's training courses in the Israeli Air Force. Herzog notes that the Air Force's excuse for the exclusion of women was that training them and the men would have been too costly for the already strained armed services branch. And, while the 1951 Equal Rights for Women Law delineated specific rights and liberties to women in regards to property rights, marriage, protection against violence, and a woman's body, then-Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion lauded this exceptionally progressive piece of legislation as a means to protect and strengthen the next generation of Israelis by ensuring that the current generation of Israeli mothers was well protected; "procreation is life" as

[43] The addition of the matriarchs into daily Jewish liturgy did not occur until well into the 20th century
[44] Herzog, "Women in Israeli Society," *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns* 199
[45] See 1949 Defence Service Law
http://www.israellawresourcecenter.org/israellaws/fulltext/defenceservicelaw.htm

Wallach so astutely, and lamentingly, proclaims. Thus, even in attempting to protect and empower women, their voices are seen only through the lens of enabling and reinforcing men.

Cohen notes that Wallach highlights these unfortunate contradictions as a means to "link the sexually biased nature of the language with…the State of Israel's early primitiveness[46]," such as using the term "טושים" for 'showers' instead of the more modern term "מקלחת." However, the issue of a true lack of parity between men and women did not cease as Israel progressed through the years; rather, only until after the Yom Kippur War did women start actively seeking out their own means of representation, both inside and outside of Israeli political parties. Prior to that, female representation within the major parties was minimal at best, and even within those, the concept of a party placing a woman in a role outside of traditionally 'female' positions – education, health, social assistance, and welfare – was unheard of. Herzog notes that women often competed against each other for coveted 'token' spots within political parties a disappointing result of what, at the time, Israeli society would have deemed progress, and an example of women attempting to silence each other's voices, rather than fighting for their cause together.

With the creation of the political party "רץ", ("run") in 1973, Shulamit Aloni attempted to create a party devoted not just to women's rights in terms of familial status and marriage law, but of a woman's right to choose whether to continue or abort a pregnancy, domestic abuse issues, and international women's rights. As a result, the party surprised many when, in the election of the 8th Knesset on December 31st, 1973, they won an unprecedented four seats, the first for a party founded and headed by a woman. This innovation would have surely pleased Wallach, but she warns in the poem about "whatever those feminists mention in their complaints, who seek stimulation outside the

[46] Cohen, *Loosen Thy Fetters* 192

language." Note that it is not by any means the prospect of equal representation that Wallach laments, nor is it the idea of active female leadership. Rather, she seeks to create and foster a language – a society – devoid of all of these seemingly arbitrary gender signifiers altogether; she seeks a Hebrew "just before he is marked with a conjugated verb," a language like the beloved English for which she pines in the beginning of the poem that is 'sexless.' Wallach demonstrates then that the problem lies within the dangerous power inherent within the systems of gender and language altogether, not – unlike the 'feminists' she criticizes – the prospect of one gender swapping power with another.

Instead, as we see, we are stuck with a Hebrew that is quite literally obsessed with sex, enamored of sex, in fact, maniacal about sex. However, this is the childish, prurient *concept* of sex, rather than the actual understanding of either sex as a representation of gender identity or the actual act of physical sex. This is the kind of obsession that boyishly "peeks through keyholes," and pores over any and all forbidden acts within the texts of our traditions, hoping to catch a glimpse of something illicit, something indecent, something naughty. This language "sees you naked" and titters as it watches you and your mother bathing in the shack, and comments that "your mother had a huge ass." Wallach proclaims boldly that Hebrew – and by extension the entirety of the Jewish tradition, as this mania "has an account longer than the Exile" – is stuck with an immature perspective on sex. Wallach emphasizes this by playfully switching between both tenses and even genders throughout the text. Whether she is the playful little boy sneaking a peak at a girl and her mother bathing – the first of many references Wallach makes both directly or indirectly to the sexually explicit tale of David and Bathsheba[47] – or the little girl forbidden from seeing her father's nudity – which calls to mind both the story of a drunken, naked Noah being hidden away abashedly by his sons[48] and the equally as tipsy Lot being taken

[47] 2 Samuel 11
[48] Genesis 9:18-29

advantage of by his daughters after the destruction of Sodom[49] – Wallach highlights the childlike curiosity inherent in this obsession, but more importantly, the shame. Since "always, he hid the sex," the tradition may never be able to move beyond this singular focus.

However, Wallach does believe that a tradition devoid of these gender signifiers, this "sex-mania" can be tenable, as "it is possible to pass over sex." Cohen translates this line "על מין אפשר לפסך" as "sex can be disregarded" but I believe that the usage of the word "פסך" (translated usually as "to pass over," in the context of the Pesach seder) is quite purposeful; Wallach is stating that it is possible to not only forgo sex – meaning both the idea of gender and the obsession with the physical act – but to sacrifice it for the greater good, a purer, non-gendered form of expression, a "clean Bathsheba." The language may be to blame for its gendered nature, but tradition, society, and the collective myth that is memory continue to perpetuate it. In the final line of the poem, Wallach proclaims – perhaps ironically using the male conjugation of the Hebrew "אוהב" instead of the female "אוהבת" – her love of a Hebrew unfettered by the constraints of gender, by the "cover of language." While Hebrew may represent a broken and severely biased system, there is still the potential for deep love both of and within its "body…the contours." Wallach appreciates the irony writing in this deeply biased language while critiquing its foundations, but she knows that it is the system with which she was raised. There is hope for Hebrew, as she claims there is hope for Israel. As Professor Haim Rechnitzer describes, "Wallach celebrates the Sex in Hebrew," and she uses this prevalence of sex both to mock the significantly gendered past and to chart out a future that celebrates any and all visions of sex.

[49] Genesis 19:30-36

אישים – "Personalities[50]"

Everyone is afraid of this voice
It is the historic voice
Everyone is afraid of him until
They mimic him and they become him
Everyone loved him, but had no idea how to use him
With a right action, it is a different voice altogether
The voice of sorcery, the voice of a great magician

[50] From the collection מופע ("Performance"). Translation mine.

The voice of small stillness, that is what everyone fears
Lest its magic descend upon him

Whatever happens
He turns into a historical creature

History, like a living thing inside a paranoid mind peeps from every direction
Since it came to be by way of pairing, and personification, its end is personification
Its transformation into person, into people
This is a classical Greek myth that creates gods
And turns blood into their engine and under their control because non-human cannot really be and therefore are not
These rules of being are very important like the dead
A world of reference within which sanity is guarded
With life to the longest available range available

The subconscious is overwhelmed with fear of an event, the dread
That sweet, alluring voice of all voices would say
You, woman, do you want your shoulder cut off for him
This is how much people like history
They smile a sweet, historical smile under a window
And they sing in a sweet, thin, historical voice, like that of a Monotonously thin womanly voice, usually only allowed for an internal voice
To be like that outside it is death
All of the monumentally reckless savagery that exist
Spin to defend the delicate and the soft
The courageous cry beside him about their loss and failure
And gradually slipped away from sanity, as they slowly lost themselves
This slave named history was made to reign
He has fulfilled all will by reigning
and brings a great deal of joy to his masters
The Security Forces

To be a child more than a child
Because the grown-ups are finished
To pit the children against the adults about society

And the babies against the children about God
And the fetuses against the children about pre-being
And to know and be a baby more than a baby
To know that all the images are lies and are forbidden
Your soul is a sickly, abstract growth

The devoured preying of a demonic wild animal
That bursts forth from the cracks of the unconscious
Gorges on the soul from within
Leaving a skeleton gnawed on and sucked dry
Following this, everything is a fabrication
Of a parasitic historical creature that sits within the conscious
And chats up history without inhibition

The final poem in this analysis, "Personalities" is also the one written the latest, found within her final collection "מופע." In it, Wallach portrays the idea of history as an all-encompassing, overpowering force that rules over all who believe and buy into it. History, as Cohen describes "is not the almighty power that everybody reveres, nor was it meant to be[51]." Rather, history is an artifice, a work of magic, of sorcery that lures its devotees into a spell-like state, able and willing to believe all told to them. People do not 'revere' history, they alternately fear it and are comforted by it, using it to drown out the voice of the small stillness that speaks from within, attempting to rouse them to action against the bully that is history. This "voice of small stillness" to which Wallach refers within this verse hearkens to the strained, quiet voice of God that the prophet Elijah hears after a great earthquake, and a great fire.[52] Elijah searches for God amidst all of the turmoil and pageantry, yet hears God only softly, intimately. Wallach underscores that the voice of God, the real power comes after the rubble, the chaos, and the bluster, and it is that power that people fear the most. In that vein, Wallach claims that if that voice is ignored, if the words go unheeded, he "turns into a historical creature," unable to discern or act outside of the specifically designated narrative that history has laid out for him. Wallach here again plays

[51] Cohen *Loosen Thy Fetters* 209
[52] 1 Kings 19:12

with the arbitrary duality of sanity/madness, elevating in this beginning stanza those who eschew the societal norms and narratives that history has provided them, and instead opting to listen to the voices of 'prophecy' within themselves. According to Wallach, despite the implication of madness, this act is far saner than falling prey to the bullying, predatory voice of collective history.

As the poem continues, Wallach proceeds to degrade the idea of history, claiming, as it were that it is entirely a function of "copulation and personification," meaning that it is nothing but stories clumsily procured from one generation, and given merit by the next. History is "paranoid," always concerned that its hegemony over those who follow it will be broken, and its power lost. It is clear at this point, that Wallach is criticizing the almost oppressive collective narrative of history that Israel has attempted to perpetuate about itself, its inception as a state, its connection with the traditions of the past, and perhaps most importantly, how those who have died for its sake are both honored and remembered, since, as Wallach describes, history is "a classical Greek myth that creates gods," and the "rules are…as important as the dead." Wallach realizes that, as the historian Yael Zerubavel notes in her essay "Patriotic Sacrifice and the Burden of Memory in Israeli Secular Culture, "modern nationalism is intimately linked to the ethos of patriotic sacrifice,[53]" or as the renowned and beloved Israeli Military Hero Joseph Trumpeldour is purported to have uttered as he lay dying from a mortal wound, "It is good to die for one's country!" Wallach also realizes that by likening these heroes who have been so memorialized and exalted to bloodless Greek gods and statues, this is the best way to ensure the longevity of both the heroes, and the myths that have built up around them.

In her essay, Zerubavel explains that in order to create one national, collective and united voice, the "still small voices" that is innate within each person must be silenced. Thus, even if an ardent Zionist

[53] Zerubavel "Patriotic Sacrifice" 73

taking part in the creation and perpetuation of the Jewish state does not literally die for the sake of his country, there is a certain level of death of identity necessary. This is why the changing of one's surname – known as Hebraizing – was so vital when they made Aliyah in the first few generations of Aliyot. The old, Diaspora name – and the identity attendant to it – must die in order to form the "New Jew," the Israeli. Thus, David Gryn became Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion; Yitzhak Shimshelivich became Yitzhak Ben Zvi, and my grandfather, David Nivitsky became David Naveh. Ben Zvi was even quoted as saying:

> Our surnames are mostly of foreign origin, which cling to exile [...] even names based on Hebrew first names were damaged and distorted from the original [...] by German and English suffixes, like "son" or "sohn" and the Slavic "in", "ovich", "ovsky" and "shvili". These surnames fill the air and the pages of our newspaper, the posters and announcements in our streets and public squares [...] it is indeed not really clear if the hardship of this inheritance which remained with us as a result of the Middle Ages and subsequent ghettoization should be tolerated...[54]

This collective adaptation of new names demonstrated one way in which the desire of the early Zionist leaders for one national identity led them to elevate collectivization over individual voices. These individual voices serve but to fracture the narrative that these leaders attempted to perpetuate: that of strength, unity, defiance against all odds, and a readiness to put the land and the people above all. Consequently, this thrust towards collectivization was incredibly successful for a number of years, as the land flourished, kibbutzim rose, and Jews finally and officially regained control of the land that had been so close, and yet so far away from their reach for so long. Poets like Haim Gouri, Natan Alterman, Yitzhak Lamdan, and Chaim Bialik wrote beautifully longing poems swooning over the land, and the new breed of Israelis inhabiting it. Thus the subsequent generations' leaders set about not only continuing the myths their forebears started, but they instilled within them another tremendously important factor: collective memory and nostalgia. If a concession of personal identity is important in order to cultivate a national one, a collective memory – that is to say a united understanding of how history

[54] Ben Zvi, *Collected Writings*, vol. 4, pp 11-14

should be viewed, taught, and passed down to latter generations – is imperative to maintain it. In order to motivate the generations of Israelis who were born in Israel to not only continue the traditions passed down to them, but use them as a rallying cry to fight for – including Wallach herself, whose generation was among the first to be born actually in the land – they must have a healthy inculcation not only of what happened in the past, but why, and if and/or how it has either helped or hurt the causes of the Israeli people.

Thus the much-beloved General Trumpledour's mythic declaration[55] is used as a battle cry; the kibbutzim seen as the secular Jewish socialist ideal, and the scads of soldiers who perished, a means to the end of securing our freedom and our borders. For, as Wallach herself describes, nostalgia feels so much better than skepticism and disappointment. "This is how much people like history," she laments, "they smile a historic smile under a window" – likely an allusion to the doomed Sisera's mother futilely awaiting his return from battle as she sits and sighs by the window in the Song of Deborah[56]. They romanticize the past, while "escap[ing] from reality to a fictitious fabulous world.[57]" Nostalgia[58] is safe, it is comfortable, and it is easier than actually facing the oftentimes crippling effects of reality.

Yet Wallach sees the cracks deep within this heightened myth of Israeli identity, noting the "subconscious is overwhelmed with fear of an event." A myth is only as good as those who continue to perpetuate it, and, after the tragedies of 1973, fewer and fewer Israelis continued to buy into the nationalist myths, lest they "gradually slipped away from sanity as they slowly lost themselves." The

[55] According to legend, as Trumpledour lay mortally wounded defending the Zionist settlements in pre-state Palestine during the battle of Tel Hai in 1920, he proclaimed "טוב הדבר למות בעד ארצנו," which translates to "It is a good thing, to die for the sake of one's country!" It is likelier, however, that he uttered a barrage of curses in Russian before shuffling off this mortal coil

[56] Judges 5:28

[57] Cohen, *Loosen Thy Fetters* 211

[58] Israeli journalist Ari Shavit's most recent book *My Promised Land* actually tackles rather well the problematic nature of remembering history exclusively through the lens of nostalgia, focusing on how this leads to forgotten narratives, many of which have equal legitimacy as those narratives chosen to be remembered by the collective

myth of Israeli security so amplified after the surprise victory of ’67 had burst, and Wallach writes with the level of cynicism and incredulity that reflected what many others felt as well, undercutting the bullying narrative of history as it had come to a resounding halt.

Chapter 2 – Tamir Lahav: How I Remember, and How We Remember

Tamir Lahav-Radlemesser was a soldier. While he has since grown into a world-renowned poet, artist, graphic designer, and photographer, the tender, heartbreaking, moving poetry within his collection, תמונות מחזור, (“Yearbook”), published in 2003, carefully documents and reflects upon his experiences as a soldier. Each of the poems in this collection touches on Lahav’s time as an army medic and tank driver during the Yom Kippur War, and how these memories fit into the context of his family’s narrative — his father was a member of Israel’s elite Air Force who flew during the War of Independence — and into the greater narrative of the Israeli story. Each of the poems translated and analyzed below highlight the themes discussed in the previous chapter. However, where Wallach

explored and critiqued these themes by broadly criticizing the systems that perpetuate them, Lahav's work is informed by actually serving in the army and fighting in one of the bloodiest wars the young state of Israel has fought so far. Thus the aforementioned themes of masculinity, sexuality and gender, and the methods through which history is recollected and presented are filtered through personal experience, gruesome war detail, and deeply intimate reminiscences.

Lahav was born in 1953 in Jerusalem, putting him in the generation just after Yona Wallach and David Avidan. This gives Lahav a different insight into his relationship with earlier generations. Many of his poems delve into personal recollections of his childhood, particularly his relationship to his father. Often his father is used as a stand-in for those venerated icons of the generation just before his; his admiration for his father is apparent, but also an exemplification of the complicated relationship that he – and Israel in general – has with the past. Many of his poems veer and swerve between dream-like nostalgic recollection and cold, news report-like meditations on the current situation. The irony is that since the book of these poems, תמונות מחזור (*T'munot Mahzor),* translated as *Yearbook*, was published in 2003, these are all recollections of the past. The fact that they are so vividly, and yet in contrast to the original events, is representative of the complicated nature of memory, both personally for Tamir Lahav as a writer, and for Israeli society as a whole. Lahav, like Wallach, focuses specifically on when those two "memories" converge, and, perhaps more importantly, when they diverge. What made these poems, and Lahav in general, that much more appealing was that he wrote so candidly and starkly about serving as a gay soldier during the war. This fact, surely a complicated issue at his time of service, shows a complex relationship with the standard image of the Israeli male soldier and what it meant to live, serve, and fight as a gay male soldier in Israel at that time.

Another appeal of these poems is how Lahav, like Wallach, weaves liturgical and biblical texts and quotes so seamlessly into his poetry. Each quote demonstrates a mastery of both the language and of the tension held within it, as the language of such sacred and joyous texts but also the language of misogyny, battle, war, loss, and chaos. The fine line between the sacred and the profane is evident in every single word of Hebrew, and Lahav balances on that line, hammering in on the tension between the language's Jewish roots and its modern Israeli usage.

The profoundly personal nature of these poems made translating them feel somewhat like I was prying into the private thoughts of the poet. I hope that I captured the intimacy and struggle within the texts. The Hebrew texts of the poems themselves can be found in the appendix to this chapter. None of these poems are titled, giving a sense that these poems are akin to snapshots — fitting the more direct translation of the title of the collection — which Lahav is revisiting, 30 years after the fact, and which the reader has the honor of viewing, together with Lahav, as he recalls these stories.

(2)[59]

I turned him, and now he is lying on his back. I did not see a wound, there was no blood stain. I rolled him on his side. No wound, no blood. Ami had been driving the APC (Armored Protective Carrier) while Yuval shrieked his commanding orders. I turned him again, his eyes were open, and his arms had dropped backward. It was then that I saw the wound: a huge hole, free of blood, yet its lips still sharp. A shard of the missile still lodged within the armpit. The APC wandered among the dunes, and the two of us bumped into the sides. His body twitched. I could not open the First-Aid package. Yuval bent down and cried out "Is everything ok!?" I did not answer. I tried to rip the packaging in two, I tried removing his shirt.

"Bandage him, do it!" "Can you not see that he needs to be bandaged?" "Quickly now with the bandaging!" "Do you not see that he is struggling to breathe?" "So bandage him up already; quickly!" "Stop thinking, and just bandage him up already!" "There is no blood! No blood!" "No blood you say?" "Just bandage him already, he needs it!" "What to bandage?" "What to bandage?" "There is nothing to bandage!" "What is there left to bandage? His soul has already left, and there is no way to bandage us up"

[59] Translation mine

This is the second poem within the collection, and in many ways, Lahav uses it as an introduction to the poems that follow within the collection. In beginning immediately with the jarring image of the gruesome, and unfortunately futile, attempts to revive a dying soldier, Lahav presents a metaphor for the immediacy and shock of the war itself. The breakdown in communication between Yuval the commander and Tamir in their attempts to bandage the soldier's strange and un-bloody wound demonstrate a system in complete disarray; both the army and the general public were so taken aback by the initial invasions from the dual Egyptian and Syrian forces that started the war, that the first few days seemed to spell almost certain doom.

The war, much like the 'wound' that needed to be bandaged was far worse, far more horrific than either Yuval or Tamir could have possibly understood. Yuval's initial reaction is to bark commands at Tamir; his terror has led to a sort of default 'Commander' response as he screams to Tamir to bandage a wound that cannot be healed. The dialogue in the second stanza shows how Yuval's default, terrified commands are completely ineffective, as they slowly watch this soldier die in their APC. With this dialogue, Lahav demonstrates that the 'default' has been shattered; the '*sabra*'[60] response of gruff machismo, so deeply lionized during and as a result of the Six-Day War just 7 years earlier, no longer applies here in these chaotic times. The deconstruction of Israeli masculinity, along with the sharp contrast of what used to be and what is currently, figure heavily into Lahav's poetry, as Lahav uses the war to symbolize the overall shift in Israeli society that came as a result.

The last line once again highlights the 'weirdness' of the wound, the lack of blood surrounding it, and the senselessness in trying to 'bandage' an already departed soul. Lahav notes that the wound was

[60]A צבר, or '*sabra*' is a prickly cactus native to the Israeli desert region. It has been used as a nickname for native-born Israelis because of its prickly, abrasive outer layer that betrays a softer, tender inside.

חף מדם, a play on the Hebrew phrase חף מפשע, meaning "innocent" or "free of guilt," highlighting the soldier's innocence, and also most likely his youth. We are left to wonder, as the soul has already departed this soldier: where is it headed, and how can such a wound be healed?

These are the questions that set the tone for the poems that follow; Lahav will continue to explore how he will heal from his wounds and how Israel recovers from the weird, gruesome, and extraordinarily bloody wound that was the Yom Kippur War. Thus we see in this poem Lahav touching on and critiquing the theme of Israeli masculinity as a stand-in for the major cultural and generational shift that occurred as a result of, and immediately following, the Yom Kippur War, with the breakdown in conversation between the gruff 'manliness' of the '*sabra'* commander and Lahav's 'new sensitivity' showing two contrasting views both of masculinity and of Israeli society as a whole.

(3)[61]

Yom Kippur, 2:10: The planes have attacked and disappeared. A distinct smell of fire. We descended from the trenches. Ami had been driving the APC towards the houses. The house received a straight attack. Flames were overpowering it, thundering down the back as the walls collapsed. The medic stood opposite where the fire was entering, only yesterday had he been attached to our troop. He was standing straight, his back upon it, staring into space.
David dropped into my lap.
The medic stood.
"Nu, get up man! Move your ass!"
He stood up in silence
"Come here and take care of this, maybe you'll have more of a chance to actually do something, so get up!"
He stood up, with fire all about his back.
David dropped.
"Come here! Get over here now!"
We dragged David, and brought him into the APC.
He was not moving
"Come on already!" I said to him "Come on!"
David, in the sand.

[61] Translation mine

"Take care of him!"

We continued onward from there, toward the war. David in the sand, the medic standing straight, at his side.

Once again, this poem opens onto a scene of chaos, confusion, and fear, as Lahav continues to highlight the disarray and turmoil brought on by this war. Lahav utilizes the character of the new medic — who under 'normal' circumstances would have been properly trained and briefed on the situation into which they were being deployed — to demonstrate exactly the kind of off-kilter environment this surprise war had created. As a result, instead of reacting quickly and professionally, the medic freezes and balks, creating a foil for Tamir, who reacts in a fury, screaming at him to do his job and make himself useful. The roles are reversed from the previous poem, as Lahav puts himself in the role of 'male aggressor,' in contrast with the tenderness and intimacy of David 'collapsing' into his lap. This tenderness again shows Lahav tweaking the stereotypical image of Israeli masculinity, as he veers from panic-stricken anger towards the medic to sensitivity to the fallen David.

Lahav's usage of the name David within this poem highlights the subsequent connection made to the biblical David's heartfelt lament in the book of Samuel, as he mourns the death of Jonathan, whose "love was wonderful to me, more than the love of any woman.[62]" The relationship between David and Jonathan is shown as incredibly intimate, as before David goes off to battle, Jonathan gives of his most prized possessions, including his cloak, tunic, sword, bow, and belt. David and Jonathan's souls were bound up together; Jonathan loved David as himself,[63] all the while eschewing his father's wishes that David be swallowed up in battle. While claiming that David and Jonathan were homosexuals in the

[62] 2 Samuel 1:26. The section in which Jonathan's love of David is proclaimed, known as the קינת דוד, or David's Lamentation, is part of a much larger narrative in which David mourns his battle losses, and the gradual downfall of the Israelites. It is also recited every year on יום הזיכרון, the Israeli Memorial Day, by Israeli soldiers as a means both to highlight the collective mourning of the Israeli society, and to parallel the fallen soldiers of the present, with their Israelite ancestors

[63] 1 Samuel 18:1-5

modern sense of the term may be anachronistic, their deep devotion to each other, and the myriad ways in which it is represented throughout the text, is undeniable. Thus in this poem, Lahav's usage of David's name is a means of providing a shorthand clue to the intimate relationship felt between his own David and himself, except in this instance, Jonathan — Tamir — is mourning David, a key reversal from the biblical text. Additionally, by choosing to demonstrate this image of David, rather than the other many instances of the heroic David of military victory and (heterosexual) sexual conquests, Lahav subverts the vision of David most often utilized and seen in Israeli society[64]. This David is vulnerable, lying prone on the lap of another male, weakened, fallen, and broken.

The last line of the poem picks up as the argument ceases. The tank continues onward towards its uncertain fate, as Tamir, the medic, and David endure, frightened, wearied, and lost. Through this poem, Lahav again captures the image of Israeli masculinity, while upending the idea of a much-admired traditional figure as a means to highlight how 'different' Israeli society had become after the Yom Kippur War.

(4)[65]

Look, look to the sky David/how blue/on Shabbat/the sky, so clear blue/bluish grey/ on Shabbat/because God seized/to rest/here/on this sandy hill/lift up your eyes/on the sand/feast your eyes upon it/to the left, and the right/look!/as we smoke cigarettes/we look at the signs/(birds are not chirping)/we are looking/up at the sky above/nothing but sand here below/we are still looking/now you look, towards the heavens David/Look down now from the heavens/Behold, the planes!/One plane, David!/And now the second!/David!/The third!/The fourth/David!/Behold how beautiful!/How wondrous/like reeds/flying around/round and round, in the air/one plane following after the next, after the next, after the next/how amazing/lift up your eyes, David and see!/roaming back and forth on their wings/these planes!/looping and wandering/one on the tail of another, David!/Oh, they are descending now!/Descending, circling, and descending again!/David, look!/They're so close/They're scraping the sand!/Here's the pilot in his canopy now!/The second, the third and the fourth, David!/And now we are hidden away in the shelter of their wings/David, look!/Look!/There's fire on their wings!/Fire!/Fire is being dispatched from the skies!/Fire!/FIRE!/FIRE FROM THE SKY!/On you, David/On me!/Fire is falling!/ Get UP David and run!/GET UP AND RUN!/Here is the machine gun/and here is mine/lie on your back, David!/ On your back!/your barrel, up towards the sky/Towards the sky!/David, pull the trigger!/Pull David!/ I am pulling!/Shit, there's fire from the sky!/Fire from machine guns/fire in the sky!/Look, they're circling again!/Circling!/One, and the other, and the third, and the fourth!/All circling/There's fire on their wings/Fire and thunder/On their wings!/Pull the trigger, David!/PULL!/Don't let go!/We shouldn't let

[65] Translation mine

go!/Fire is ascending towards the sky!/Fire is coming down FROM the sky!/In the sky and on land!/Fire is descending/Bring mercy from heaven/Have mercy, He who dwells in Heaven/Fire and fire are touching!/Look, the eyes of the pilot!/Look at his eyes!/His eyes in mine!/Look, fire is bursting from its wings!/David, we hit it!/We struck it!/Do NOT let go of the trigger!/Don't loosen your grip!/We didn't strike!/Here is the thunder!/Look, the fire is still glowing!/Fire is consuming itself!/Fire inside of us/Look, the sand all over the air!/Look, you've landed/You're landing, David/On me!/David you're falling/David, wake up!/ Wake up David!/You're too heavy David!/Wake up!/Squeeze the trigger, David!/Wake up!/And we'll get out of here/Away from the sand/Away from the ashes/Away from the fire/David get up/Get up you beautiful boy, you/your head full of dew/your hair, like a horse at night/Your body, with its pathways and exit-ways/pathways and exit-ways/Your body is too heavy on me!/Get up I said!/ I said GET UP!/Quickly, and immediately!/Get up!/ David, please!/Wake up, please!/Rise, please!/Stand-Up, Please!/Present yourself and stand…please!/Please stand up/Please!/Quickly and without haste!/We can just listen to the quiet/We can stare at the sky/the transparent sky/the bluish grey sky/Fire on Shabbat!/For God seized…/We can just listen to the quiet/Such quiet here/And hot/October, and it's hot!/Hot like blood/Blood is hot/My fingers in your holes/My fingers in your exit-ways/They're so hot!/My fingers, in your wounds!/So blood won't flow out/blood, it won't flow out/So that blood will not squeeze out of your insides/So that you won't be exhausted David/So…you…will…cease…/Our father, our king, act for the sake of those who've come by the fire/Do for those who have been burned, those who have died, those who have nursed/Do it!/For those who sleep in the dust/Do it!/Quickly and without haste!/Do it!/Do it, I SAID!/Do for us, for the sake of your name!/Please do for us, in order to lengthen our days/Do it!/Quickly now, fast!/Do it!/Now!/Fast!/Do it!/The fire is bubbling up!/And the wind!/The wind!/Clouds, there are none/Rain, none/No wind/Blood…already none.

The title of this poem says it all: מזמור לדוד, a song for David; although as it continues on it reads more like a desperate plea, a stinging supplication, a frantic appeal, and a final concession. Lahav packs the poem with liturgical references, including a number of stinging references to the Yom Kippur liturgy, a cutting commentary on this terrible war of atonement occurring on the Day of Atonement itself. The poem's stark, repetitive, and almost incantatory rhythm shifts back and forth from awe — the speaker calling out planes flying above on a bucolic, sunny Shabbat morning — to pleading, as the speaker begs the David character — who switches back and forth from the dying soldier to the King and traditional author of the Psalms — to 'get up,' rouse himself from inaction, from near-death and be with him, even as he fades away for good.

The poem begins as we witness two friends lying on the ground staring up at the clear blue sky. The repetition starts out less like an incantation than childlike wonder; much of Lahav's poetry emphasizes his love and awe of airplanes, and with this poem, the first few lines breezily create

incredible images of these planes doing aerial stunts, as if in an air show, there exclusively for the entertainment of our two protagonists. The childlike wonder continues even as the speaker calls out the fire falling down from the planes, slowly engulfing the planes, the repetition implying the puzzled nature in which a child would respond to seeing such images in the sky. The placement of the poem itself so early in the collection shows Lahav's representation of the chaos of the first few days of the Yom Kippur War, and how within a matter of mere minutes, Israel was plunged into an almost unprecedented level of vulnerability and fear. Lahav uses the first few images of the bucolic Shabbat scene to represent the days of בטחון עצמי ("self-confidence") that followed the overwhelming victory of the Six-Day-War. Suddenly, the country seemed invincible; the clouds had lifted, and blue skies followed, until the dual invasion of the Yom Kippur War seven years later. The suddenness of this invasion is portrayed in the near immediate descent into a quick, fast-paced style of writing, demonstrating both the frenetic, often suffocating nature of the war, and the near immediate shift in the Israeli psyche. The dream that had been cultivated for so long had turned into a dizzying nightmare.

All of a sudden, the splendid air show descends into madness, and the speaker's call to הביט בשמים ("Look at the sky!") becomes a literal call to arms, beseeching David to grab his gun and shoot. No longer are these planes to admire; the lazy Shabbat day is torn in shambles. The near constant repetition of fire imagery is one of the many Yom Kippur liturgy references, calling to mind the אונתה טוקף *("Let us Proclaim the Awesomeness…")*[66], which asks of us to accept the seemingly whimsical nature of God's final judgment and decree; 'who by fire,' the prayer inquires, cruelly mocking those

[66] The *U'netanah Tokef*, a liturgical poem traditionally claimed to have been written by Rabbi Amnon of Mainz is considered to be one of the linchpins of the Yom Kippur service. The poem describes how the fate of all people is written on Rosh Hashanah – the Jewish New Year – and sealed on Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement. It continues with a list of the various means in which people will perish that year, ending with the phrase 'But Repentance, Prayer, and Charity, can annul this harsh decree.' In recent years, as a result of the Yom Kippur War, the poem has taken on a new meaning, and a version recorded and sung by Yair Rosenblum to honor those members of Kibbutz Bet Hashita who perished in the Yom Kippur War can frequently be found on Israeli pop radio stations around the High Holiday season.

soldiers' unwitting fulfillment of that prayer. As David fades further into death, the poem references directly the language of [67]אל מלא רחמים, ("God, Full of Compassion") calling on God to take David into his sheltering wings, knowing that this protection is divine, but ultimately fatal.

The myriad liturgical and biblical elements in this poem reflect Lahav's understanding of the fusion and collapse between reality and theology that is omnipresent in Israeli society. That is to say, Jews living in Israel live their daily lives under the umbrella of a Jewish state, with all of its attendant theological and ideological implications. As a result, there is a strong debate about whether they are Jews or Israelis first, and if and how those two identities diverge. As discussed in the previous chapter, early Zionist leaders, in laying the groundwork for what would eventually become the Jewish State, sought to separate themselves and their successors from the Jews of the diaspora, creating an Israeli identity by taking the rituals, traditions, and ideologies of traditional Judaism, and coopting them for Zionist and distinctively Israeli purposes. An example of this that Lahav strongly echoes in this poem is the usage of Psalm 121 as the unofficial 'theme song' of the צה"ל, (the Israeli Defense Forces). The Psalm, with its swooping, moving imagery of the Eternal Guardian who neither slumbers nor sleeps, supplanting God with the heroic forces of the Israeli soldiers. The Psalm, a brief eight verses, begins similarly to Lahav's, as the narrator looks up to the sky imploring for "my help. My Help will come from God, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.[68]" Thus Lahav plays on this tension between the traditional image of God as the eternal redeemer of the people Israel and the secular Zionist re-appropriation in order to continue to further and perpetuate the Israeli narrative. As David Jacobson notes,

[67] אל מלא רחמים (*El Malei Rahamim)* "God, Full of Mercy" is a traditional prayer recited by and for mourners to honor a loved one who has perished either recently, or on the date of the anniversary of their passing. The language asks God to provide eternal mercy, shelter, and protection, and that they be bound up in the bonds of God's love, and life

[68] Psalm 121:2

> Zionism rejected the traditional notion of the dependence of the Jew on God, and instead advocated more active human efforts to fulfill the needs of Jews to sustain themselves physically, to determine their values and life style and to protect themselves from the forces that caused their suffering.[69]

Zionist leaders attempted to fashion an identity that was completely self-reliant, but in a way that was in concert with the language Jewish émigrés to Israel would both understand and connect with. Thus the images of planes swerving so quickly and dangerously close, with fire shooting out of them is so poignant: these planes in the sky are supposed to be the saviors, the redeemers of the people; they are the replacement God. So when they start attacking, cutting into the pastoral imagery of the blue sky and the sandy hill, it feels like both an abandonment by, and a direct attack from, God. And as the pleas heavenward become more insistent, and more impassioned, the feeling of loss becomes that much more agonizing. The Psalm, meant to be a poignant plea to God the redeemer and savior, now becomes a sort of macabre, cruel joke. Not only do we as the reader feel this soldier's devastation about his friend's quick and brutal death, Lahav makes sure to show it as representative of the breakdown of the system itself. These planes that were supposed to neither slumber nor sleep are not indestructible; the guardianship of the military that was supposed to be eternal is finite. The Zionist state that was supposed to be built and sustained on self-reliance, with no need to rely on any deity to protect it, has crumbled, falling victim, ironically, to one of its earliest biblical oppressors. This existential panic is reflected subsequently in the manic pace that the poem picks up as it continues. Lahav continues to plead towards the skies, making full, beautiful use of the double meaning of this term, as skies and as 'heavens,' imploring David to 'look up,' 'look at the fire,' while simultaneously begging God to respond and 'Do for us…' 'Do something!' The inherent trust within the Psalms that God does and will respond has been shattered and may never return.

[69] David C. Jacobson *Does David Still Play Before You?* Wayne State University Press (June 1, 1997) p. 206

Quickly, the incantation morphs completely into a plea, swerving breathlessly between David and God. The נקבים חלולים, ("Pathways and Entryways") except these are not the entrance ways and exit ways[70] for which we are required to thank God; they are bullet holes, and the speaker attempts to plug them with his fingers, in ironic dissonance with the specific language of the prayer that proclaims complete bodily ineffectiveness if those holes were to ever be stopped up. All the while, the speaker entreats David to keep awake, stay with him, using language from Song of Songs to describe his beauty, likening him even more to מלך דוד, ("King David"), heartthrob and author of the Psalms. However, this poem is the opposite, the antithesis of the traditional מזמור, as in contrast to the Psalms of the תנ"ך, (*Tanakh*, or the Hebrew Biblical Canon), this David is completely passive, being implored to action by Lahav as he lays dying. Lahav rather pointedly uses this image to highlight both the incredible intimacy between himself and this David — as he did in the previous poems — but also to a king and a kingdom in disarray, lifeless, fallen.

With the final few lines of the מזמור, ("Song"), the incantation shifts into a sort of fever dream, as the speaker calls out to אבינו מלכינו[71], (Our Father Our King) in a more pointed reference to Yom Kippur liturgy and the chaos of being thrust into battle on such a holy day.

Again, the last few words end with a conciliation; having thrown up his hands in defeat, the speaker stops beseeching, the incantation terminates, and his fevered pleas cease. David has bled out, the ספר החיים (The Book of Life) has closed, and the שערי שמים, (the Gates of Heaven) have been shut,

[70] This language comes from the section of Daily Prayer, known as "ברכות השחר" (*Birhot HaShahar),* "Morning Blessings." The prayer, known as the אשר יצר (*Asher Yatzar)* "The One Who Created" thanks God for creating our bodies with purposeful intricate design, and is one of the first prayers to be recited in the morning. Traditionally, it was recited just after waking and rising from bed.

[71] אבינו מלכינו, (*Avinu Malkeinu)*, "Our Father, Our Sovereign" are the first two words in a series of pleas to God recited during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, asking God's forgiveness for our various transgressions and sins of the previous year. These pleas are recited to an open Torah ark, collectively as a congregation.

and the redemption that has been promised by God throughout the High Holidays, which is begged and pled for by Jews in fervent prayer, has not been brought. Rather, God brings death, destruction and wrath.

This poem, perhaps more than the others in this collection, seeks to topple the ideological overlay — and the need for a continued myth to be perpetuated — that Zionist leadership had so deeply clung to in its attempt to rebuild and revitalize the nation of Israel. In framing this poem as a psalm, Lahav highlights this overlay, while demonstrating how vulnerable it is, and how in contrast to the other times in which the Israelis were tested with prior battles, this war is different, and the outcome is far more violent than expected.

(5)[72]

My father served 10 years in the air-force. For over 30 years, he flew Boeing planes in the service of El-Al. On the shelves of my bedroom, lining one side was the Encyclopedia of Culture, standing in perfect lines, from the first, to the last, with every single article on the air-force. I read them every single night, all of them, page after page, image after image, stories of munitions, and adjutancy, procurements, and equipping yourself, stories of heroism, and of brave air combat, I was fixated by all of them. I saw the annual detailed descriptions of the Commander of the soldiers, and all of the joys of flying. I was a little boy, in an air-force family.

Together with my father, and with the soldiers I entered the age of the Jetstream: Meteor Planes, Oregon Planes, with huge excitement for the coming of the "Mister Planes" to be operational, "Hoo-toor Planes," and of course the "Super-Misters!" Ooh-la-la, the "Super-Mister!" How chic, it must be a mirage!" How elegant those Masters of the Delta wings were! Much prettier than us! I called my dog "Mirage." And also Shoshi, a girl from my class, because of the perfect triangle on her face. The American Skyhawk, and the Heavy Phantom, Master of the Rear tail, sloping and looping in the air like a rectangle, "such noise it's making! Such shrieking in the air!"

*

Sunday morning, the second day of the war, my APC is transporting the artillery officers to the water line, opposite the "nutcracker" post. To our right one tank, to our left, the second, and that was it. There were no other forces in that area, and there was no one else there to halt the Egyptians from pushing back the border. Shards of Sagger Missiles were strewn all around our trench, and they continued to be launched. Fire, from the machine guns, smoke, missiles, all sorts of weapons. And planes. Four Skyhawk planes,

[72] Translation mine

returning from the bombing; they were coming closer. Three planes, crossing the trenches; the fourth, crosses, and bombs. Such beauty, such beauty! Such noise, and look, there's fire falling from the skies, what a breathtaking vision this is. Thunder is coming out from the fire! Such beauty, shattering the ground, and quaking the land. A pillar of fire in the dune, and the plane is not falling!

What an idiot! That was ours! What foolishness! Where is the joy!? That was ours, that Skyhawk! I know that plane, I can recognize it, I bought the model; I've seen pictures, I even took courses! I've seen the same plane 100 times! 'Such beauty,' I said; such splendor, such wonderful death. Such storms, such tempests, such fiery flames. The world is damned; it burns, while I sing.

*

I threw out all of my journals about the Air Force.

And now, every time a plane flies above in the sky, I pass to the shady side of the street

In the Israeli Army, few companies rank higher than the Air Force, filled with the most elite of the Israeli soldiers. The Air Force, like the Paratroopers, were lionized by Israeli society, considered to be the ultimate achievement for the Israeli male soldier.[73] As such, it is fitting that Lahav begins this poem as an elegy both for the awe and wonder he used to feel about airplanes, and for his heroic father, who flew them. By starting his poem off with such a nostalgic, childlike image of his father, Lahav is already setting up a contrast between himself and his father; he was a "little boy in an Air Force family," and this poem makes clear that he struggled with that identity, castigating himself later in the poem for that same awe and wonder he used to feel about the planes he loved so much. Thus we are presented with an important duality in this poem: Lahav's father the heroic pilot, whom we see in later poems flying in and out of exotic lands, versus Lahav the scared, confused tank driver, whom we see in earlier poems fluctuating between moments of abject terror and heartrending intimacy. The former is just the sort of idealized Israeli masculinity that Lahav seems to believe is in the past, while the current iteration hews far closer to his own representation of himself, in the stanza in which he describes the war scene: frightened, confused, still attempting to be awed and inspired by the planes above — and the ideals they represent — while knowing that these planes only bring destruction and death.

[73] See the Yona Wallach chapter in this thesis on the integration of the Air Force as a result of a lawsuit following the Yom Kippur War

As in the previous poem, Lahav cries out about the fire descending from the skies, creating a pillar of fire, in an apparent reference to the pillar of fire in which God travelled as protection as the Israelites wandered through the wilderness towards the promised land[74]. However, Lahav notes that these are Egyptian planes causing the fire to crash down towards the earth from the skies, and the "planes are not falling," even though the pillar of fire remains. These Skyhawk planes, this pillar of fire, this image of the invincible army and the invincible men fighting within it, these were supposed to bring redemption and protection, but they've been stolen by the enemy, turned into weapons, and used instead to bring death. Lahav continues the equation of God's protective force with the force of the IDF that he utilized in the previous poem, highlighting how brutally that protective force has been coopted by the other side.

The poem ends as Lahav castigates himself for his own naïveté and gullibility. In a sense, he feels as if he has been duped by the enemy, who so viciously stole away his innocence and his sense of safety. However, he also feels that he has been duped by his past; how could he have really believed that Israel would continue to be invincible forever? Did he really believe that he and his generation could live up to the venerated generation before, continuing to provide Israel with that protective force with which he had grown up? In the last line of the penultimate stanza, Lahav quotes the Midrash on the text of *Shirat Ha-Yam*, the Song of the Sea, the joyous poem Moses recites after the Israelites cross through the Red Sea triumphantly. The Midrash shows God rebuking the Israelites for cheering, "even as my people die,"[75] implying that even those who sought the death and destruction of the Israelites were God's

[74] Exodus 13:21
[75] Exodus Raba 23:7

people. Lahav is no longer sure who warrants, nor who receives, the protection from the planes above; he just laments that he stood singing; awestruck, terrified, and lost, as his people continued to burn.

(6)[76]

"In the beginning, I did not fear death. On the second day, I was killed. Then, the fear came. And stayed."

In its brevity, this poem packs a wallop. Lahav describes a cocky soldier, all swagger and strength, who shows no sign of fearing death or battle. Without any of the previous poem's description of how, nor any of the fever dream elements of מזמור לדוד, he dies, and immediately, fear comes, and does not leave. Perhaps more than any of the other poems, this poem in particular shows how this war was different than the others, and the outcomes were that much more brutal. In the beginning, the previous wars, life prior to 1973, there was no need to fear death; Israel had been victorious. Celebration drowned out any need for worry, which subsequently led to the vulnerability that started the Yom Kippur War. Thus, this cocky soldier's swagger was not only unfounded but dangerous, leaving himself open to the inevitable. And the fear, anxiety, weakness, and brokenness that followed the Yom Kippur War for Israel arrived in spades, and did not leave.

[76] Translation mine

(7)[77]

A Memory from Childhood: I am 3 years old. This would turn out to be the beginning of the "holy situation." My father was travelling in the service of the air-force. A long trip – one month, two months. Dad returned from France, and brought me a gift: a pear, and also a bicycle. I recall the bicycle because of a photograph in black and white. Regarding the pear, it had the taste of a far-off land, and a sweet smell.
Another memory from Childhood: When the war broke out, my mother and I travelled to Jerusalem to my grandparents' house. On the edge of the neighborhood, next to the Angel Bakery, there was a small landing strip for some small planes. One day, a Piper plane landed there, in khaki colors. I ran there with all of the neighborhood children to gaze at this wonder. I managed to get the closest of anyone else there. One man picked me up on his arms, stroked my head, and kissed my forehead. The rest of the children were furious, they requested the same. But I was terrified of the black eye-patch upon his eye.

Memory of my teenage years: The chrysanthemum field was the field of pits. We dug and dug until our heads were no longer visible from above the ground. Tourjeman had amputated all of its fingers, and only one remaining guy from the neighborhood had not been drafted. "No big deal," we said to him, "you must have a reason," but Tourjeman had hidden itself under a pit, and stayed quiet. But we children played "hands-up" and we wanted a situation that would bring about a real war, even if it only lasted one or two days, or maybe for six.

A memory from adulthood: What luck, the war of attrition has ceased! I am going to go sunbathe for 3 days over by the Suez Canal.

[77] Translation mine

Lahav traces the arc of the brief history of the state of Israel through his own personal recollections; in doing so, Lahav demonstrates that there is no such thing as 'objective history,' and that nostalgia, memory, and personal experience will perpetually color how past events are seen, related to, and interpreted for future generations.

In breaking down the 'myth' of the Israeli collective memory, this is almost a response piece to Wallach's poem "אישים" that demonstrates the big voice of 'history' that so many are scared into believing. That the poem ends immediately before the start of the Yom Kippur War highlights that the War was the catalyst in disrupting the prevailing narrative of Israel.

Once again, Lahav sets up the deconstruction of the collective memory through contrasting the narrator — presumably Lahav himself — with his pilot father and the much beloved Israeli war hero Moshe Dayan[78] with regards to 'heroism' and 'masculinity.' Both are portrayed as the ideal, but the ideal of the past, what Lahav — and by proxy the Israeli society — remembered as the 'ideal.' Lahav's usage of Dayan in particular demonstrates the contrast in the memory of the 'ideal past' versus its much grittier reality, as his status as the much beloved and near-universally admired war hero of the War of Independence and the Six-Day War faded almost immediately after the public implicated him in the Israeli military's botched and delayed response to the dual invasions of Egypt and Syria. While Dayan was not initially implicated by the Agranat Commission, the public saw him as representing the old-guard that had so disappointed them, leaving them vulnerable in the face of what seemed like near certain doom. Lahav understood that this recollection of Dayan would elicit the dual response of

[78] **Moshe Dayan** (1915-1981) – Israeli military hero, and politician, serving as the Fourth Chief of Staff to the Israeli Army, as Defense Minister during both the Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 – for which he was strongly castigated by the Israeli public for his administration's apparent mishandling of the war – and as Foreign Minister to Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1977. His advisement to Prime Minister Begin during his tenure as Foreign Minister contributed to Israel's participation in the Camp David Accords.

adoration and disappointment, the idealized heroism and the fall from grace. The fact that this stanza ends with Lahav recalling that he was scared of the man with the black eye-patch implies a certain ominousness on his end, as if he somehow always knew that Dayan's worship would fade, and that the idealized golden years of Israel would end.

The poem's last line, called a "memory from adulthood," is certainly a play on the innocence and hubris that clouded Israel immediately after the Six-Day War. Despite the intermittent skirmishes along the Egyptian border that followed the war in 1967, skirmishes that in hindsight were likely harbingers of the Egyptian invasion in 1973, Israeli society was joyous in its apparent victory. Lahav's seemingly innocuous desire to go sunbathing on the Suez is a key example of dramatic irony for the Israeli reader, as they know that so much of the brutality of the Yom Kippur War took place along the Suez Canal. For the poem to end almost immediately before that violence starts is a cruel, but effective, means of highlighting how vastly different society was immediately after, in terms of its trust in the government in specific, and its belief in the greater Israeli narrative in general.

Thus this poem skewers the myth of Israeli exceptionalism through Lahav's personal recollections and memories, demonstrating that how events in history are remembered is often as important, if not more so, than how the events may have actually taken place.

(8)[79]

Look, there
In the sand, he
Lays. He
Has no face, nor has he
Sight
His shirt, tossed off
Onto his head, for coverage.

"Medic, injection, the infusion bag is empty!"

Look, there
Upon the sand he,
Lays: Pants rolled up, underwear
Around his knees
He lies on the sand.

"Stretcher! Ambulance! Stretcher! Stretcher!"

Look, there
On the sand, a patch of color
His nakedness in death, in a patch of color
The stark shining of the sun
October is being consumed.

[79] Translation mine

There was no time. We turned the wounded, and lowered them one after another into the APC, and fastened them into the stretchers, which we positioned in a long line on the sand, on the side of the street, there was no time. With regard to the corpses, they lowered them from the stretchers and lay them all down in the sand, there was a shortage. There was no time. My APC held 6 of the wounded, one next to another, as there was no room. Wound next to wound, skin beside skin, blood alongside blood, us all alongside each other, scream alongside scream, wail alongside wail. Groaning, yowling, shriek alongside shriek, shouting alongside shouting, crying and chaos alongside the roar of the engine. There was not time. There wasn't.

There is not time. And there are no
Blankets to cover the stains
The October sun

Look
Swollen jeans, but there is no
Coverage, and my eyes strain from
The delicate sun

October, it is
The cruelest month.

This poem is a conversation between the 'past event' and its recollection, both of which are interjecting and interrupting each other, with the immediacy and urgency of the — seemingly futile — attempts to save this body, juxtaposed with Lahav's laments on their inability to do so.. As such, the paragraph in which Lahav bemoans the lack of time to help the disheveled body found on the side of the road reads like an apology, or an ex post facto rationalization from a narrator on whose mind this event still weighs heavily. That there was not enough time is repeated frequently throughout the poem, in a number of different iterations, both past and present tense, such that it eventually becomes a mantra, the line that those in charge would continue to use to justify their utter lack of preparedness in the face of dual invasion by Egypt and Syria in October of 1973. Lahav uses this mantra to demonstrate how history is entirely contingent on how we choose to remember it for ourselves, and how we choose to recall it to other people; the "big voice" of history that Wallach refers to in her poem "אישים" ("Personalities") can be subdued by the power of people's shared recollections.

Lahav recalls the callous method in which the wounded were stacked in his vehicle, "wound next to wound, skin beside skin," echoing the language used by Moses to the Israelites when laying out the code of civic law at Sinai. A literal translation of this code allows for exact physical revenge to be demanded and obtained in the case of a physical attack: "life for life, eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, wound for wound, and bruise for bruise."[80] Later rabbinic authorities argue within the Talmud[81] whether this text should be read literally, or whether it regards the financial compensation due for the loss of that person's limb in the context of the work he is unable to provide on account of the loss, highlighting, as W. Gunther Plaut notes in his commentary on this section of the Torah, the "gross inequity" that would follow as a result, along with attempting to curb any attempts at so-called 'personal retaliation,' outside of the code system[82]. However, Lahav uses this language to reduce the wounded to nothing but their shrieks, wounds, cries, and pains; if the rabbis of the Talmud attempt to emphasize the humanity within the ostensibly violent texts, Lahav parallels the language to showcase the dehumanizing nature of this war. This war is ugly, it is painful, and it is messy. There are no heroes, as men dissolve into – and are subsequently identified solely by – wounds, shrieks, cries, and blood. As Lahav describes, vengeance of any kind cannot come, because they cannot even identify the eye, the tooth, or the wound; they are all one. This image echoes the conversation between God and Cain in the book of Genesis, as God rebukes Cain proclaiming that "your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground[83]" when Cain attempts to hide his murder of Abel. In this chaos, when blood is mixed with blood, and shrieks with other shrieks, even God cannot identify the voices of those murdered; they have all become one broken, piercing voice.

[80] Exodus 21:24-5, and again in Leviticus 24:19-21
[81] Talmud Bava Kamma 83:b-84a
[82] W. Gunther Plaut, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, 2005, p.529
[83] Genesis 4:10

In stark contrast to the manner in which the wounded are described way is the manner in which the dying soldier is described and the aspects of his body, dress, and disposition that are highlighted: his "shirt tossed off…underwear around his knees…his nudity in death, in a patch of color." These suggestive, almost sensual, details betray a certain carnal connection that Lahav feels towards the body, even though he is given no further identification. We know not whether he is a soldier, nor whether he is Israeli, Arab, or otherwise – nor context as to why his jeans are rolled up, and his "underwear half off." He is nameless, faceless, and sightless, yet he is described in such an erotic undertone, as if being objectified. Through Lahav's descriptions, the body is reduced to sex: jeans rolled up, underwear pulled down, and shirt off, in a manner more befitting someone about to engage in a hurried, passionate sexual act. Conversely, this description could also reveal a body violated, shamed, and desecrated. Lahav uses the term לכסות, 'for coverage,' purposefully in this context, echoing the passage in Genesis when Noah's two sons Shem and Japheth cover up their father's nakedness after Noah drinks to excess[84]. The Hebrew term used for nakedness in this passage, ערום, implies more than just physical nudity, introducing a level of shame, embarrassment, and vulnerability to the act of being nude. While nudity involves being devoid of clothes, nakedness, especially in the manner in which Noah is described in Genesis, is deeply shaming, and should be hidden away and covered.

As such, in noting that the man's shirt was used לכסות ("to cover"), Lahav infers a deep violation of the most basic dignity of this body, thus making the sensuality in which his physical appearance is described more poignant and raw. This is a shrewd reference to the idea of the 'spoils of war,' the rewards taken after a successful conquest in battle. These rewards can be sexual in nature, monetary, or land based. In the case of the wars of Israel – certainly the Six-Day War – the rewards for Israel's battles were land, reclaiming Jerusalem, and the better part of the Sinai Peninsula. However, the Yom Kippur

[84] Genesis 9:21-25

War was a defensive fight, as Israel – especially in the chaos of the first few days of battle – grasped to maintain any control of the borders they already had, fending off the encroaching Egyptian forces from the South and the Syrian forces from the North. There were no spoils of this war, no rewards of conquest, just an army, a country, and a people left violated, brutalized, and desecrated.

Lahav ends with a reference to T.S. Eliot's classic poem "The Waste Land," claiming that October (rather than Eliot's April) is indeed the cruelest month, a reference both to the brutal heat of October in the desert and the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. Eliot begins his poem with this line, continuing on for 434 lines, wending quickly yet effortlessly through countless biblical, mediaeval, and early 20th century British references before ending with the Sanskrit line "Shantih Shantih," known as the "peace mantra" when recited at the beginning and the culmination of Hindu prayer services. The reason for its threefold recitation is that this declaration is supposed to calm the three realms of the physical, the divine, and the internal, bringing a level of peace to the person reciting it. Authors have noted the irony of Eliot ending this tremendously frenetic poem fraught with linguistic, generational, and narrative shifts with a blessing of peace,[85] but it can be read as a salve, a means to calm and comfort the reader – and arguably Eliot himself – after such a wild poetic ride. By contrast, Lahav chooses to end his poem with the first line, implying that the chaos Eliot is attempting to soothe with his final line is only about to begin as the war escalates, and Israeli society, as it was prior to the war, begins to break down.

[85] See "'Shantih' in the Waste Land" by K. Narayana Chadran from *American Literature* Vol. 61, No. 4 (Dec., 1989), pp. 681-683

(9)[86]

In 11th grade, he was the handsomest of all of the boys,
I saw him again one Tuesday morning
When we tended to the wounded at "נוצה"

He was being dragged to the side of the road
Helmet in hand, his shirt unraveled,
But his lips were moving. He was talking to himself.

He could not hear my calling
He could not see me waving my hand.

We lowered the wounded into the entrance of the bunker,
That evening the Egyptians took control of our fort

This poem once again emphasizes the danger when the innocence of nostalgia butts up against the brutal violence of reality. The reader is never given any further clue as to whether this 11th grade crush reciprocated Lahav's feelings, although one can intimate that he did not, and that the innocent memory of the boy's aesthetic perfection outweighs the prospective awkwardness of the actual situation. In reality, the boy may not have known Lahav particularly well, and Lahav may have struggled painfully with a crush on a fellow male classmate in a repressive, heterosexually oriented society.

[86] Translation mine

However, this poem only hints at that reality, when Lahav, confused and seemingly heartbroken that his crush does not recognize him amidst the rubble and the injuries, returns to the quotidian act of tending to the war wounded. It would initially seem both silly and crass to the reader for Lahav to expect this obviously wounded, and possibly delirious, soldier to recognize him even if they had a strong relationship in high school, however that confusion turns to pity as the reader realizes both that Lahav's crush went nowhere, and that this beautiful memory of this beautiful boy has just been shattered.

In demonstrating this sad contrast between memory and reality, Lahav reveals that nothing is ever as chaste and innocent as remembered, and there is real peril in looking only backwards and only looking in such a manner that is comfortable or beneficial for the person remembering. With the last line, and the casualness in which it is written, Lahav parallels his own mistakes in looking at the past through rose-colored glasses with the hagiographic way in which Israeli society did the same immediately following the '67 war.

(11)[87]

Father, father, what happened
What happened there?
What happened
In the forests?
Tell me, Tell me!
So that I can finally know
What happened
To me there?

While this is one of the shorter poems in the collection, in its brevity it speaks to many of the same themes Lahav touches on previously, namely how the past is both remembered and utilized. Poem number seven shows the arc of Israeli history through Lahav's personal recollection, demonstrating the personal and intimate nature of memory as history, thus highlighting the interpretive and subjective nature of historical narrative. In contrast, this poem shows Lahav begging and pleading for a level of context, both historically and personally, in which to frame the chaos of this war. With this poem, Lahav seeks to find some means to understand this war, and how it fits in the greater narrative of Israel. Lahav writes that in order for him to understand what has happened to him as a result of that war – likely using himself as a stand-in for the greater Israeli society – he must understand what has come before and how the generations that preceded him built and framed the narrative.

[87] Translation mine

In beseeching for a historical framework in which to place the Yom Kippur War, Lahav is implicitly noting how exceptional the war, and its resultant outcome, were to Israeli society. Thus once again, this is not the standard image of the Israeli soldier, but one who is alienated and lost.

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Chapter 3 – David Avidan: Word-Man

Of a somewhat earlier generation than Yona Wallach, and arguably with as much influence on the bending, flexing, and stretching of the Modern Hebrew linguistic boundaries, "help[ing] the biblical tongue evolve into a modern, living language[89]" is David Avidan. Avidan saw in Hebrew almost infinite potential for play, along with the opportunity to use it as a tool to shape the future, while chipping away at the past. Almost all of his poetic works contain some kind of clever wordplay; Avidan would often literally bend Hebrew words and letters in and around his poems until their near-breaking point[90] in order to prove the flexibility of a language rooted in ancient times, but which springs to life renewed on a daily basis. As noted poet and translator Lisa Katz has written, on Avidan's gravestone is perhaps the most apt word to describe his love for and constant creation of Hebrew words: "[91]אדמילה," (*adamila)* a 'word-man,' a combination of the Hebrew words for man (אדם) and word (מילה).

[89] *New York Times*, "Obituary of David Avidan," May 13, 1995
[90] See "נשורת תקשורתית" (תשדורות מלוויין-ריגול) in which Avidan bends the meaning – and the physicality – of the words of the Israeli national anthem "Hatikvah" to represent an older man achieving an erection during sexual intercourse
[91] Avidan would take great joy in the fact that the red line that signifies a misspelled or unknown word in the Microsoft Word word-processor is underneath both the Hebrew and transliteration of this term

Born in 1934 in Tel Aviv, Avidan was technically a contemporary of Natan Zach and Yehuda Amichai; however, he did not reach nearly the level of universal renown and celebrity as they did, perhaps because of his proclivity to challenge the limitations of language and everything that it stood for. He attended one of the premiere Gymnasia Schools in Tel Aviv and was an active member of Israel's Communist Youth organization, even having some of his first poems published in its house newspaper "קול העם" ("The Voice of the People"). He continued to publish upwards of two dozen collections of poetry, along with a number of plays, children's books, and films. The titles of many of his poetry collections demonstrate Avidan's desire to challenge and be challenged by the awe-inspiring technologies of the future, and how they can be used – like language – both as tools for the future and the past. In 1974, he published a collection called "הפסיכיאטר האלקטרוני שלי" (*My Electronic Psychiatrist)*, in which he stages all of the poems as a conversation between himself and his computer, asking his computer for advice, a la "2001: A Space Odyssey," a fascinating, and perhaps frighteningly, prescient comment on the ever-growing relationship between man and technology. The poet Gilad Meiri calls Avidan's style 'nano-poetics,' a form that contains:

> Miniaturised forms, minimal content, nonsense and duplication [via intertextual reference]. Avidan, a pioneer of space and futuristic poetry, sees the realm of the future in the universe of the tiny, the sub-atomic particles which may be found in outer space[92]

Avidan then was as fascinated with the big picture implications of technology as he was the tiny, particle, molecular effects.

The collection from which I have taken the poems below, "תשדורות מלוויין-ריגול" (*Cryptograms from a Telstar)*, is an incredible example of Avidan's desire to explore and exploit the boundaries of technology, language, Israeli societal mores, gender and sexuality norms, and some of the most sacred icons within Israeli culture. Within these poems I have chosen, Avidan also utilizes his extraordinarily

[92] Gilad Meiri, "An Introduction to Nano-Poetics"

proficient knowledge of the Hebrew language — as is required if one is going to stretch it as far as he does — to highlight the ever-present link between the traditions, rituals, and texts of the Jewish canon and its deep, ancient roots, and the ever-changing, ever-growing modern Israeli culture. While Avidan does not go so far as utilizing a ritual prayer item in a sadomasochistic fashion — that is Wallach's territory — he does slip in occasional biblical references both to highlight and to ridicule some of the connections. The poems I have chosen from this collection demonstrate Avidan's relationship with, reflection of, and struggle with Israeli society after the Yom Kippur War. He writes of a society and a culture that is deeply vulnerable, weakened, and reeling after a loss that caught it off guard far more than it should have. However, these are not lamentations, mourning the loss of the Collective Israeli identity, or the ideal Israeli male, nor are they rebukes of the sort of nostalgic historicity that Tamir Lahav documents in his poetry. Rather, these poems tackle the themes highlighted throughout through Avidan's wit, his wordplay, his keen sense of historical context, and his often-brutal candor, and abruptness. Avidan skewers the sacred cows of Israeli society, not because he is disgusted by them, but because he is disappointed by them, a common feeling among many Israelis after the Yom Kippur War.

Unfortunately, Avidan died alone and seemingly penniless in Tel Aviv at the severely too-young age of 61, just a year after he received the illustrious "Bialik Prize" for excellence in poetry in Israel. This אדמילה will forever be survived by the almost infinite words he has left for us in this world, and as he wrote, "At the end of the journey, perhaps you'll feel that you know more about words than you'd known before. Words know much more about you than you know, or will ever know about them."

Admittedly, Avidan's trickster-like curiosity in the limits of Hebrew made translating his works quite a challenge, and some of the joys of the words that he creates, misshapes, manipulates, and

highlights the double-meanings of is lost in the translation. However, in certain cases, I left certain words untranslated to highlight the double-meaning that Avidan implied — or that I believe he implied — and with others, I tried to explicate some of those wordplays. The Hebrew versions of these poems can be found in the appendix to this chapter.

1973 תיכון חובה – "Senior Year, High School[93]"

A young man finishing his בגרותgoes to be damaged
Nothing immediately lighting a fire under him, he does not love force
No water in his knees
No quicklime in his joints (they haven't hardened yet)
He will be stuck between the strikers, and the struck

A young man finishing his בגרות goes to be hurt
No ringing in his ears
No soot in his eyes
No blood on his clothes
He is trained to be a lord among slaves

A young man finishing his בגרות is going, to not return
He gets his mail every other day, and black hair
A girlfriend in Givata'yim
Friends in Palmakhim
He is part of the 'in' crowd

A young man finishing his בגרות goes to be finished
Already, in the course of two days, have his friends gone, one friend here, one there
Count him amongst the thousands
Tally it all on a computer
He still manages to keep it together, while he sits

A young man finishing his בגרות is returned in packing material
Two legs, two arms, not too fat, not too thin
They wash him in the water
Straighten his uniform
And bury him whole between the Jews

[93] Translation mine

The usage of the term בגרות (*bagrut)* in this poem has the dual meaning in Israeli culture of signifying a level of maturity — the term's literal definition — and the matriculation exams that all Israeli students take upon completion of their high school studies, as they begin their process of matriculation into the army. As such, I decided to leave the term untranslated within the poem, to highlight the very specific, and in many cases disingenuous, forced maturity that Avidan implies within Israeli army service. Avidan plays with the term to highlight the youthfulness of the incoming soldier; he is but a teenager, and yet according to the matriculation exams, he is ostensibly ready to serve his country and even die for it. This theme contrasting the actual age versus age of obligation to serve continues throughout the first stanza, focusing on the new soldier's lack of any of the typical army or age–related aches and pains, no "water in his knees," nor "quicklime in his joints," signifying that his extremities have not had enough time to be damaged yet, neither by service nor age. Avidan suggests that this boy is well on his way to becoming another shining example of the heroic soldier figure in Israeli society, yet his namelessness and facelessness demonstrate a cookie-cutter element to this image. This soldier is readying himself for battle, but more importantly, he is ostensibly readying himself to be a representation of the country he is serving, a part of the collective, a symbol of society.

In the second stanza, Avidan continues to highlight the relative inexperience of the young soldier, suggesting that the 'cleanliness' of his uniform implies that he is not yet prepared for the battles that await him, despite having completed his בגרות. The final line of the stanza, the soldier readying to be "a lord among slaves," implies that due to his age and relative inexperience, his service will only go so far, and perhaps the swollen ego that comes from military service at such a young age will lead him towards over-emphasizing his role; his role as "lord" is meaningless among the rest of the conscripted and 'enslaved' soldiers.

The third stanza starts with a play on the common modern Israeli phrase "הולך ל", a somewhat literal translation of the English phraseology "I am going to walk…" or "I am going to eat at the restaurant." By writing הוא הולך ולא לחזור, he continues the trend from the first two stanzas, while also highlighting that this soldier's fate has already been sealed for him even before his departure. With that in mind, another translation option could have been "a young man…goes, but will not return." The third stanza also gives the soldier more of a backstory, placing him from Givatayiim, a town of about 46,000, one of the wealthiest areas in Israel. This biographical information places the soldier in an echelon of higher society in Israel; he fits within the Ashkenazi, bourgeoisie majority. Additionally, Givatayiim has for generations served as a linchpin for Mapai, further cementing this soldier's status as a representative of the sort-of "Israeli ideal:" Labor background, wealthy upbringing, Ashkenazi ethnicity. He is, as the last line states, very much a part of the 'in-crowd.' It is worthy to note that, while this type of solider made up the majority of the army's combat units in previous years, an increasing number of these combat units are being taken over by non-Ashkenazi immigrants and youth from Israel's 'periphery[94],' thus continuing to muddy the previously held image of the "Israeli ideal."

With the penultimate stanza, Avidan contrasts the characterization given in the previous stanza, which gave the soldier a backstory and a context, by putting him among the nameless, faceless thousands who will also fall in the line of battle. Friends of his, fellow troop-mates, other anonymous multitudes, all awaiting their turn to die.

The last stanza demonstrates the first reference to Jewish tradition, rather than Israeli custom. As Liebman describes, a "secular Zionist view…dominated the Israeli Jewish society prior to and

[94] The periphery of Israel is defined as the parts of the country outside of the major metropolitan areas and cities, specifically large parts of the southern Negev Desert, and the Upper Galilee. Traditionally, these areas have not been as privy to some of the economic boon or infrastructure improvement that other parts of the country have seen.

throughout the first two decades of statehood[95]," which stood in stark contrast to the Jew of the diaspora. Here, much like in Lahav's epic "Mizmor L'David," we see the struggle between Israeli and Jewish identities. Avidan portrays this struggle in the tension between Israeli military tradition and Jewish burial ritual, highlighting the irony that Jewish ritual is defaulted to only in times of tragedy and loss. As with Lahav, Avidan uses this tension to highlight how Israeli symbols, rituals, and icons — including, if not especially the military — came to supplant traditionally Jewish ones as a means of demonstrating the self-reliant and independent nature of the Israeli, while also fortifying the collective Israeli identity around their own specific set of icons, rituals, and traditions[96]. Both the Jewish and the military traditions have specific and exacting rituals for burial; burial in military cemeteries is in specific rows, in specific compartments, and specific sections: Jew with fellow Jew[97], with no deviation. Ironically, both sets of tradition highlight a level of collective modesty: the simple wooden coffin required for traditional Jewish burial, set amidst the modest gravestone allowed for Israeli military burial. Avidan notes that both seek to emphasize anonymity for the greater good of the collective; the soldier's death, as in life, serving only for the representation and betterment of the collective.

Thus in death, the secular, wealthy, bourgeoisie, Mapainik[98] soldier עברי[99] becomes a Jew. He is buried now as society determines, in the order that they desire, in the message and the ideology

[95] Charles Liebman, "The Myth of Defeat" Middle Eastern Studies, Vo1.29, No.3, July 1993, pp. 399-418
[96] Traditional Jewish burial includes the ritual washing mentioned above, called טהורות (*t'horot)* as a means of final purification before the body is covered in a simple white shroud, and placed in the aforementioned simple wooden coffin.
[97] Interestingly, a recent IDF proposal laid out guidelines proposing burial of Jews and non-Jews in different rows, but in the same sections of Israeli military cemeteries. See "IDF plan has Jewish, non-Jewish soldiers buried in same section" JTA Wire, July 7, 2013 http://www.jta.org/2013/07/07/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/idf-plan-has-jewish-non-jewish-soldiers-buried-in-same-section#ixzz2vmY12589
[98] Mapai, or מפא"י, an acronym for מפלגת פעלי ארץ ישראל, (The Labor Movement Party of Israel) was the pre-eminent left-wing party within the Israeli government, and the dominant force within Israeli politics until it merged with the Modern Israeli Labor Party in 1968, and was eventually brought out of office in 1977 with the election of Menachem Begin's right-wing Likkud Party.
[99] This term, literally meaning "Hebrew" was used by many Israelis as a means of differentiating themselves from their Jewish counterparts in the Diaspora, and creating an independent, land-based identity

desired. Legislation passed in 1951 and renewed again in 2011 emphasized specific language to be inscribed on the gravestones of the fallen, along with specifications on design, layout, and size, such that all burial plots and stones are equal, and communally appropriate[100].

In addition, language in the letters sent to bereaved families was specific in the description of the fallen soldiers and the cause of death. According to researcher Maoz Azaryahu of Haifa University, the language in official letters to bereaved families has shifted because "[w]e are a developed, Western society, and the language itself has changed. We are more ironic and subversive. We have given up on heroes and what are left are celebrities and victims. We are fans of victims[101]." While letters dated from the 40s, 50s and 60s — the early days of Israeli statehood — emphasized the great sacrifices these soldiers made for the sake of their country[102], and the deep pride the country and the family should feel for their sacrifice, starting in the 1970s the language changed to emphasize the outsized loss the soldier's death has caused. Israeli Professor Udi Lebel notes how after the Yom Kippur War

[100] This legislation designated very specific language to be allowed on each gravestone. The gravestone is to include: the name of the fallen soldier, his/her parents, place of birth, date of Aliyah (if they made Aliyah), circumstances of the death, and time of death, along with the inscribed letters ת נ צ ב ה, which stand for תהא נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים, meaning "may his soul be bound for eternal life." Regarding the circumstances of the death, the language can use one of five options:

א. נפל בקרב, בציון מקום הנפילה (Fallen in battle, his final resting place will be in Zion)
ב. נפל בפעילות מבצעית, בציון מקום הנפילה (Fell during operational activities, his final resting place will be in Zion)
ג. נפל בעת מילוי תפקידו, ניתן לציין מקום הנפילה לפי בקשת קרוב (Fallen during reserve duty, his final resting place will be in Zion)
ד. נפל בעת שירותו (Fallen during his time of service)
ה. נפטר – נוסח זה ירשם לחללים הזכאים לקבר צבאי ושנפטרו שלא בעת שירותם (Died – This version is reserved specifically for one who died, but not during their time of service, as allotted within military cemeteries)
כמוגדר בחוק בתי קברות צבאיים. "

[101] Gilli Cohen, "The Shifting Expression of Israel's Grief, from National to Personal," Ha'aretz, April 14, 2013

[102] Cohen quotes letters written by Prime Ministers David Ben-Gurion in 1963 "The heroes … a bold youth, adorned in courage and glory that willed with its death a life of freedom and independence for its people and sacred homeland" and Levi Eshkol in 1967: "These sons of ours sacrificed their lives and their youth for the sake of their nation's freedom, for the sake of a peaceful and productive life on the land of our forefathers." Each emphasize the need to collectivize and contextualize a soldier's death.

> The loss of faith in the country's leadership and the precedent-setting feeling that the death of their sons was not necessary and happened because of something for which the country's leaders were to blame led to a whole range of new forms of behaviour[103].

Slowly, the individual catastrophe of death began to overpower the collective nature of sacrifice of earlier generations. Avidan, however, emphasizes that the cookie-cutter system that continues to spout out soldiers as ideal models and at-the-ready defenders — the Guardians of Psalm 121 that Lahav points out as well — of the Great Israeli Society wins out even at the end, as the soldier becomes one of the innumerable masses who are thrust into war, stuffed into societally proscribed roles, and buried with specific and meticulous regulations. In questioning the means of burial of this soldier, Avidan calls into question the entire system that produced him.

In highlighting the hesitation of the new soldier, the sad inevitability of his death in battle, and the cynical de-individualization of his burial, Avidan presents the opposite of Nathan Alterman's famous poem "Silver Platter[104]," written in 1947, on the cusp of Israeli statehood, in response to Chaim Weizmann's now famous line that "no state is ever served up on a silver platter[105]." The two soldiers presented in Alterman's classic poem, the girl and the boy who "march onward towards an anxious nation…not having changed from their dirty work clothes" (translation mine) stand at the ready to sacrifice themselves as the 'silver platter' for the people. Alterman's two soldiers are also nameless, but they are presented with exquisite detail, in order to fully realize their role in helping to shape and form the burgeoning nation. Their namelessness also further emphasizes the call for real collectivization

[103] Udi Lebel, "The Creation of the Israeli 'Political Bereavement Model'—Security Crises and their Influence on the Public Behaviour of Loss: A Psycho-Political Approach to the Study of History," Israel Affairs, 12:3, 439-461,
[104] First published in the Israeli newspaper *Davar* December 26th, 1947
[105] **Dr. Chaim Weizmann** (1874-1952), then President of the Zionist Organization, and first President of the State of Israel uttered this line as part of a speech given in response to the UN Partition Plan for Palestine, which sought to delineate specific borders within the then British protectorate of Palestine; giving land to both the Jewish and the Arab populations. Signed on November 29th, 1947, the Plan was accepted immediately by the Jewish Agency for Israel, but rejected by the Arab League, causing massive civil unrest. As such, the Partition Plan failed, and Israel was not granted full Jewish statehood until May of 1948, which led to immediate invasion from surrounding Arab nations, as Israel fought to maintain its newly gained independence.

within Israel at that time; these two soldiers could be any one of the countless young people eagerly farming and reaping by day and protecting the country by night. Alterman's poem has become the de facto piece used to honor soldiers slain in the line of duty, its recital heard every year on יום הזיכרון, the Israeli Day of Remembrance. The poem however, betrays a nation wearied by four wars in 25 years, and disappointed by the deep flaws and losses of the most recent one.

Thus, Avidan tackles many of the themes discussed elsewhere within this thesis: the shifting tide of Israeli masculinity, the dissolution of the collective identity, the tension between the Israeli and Jewish identities, and the usage and great power of language within Israeli society.

ביטחונות – Security[106]

1. **Command of the Day**
   We will trample over it, we will explode it, we will conquer it, we will not return it.

This first section quotes heavily from שירת הים, the Song of the Sea[107] that Moses recites to the Israelites as they celebrate their successful crossing the Red Sea, escaping the ferocious chariots of the Pharaoh's army. Ironically, the line that Avidan manipulates (Exodus 15:9) — shifting the tense from first person singular to first person plural — is claimed to have been spoken by the enemy Egyptians in their chase of the Israelites. The line reads: "אֶרְדֹּף אַשִּׂיג אֲחַלֵּק שָׁלָל; תִּמְלָאֵמוֹ נַפְשִׁי אָרִיק חַרְבִּי, תּוֹרִישֵׁמוֹ יָדִי" which the King James Version translates as "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them[108]."

We as readers are unsure who is reciting this phrase in this poem, whether it is the Egyptian enemy, or if it is the Israeli army proclaiming their eventual victory over the Egyptians. We can assume that it is the latter, which would put an ironic spin on the source text. In starting this poem by highlighting the key text celebrating Israelite victory over the pursuing Egyptian army, Avidan again notes the complicated tension between Jewish tradition and Israeli reality: is the Yom Kippur War yet another manifestation of an ancient feud? Does this battle indeed have biblical implications and, if so, does that matter?

[106] Translation mine
[107] Exodus 15:1-27
[108] Exodus 15:9 King James Version

תשדורות מלוויין-ריגול was published in 1978, the year when Israel officially returned the Sinai to the Egyptians as part of the Camp David Accords between American President Jimmy Carter, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. As such, the last line of this first section can be read as a poignant elegy for the extraordinarily chauvinistıc Israeli ideology of clinging to land — land broken, decimated and destroyed — at all costs.

2. **Life Insurance, Adjusted**
Trust us,
to produce for you
trust in yourself

We will return for you
The Self-confidence
with which you were born
the very same that they stole from you
The Educational System
your parents
Your teachers
the whole Histadrut of your workers, and your Hebrews
All the Arab labor
in the orchards, and in the cities
Nablus, turning old the young
we will protect you, you son-of-a-bitch
even from your mother, the whore
even from her…customers
and most importantly, against the severe risk
that you pose for yourself, and for those following

And we will compensate you with good money,
the kind that you would never have been able to earn
in any other way

So get outta here already
we are above you, now! (Compensation will lead to ruin)

3. **The Final Solution in the Eyes of Idi Amin, the White**

The Final Solution for the Arab Problem
Is to change the molecular structure of all the neighbors

Any resemblance between this solution
And warfare both biological and chemical,
is purely coincidental

We have nothing against the Arabs
Our only goal is to
Turn them, over the course of a few years
Into a small, yet high-quality people

To condense them
Into something presentable, and compact

Something that doesn't move in territory,
Something that barely moves within itself

Israel's only goal
Is to turn the Arabs
From the many to quality

And really, the only goal of the Arabs,
Is to turn Israel into nothing at all

These lines present the goals as nothing else, but the goals themselves

The title of this section echoes a final solution that, perhaps ironically – given the nature of the phrase – the life insurance mentioned in the previous section can provide; however the specific phrase 'final solution' will always resonate more strongly with Jews as Adolf Hitler's plan to fully exterminate the Jewish population of Europe and Russia during World War II. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the actual date of the Nazi implementation of the "Final Solution" is uncertain, but it was the culmination of the years- long degradation, persecution, imprisonment, and subsequent mass-murder of the Jewish population of Nazi conquered countries and territories. While the goal, according to the poem, is not necessarily full extermination of the Arab population in Israel — rather the poem seems to endorse a drastic contraction of the Arab population into something smaller and more easy to manipulate — the title certainly highlights and critiques the chauvinistic attitude of many Israelis towards the Arabs with whom they shared their country, a significant result of the antipathy felt towards the Israelis by the Arab invaders. Avidan

notes that antipathy in the line "And really, the only goal of the Arabs is to turn Israel into nothing at all," as if to imply this line of thought as a justification for this 'final solution' proposed by the Israelis.

By using Idi Amin as a filter through which this 'final solution' is proposed, Avidan highlights the complicated and fraught relationship between Amin and Israel. Amin is best known as the brutal Ugandan dictator and self-proclaimed "president for life" who ruled from 1971-1979 and ruthlessly murdered hundreds of thousands of his own people and provided haven for the Palestinian terrorists who hijacked an Air France airplane in 1976, kidnapping its Israeli and Jewish passengers at the Entebbe airport. This hijacking resulted in a stunningly quick raid by the Israeli army, who killed the terrorists and freed the captive passengers, a source of great pride for Israel. Amin, however, was not always so vehemently anti-Israel. In 1963, after fighting alongside the British forces in Kenya against the Mau Mau guerilla forces who opposed white rule, he trained with the Israeli air-force, earning paratrooper wings. Amin was very proud of this training and wore the wings frequently. However, as he continued to seize power in Uganda, he sought support more and more from the Arab nations who vehemently opposed Israeli statehood, aligning himself with their ideologies, thus leading to the raid on Entebbe. By calling him "Idi Amin, the White," Avidan pokes at the attempts to whitewash Amin's reputation in Israel, highlighting his former alliance with Israel.[109]

Much of the language in this poem juxtaposes the Jewish ideology of serving as an אור לגוים (a light unto the nations) with the apparent desire to 'turn' the Arabs into a people of quality, so they can ostensibly become אורי לגוים ("lights unto the nations") themselves. Avidan mocks the condescending jingoism inherent in this ideology, a jarring, yet not entirely inaccurate, point,

[109] JTA "Idi Amin and Israel: First Love, then Hate" http://www.jta.org/2003/08/20/archive/idi-amin-and-israel-first-love-then-hate#ixzz2mpQbcNli August 20, 2003

especially given the title of this section and the connotation of using the same tactics on others that were used upon the Jews during the Holocaust. Through this section, Avidan asks: 'what kind of example are we setting if our practice of being a light unto the nations leads to the effective dissolution of another nation?' As a result, Avidan is upending the methodology of "Cultural Zionism" as laid out by Zionist leaders like Ahad Ha'Am, stating that a small but quality contingent of Jews living in Israel, setting the standard for the rest of the Jews of the Diaspora, would be both sufficient and necessary. Israel has grown from this small but culturally significant minority into the majority, given full reign and authority over not just themselves but others for the first time, and their actions reflect almost exactly those who oppressed and shackled them. With this section, Avidan demonstrates how selectively Israel remembers its own history when it is in power.

4. **It's not worthwhile to be too sorry**

Do not take to heart
The phallic construction
Of the nervous Israeli security
In any case, it didn't match
The vaginal nature
Of the Suez Canal
All the better reason for it to retreat,
With or without concession
The crude oil orgasm would have been a slight problem
Sourpuss,
Chronically pregnant
"Ah yes Herr Doktor,
It was nice"
I've heard about you,
In the womb
The womb of your mother
Have pity on your father
For all the victories of Sadat

By Oct. 16, 1973, Israeli forces had crossed into the Suez Canal, a particularly auspicious victory for the Israeli army, as the first few days of the war (just 10 days prior) seemed to spell almost certain doom. The war broke out on Oct. 6th 1973 as Egyptian forces broke through the Bar-Lev line — the border separating Egypt from Israel created following the Israeli capture of the Sinai

Peninsula after the Six-Day War of 1967 — from the South, while Syrian forces breached Mt. Hermon in the Northern part of the Golan Heights. Subsequent Israeli counterattacks proved both futile in their attempts to keep enemy forces at bay and devastating in the number of Israeli fatalities. However, by the 16th, with significant assistance from the American government — in an attempt to outflank the Soviet assistance of the Arab forces — Israel had gained significant footholds on the Northern and Southern fronts, signified by the crossing of the Suez.

This action spurred Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to request to convene the United Nations and call for a ceasefire between the warring nations. The next day, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries issued a harsh embargo on exported oil to all countries who supported Israel, in an attempt to punish the American government for its assistance with Israeli fighting. OPEC claimed the embargo will be lifted when the pre-Six-Day War borders are returned, Sinai is returned to Egyptian rule, and the rights of the Arab populations displaced by the War are returned. This embargo lasted through much of 1974, crippling the US supply of foreign oil and causing prices to skyrocket.

The Israeli army continued to advance both in the north and the south as Israeli forces reached within 40 miles of Cairo, and eventually overtook all Syrian forces on Mt. Hermon. On October 22nd, the first of three ceasefires was called by the United Nations; the last ceasefire was called two days later on October 24th, as the Soviet government threatened to continue to supply arms to the Arab forces but subsequently withdrew the following day. On October 28th, Israeli and Egyptian forces met on Kilometer 101 in the Sinai Peninsula, and began to implement the ceasefire, with Israeli forces retreating from the Suez Canal after overtaking the Egyptian Third Army.

Avidan's use of explicit sexual terminology to describe this retreat connotes a certain level of irony, facetiously mocking the implied potency of the Israeli army for failing to attain climax in the Suez, pulling out just before the petroleum orgasm. The title suggests a scene in which Israeli forces 'apologize' for 'failing to get it up' in battle with the Egyptians; 'no need' to be too sorry, as the consequences of maintaining a presence in the Suez (the apparent 'climax' leading to the 'chronic pregnancy' of continued fighting and turmoil) would have been far worse than the 'impotence.' This is a major slight on the virility and masculinity of the Israeli male and the Israeli army; they are reduced to apology, rather than conquest; impotence rather than orgasm. Avidan mocks the image that in 'pulling out,' the Israeli is weakened, defeated, and broken.

The line about 'know[ing] you from the womb' is an almost direct quote from Jeremiah 1:5[110] in which God speaks to the prophet Jeremiah, reminding him that God blessed him with the gift of prophecy even before birth. Avidan uses this quote to ridicule the 'blessed' or 'chosen' nature of Israel, implying that this special status has somehow been snatched away as a result of these concessions. The 'pity for your father' elicited by the victories of Sadat is a wry rebuff of the old-guard of Israel, many of whom were excoriated for their gross mishandling of the war; as a result, much of the leadership was overhauled in 1977. Note that Avidan does not call for outrage towards 'your father,' but pity, implying the sad dissolution of the old guard, the end of that ideal era of Israel.

5. Learning How to Fall
The possible connection between epilepsy and homosexuality
There is no need for reproof
Wilhelm Stekel

[110] "Before I formed you in the stomach, I knew you. Before you came out of the womb, I blessed you" Jeremiah 1:5

Pointed it out for the second time in 1922
The news returned again in 1949,
But he should be read slowly

A case that Stekel did not consider though,
Was that the connection between epilepsy and homosexuality
Had begged to be seen:
Because when a mature man begins to collapse,
He is very much in need of someone faithful to lean on
And it is preferred to lean on, as it happens, another man
Rather than a woman

From the final test, each paratrooper must indeed be sick of falling
Just as any driver is sick of the steering wheel
And the ideal timing for a seizure
Is certainly the time of the drop

One who is sick of falling dribbles out saliva between the heavens and the earth
And when he lands on the ground
He wipes his mouth,
And crawls, revived, towards his target

A possible slogan for those who are sick of falling with the wings of the paratroopers should be:
"Diving, But Falling First"

Avidan uses the long since discredited theories of the formerly renowned German psychologist Dr. Wilhelm Stekel[111] to poke fun at one of Israeli society's most sacred of icons: the hyper-masculinized image of the Israeli Paratrooper, considered to be among the most elite of the Israeli military units. The final line, Avidan's suggested new slogan for the Paratroopers, plays on the famous Paratrooper slogan "אחרי לצנחנים!" which translates to "Follow me, Paratroopers!"

[111] Wilhelm Stekel (1868-1940) was an Austrian physician and psychologist who was one of Sigmund Freud's first, and most prominent, disciples. His work dealt primarily with dream analysis, and psychosexual neuroses. He coined the term 'paraphilia,' to replace the term 'perversion' in describing sexual fetishes wherein a person with a certain fetish – for a shoe, or an article of clothing – lusts after that object more than the woman who owns the object, or in some cases she becomes superfluous. In one of his books *The Homosexual Neuroses*, published in 1922, Stekel finds connections between epilepsy and homosexual activity, claiming:

> Usually the epileptic neurosis…influences homosexuality in the sense of removing the inhibitions and increasing the impulsive energy of the instinctive cravings... [I]t is conceivable that during the beclouding of consciousness induced by an epileptic seizure all psychic factors undergo such a complete transformation that even tendencies ordinarily wholly foreign to consciousness and not even tolerated in the fore-consciousness, insofar as the latter may be revealed, find ready outlet
> (Stekel, *The Homosexual Neuroses 1922)*

signifying that the Paratroopers were always the first dispatched into battle and given the most heroic duties. The Paratrooper was not only the military ideal, but in many ways the cultural ideal as well; numerous Israeli folk and pop songs[112] were written about the paratrooper, their role elevated to near god-like worship following their instrumental role in reclaiming Jerusalem and ending the Six-Day War of 1967 so swiftly.

As such, to reduce what is considered to be the Ultimate Israeli Male into a simpering, clumsy, sickly, epileptic homosexual is to annihilate that myth with one fell swoop. Avidan is not mocking the paratroopers per se, but the image that they've cultivated within Israeli society; in elevating these men — and in these days, they were all men — to elite, god-like status forgoes their humanity, and the prospect that these men might feel fear, apprehension, or anxiety is forgotten. With this section then, Avidan seeks to destroy the penchant within Israeli society towards this maniacal level of hero worship; heroes in all circumstances are just men, and are not immune to the same vulnerabilities and weaknesses of those who worship them.

6. **Final Judgment of the Civilian Guard**
From our enterprises, security will not be bestowed
From our enterprises, self-confidence will be bestowed
Those who prefer security over self-confidence,
Ain't much to look for over here with us

However, those who prefer self-confidence
Over security
Can be convinced that we have granted it to them
Far more than the Pentagon has granted to Israel

More details to follow…

This section mocks the aforementioned phrase ביטחון עצמי, loosely translated as 'self-confidence;' but in this it takes on a context far more detached from reality. I would translate it

[112] See: Yoram Tahar-Lev – "שירו של צנחן" "גבעת התחמושת" Both of these songs were set to music by Yair Rosenblum

more as hubris or arrogance. The phrase described the euphoric feeling felt by Israeli society following the surprising and overwhelming victory in the Six-Day War in 1967 and the subsequent reuniting of Jerusalem. This euphoria in many ways betrayed a number of the realities of Israel's security situation following the '67 war and immediately preceding the Yom Kippur War, as the Agranat Commission[113] noted.

The last line in this section calls out the Pentagon's support for Israel during the war, making the ironic claim that America's support of the Israeli forces by way of providing supplies and arms undermined the Israeli sense of 'self-confidence,' that they could take care of themselves. The irony that Avidan notes of course is that American support, by way of not only of arms and supplies provision, but in many ways helping to negotiate both the terms of the war, and its subsequent ceasefire, was essential in helping Israel to claim victory over the Egyptian and Syrian armies. However, the fact that the homeland had to once again rely on the diaspora, especially after its bombastic victory seven years earlier weakened the 'self-confidence,' even if it increased the actual 'security,' as Avidan sarcastically notes in the poem. Thus an Israel that necessitates the support of the bigger, stronger Superpower nation demonstrates an Israel that is weakened, vulnerable, defeated, and no longer the self-sustaining, militarily superior nation it once was.

7. **What is, and what is not**
The matter of discussion is the quest for security of the body
I inspected the (female) suspect at the entrance of the cinema
I found two live grenades
And a time-bomb
And my time, has passed (I missed my chance)

[113] The Agranat Commission had noted that the so-called 'War of Attrition' that immediately followed the Six-Day War, in which prolonged battles were waged on the Sinai border between Egypt and Israel, had left the borders vulnerable, and in fact the Egyptian and Syrian militaries had been amassing along their respective borders

> Avidan ends this poem in a cinema, a jarring image of something closed-in and claustrophobic, as a contrast to the standard imagery of Israel with its wide expanses of mountains, deserts, coastlines, and farmland. This war has led to an Israel that is closed in on itself, isolated, self-contained, forced now to protect itself from the inside as well. The image of the all-powerful, mighty, and heroic Israeli solider charged with valiantly guarding the Israelis against the ever-present threats of annihilation has been replaced with a horny security guard, who in all likelihood is most likely more preoccupied with the female suspect's body than with any threat — real or perceived — that she may pose to him. If he can barely protect such a small, walled-in space as a cinema, what hope does the country have? Avidan ends with this swift play on words as a jab at what Israel's supposed swiftness and military adeptness had been reduced to. This is no longer the Israel of self-sustenance and collective action, able to build a country from the inside, while defending itself from the outside. This is a country full of paranoia, disappointment, anxiety and loss, whose 'protection' has been reduced to almost nothing.

And thus this epic poem concludes, having in its breadth lain waste to the sacred cows of Israeli masculinity, its former glory as the ultimate military authority, the myth of the narrative of the great collective nation, and the inflated notion of hero worship so intrinsic to Israeli culture, exposing these sacred cows as the golden calves to countless generations of Israelis.

הערות שפויות על המלחמה המופרעת – Sane Remarks on our Disturbing War[114]

1. ***The Army Spokesperson Announces*:**
   Our forces…are finished
2. ***Scoop: For your information, I am…***
   a. *The sanest person at this moment, in all the world*
   b. *Carter[115]'s secret advisor for matters of Brzezinski[116]*
   c. *The secret advisor for Brzezinski on matters of Carter*
   d. *The only person in Israel who Dayan, Weizmann[117], Sharon[118], and Begin[119] trust for my opinion*
   e. *Drug provider for the top Chinese echelon*
   f. *Top Karate instructor for the Kremlin*
   g. *A prick*

   Therefore, you should pay attention to my remarks on this unimportant matter, known as the conflict in our area.

Avidan starts this poem by positioning himself as the expert on all people, issues, and matters related to Israeli policy immediately following the Yom Kippur War. Each of the institutions and people he lists have a specific stake in Israel's continued wellbeing, but in listing the Kremlin, along with US officials like Carter and Brzezinski, Avidan emphasizes the weakened state Israel is in following the war. However, in claiming his 'expertise' on the matter, he is mimicking the bellicose, '*sabra'* manner of Israeli communication.

[114] Translation mine
[115] **Jimmy Carter** (1924-present) – 39th President of the United States of America from 1977-1981. He was instrumental in organizing the Camp David Accords in 1978, requesting Israel to cede control of the Sinai Peninsula back to the Egyptians, thus brokering peace between Egypt and Israel.
[116] **Zbigniew Brzezinski** (1928-present) – President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor from 1977-1981. He was one of the top figures in the Carter administration for foreign policy, and was strongly influential in implementing the Camp David Accords.
[117] **Ezer Weizmann** (1924-2005) – Former Commander of the Israeli Air Force – he led one of the major air strikes against Egyptian battlefields on day one of the Six-Day War – he served as the Defense Minister under Prime Minister Menachem Begin. He eventually became the 7th president of Israel in 1993.
[118] **Ariel Sharon** (1928-2014) – Former Commander in the Israeli Army, Sharon was vital in virtually all of Israel's military victories, including leading the breach of the Suez Canal during the Yom Kippur War, leading to Israel's eventual toppling of the Egyptian forces. He later became the 11th Prime Minister of Israel in 2004.
[119] **Menachem Begin** (1913-1992) – Revisionist Zionist leader, and founder of the Israeli political party Likkud, he became Israel's 6th Prime Minister in a sweeping victory over the dominant Labour Party, signaling the end of Labour's stronghold over the Israeli government and the greater Israeli society. With President Carter, and Egyptian Prime Minister Anwar Sadat, he brokered the Camp David Accords.

3. **What is disturbed, who is disturbed?**
   I once categorized the Yom Kippur War as the "Disturbed War"
   I am contemplating eventually publishing an entire book of poems called "Poems of the Disturbed War"

   Because the two sides who fought, were and remain disturbed
   Because they disturbed us from managing without the war
   Because they disturbed us to open the war
   Because they disturbed us from finishing it
   Because they continue to disturb us from categorizing it

   If they don't disturb me from writing this sane book mentioned above,
   It will be brought to light without advance notice with at least
   Two thousand armored copies on the border, with the clear intent
   To cross it, and not to waste time on surrounding it

This section plays on the term 'disturbed,' and its dual meaning as both rousing somebody into an agitated state (the verb form), and the adjective form, meaning angered, annoyed, but also unstable, unbalanced and unhinged. Avidan emphasizes that both sides — the Egyptians and the Israelis — remain disturbed and anxious as a result of the war. Avidan continues with the list of means in which the Israeli public was disturbed by this war: once again, the Israeli people were agitated into another war, forced to 'open' the war after being attacked from two fronts, thrust into an artificial ceasefire without properly understanding how to complete it, and, perhaps most egregiously, figuring out how to categorize this war. Was this war a complete loss, a complete victory, or some murky territory in between? Were the incredible losses on all sides worthwhile, or was it all for naught? How did this war fit into the rest of the Israeli narrative of war? Avidan concludes that because this war disturbed Israeli culture so monumentally, it just does not fit, and thus it cannot be categorized with the prior victories and sacrifices.

The second stanza sarcastically shifts into using the book to describe the Israeli siege of the Egyptian/Israeli border at the Suez Canal, except rather than wasting time encircling the Third Army, crossing straight on through to Egypt.

4. **An existential song**

All of a sudden, you return to your wife
your wife that loved you
who loved you all these years,
and gave birth to three sons

and now you are coming back to these four
and they haven't changed; they are the same
as they were: loving you, and each other
and you, like that, love them.

And now you return for one day
for one special, short day
and they are with you, and you with them.
You and she, three of you, and four of you
and after that, you say good-bye
even though you think peace is a dream
you return to the unit and then…
"Move! Move! The force is moving!

"Move, move my son, you are being moved,"
passing from offense to defense
You stop, and you are being stopped.
And that's all, no justice in the world.

5. **Sexual Reserves Vacation**

Move! Move, my son, on the wife who loves you!
To your wife who screwed with your neighbors
To your wife and her little breasts

The three little ones are sleeping
Masturbating in their dreams about their little sister
their cute little sister who has not yet been born
Move! Move! Officer of birth

Move! Move, my son and don't stop yourself!
For the sake of the war, for peace
Move, my son, for the sake of your compatriots
who are stuck fucking the Egyptians.
Move, move my boy, go from here
Be a pilot, conquer the world!
Until a ground-to-air missile hits you
and your parents are visited by the Town-Officer

This section is similar to the section immediately preceding it, in that it again highlights the awkward transition from soldier to husband, only this time emphasizing the sexual duties the husband is required

to fulfill while on his brief leave. The section moves along with characteristic wit and silly wordplay — the title of this section is a combination of the Hebrew words for sex (מין) and reserves (מילואים) — until the last two lines, when upon returning to his unit, the soldier is struck by a missile, and the Town Officer must visit his parents to explain his death. The abruptness of this final image highlights the awkward abruptness with which the reservist soldier — of which there were an unprecedented amount called upon for this war — must transition back and forth between war and family. At a drop of a dime, the reservist must switch from being a father, to being a husband, to being a soldier, three discrete shades of masculinity that he must take care to keep separated, no matter how difficult.

Avidan mocks the absurd need within Israeli society to combine husband and soldier — implying the commander is barking orders to him while he is with his wife — as if the reservist is fucking his wife for the good of his country, allowing his entire brigade to share in his conquest by proxy in their conquest of the Egyptians. In reality, the ramifications of constantly having to shift between those discrete shades of masculine identity, and the dangers that occur when these identities commingle were immense, and led to an equally as unprecedented number of reservists necessitating psychological care, as Susan Hattis-Rolef documents

> Over 2,000 soldiers both regulars and reservists…both during and soon after the war developed symptoms referred to by professionals as 'combat reactions' and required professional treatment. In none of Israel's previous wars were there so many casualties of this type[120].

Both this stanza and the one above highlight how destabilizing and emotionally stunting war can actually be, debunking the grand Israeli myth of the all-purpose soldier, able to fuck his wife and his enemies with one fell swoop.

[120] Susan Hattis Rolef (1999) The domestic fallout of the Yom Kippur War, Israel Affairs, 6:1, 177-194,

6. **Lullaby for the Third Army**
   The Third Army on the second banks
   surrounded, surrounded for the first time
   had a lot of sleepless nights
   a lot of missiles, and very little understanding
   of the situation that was created
   near the desert
   because of a general with white hair
   or his superiors, for that matter
   Lacking in water, milk,
   gas, and medicine
   and a very problematic night passed
   and from Cairo arrived urgent messages
   telling them to get out of the siege, get out immediately
   To burst out with your teeth, like every Egyptian tiger
   and then came the redeeming angel
   down the road, on the 101st Kilometer
   and the Egyptian soldiers, and the Israeli soldiers
   Played Backgammon and Chess

On October 21st, the third full week of fighting, Israeli troops continued their siege of Egypt, encircling Egypt's Third Army along the banks of the Gulf of Suez, isolating them from the rest of the Egyptian forces. This encirclement represented a significant victory for the Israeli forces, as they had already secured the "Chinese Farms," a former Egyptian agricultural station, using it to gain significant traction heading northwest towards the Suez Canal. Egyptian Prime Minister Sadat sought assistance in fighting back the Israeli forces from the Soviet Union, which implored the United States to plead with Israeli officials to remove the encirclement, and the next day the United Nations passed Security Council Resolution 338 calling for an immediate ceasefire for both parties. United Nations forces were dispatched toward the Suez Canal, as a second ceasefire was called on October the 23rd. As the fighting continued, the brinksmanship between Israeli and Egyptian forces escalated, as did the larger battle between the United States and the Soviet Union, which threatened to assist in Egyptian escalation if the United States did not convince Israel to accept the ceasefire.

Meanwhile, as the battles escalated between warring nations — those with forces actually engaging in the fight, and those without — the soldiers of the Egyptian Third Army were stuck in the middle, pawns to the growing international crisis that encircled them, much like the Israeli army. Avidan notes this powerlessness in this section, as the Third Army soldiers await their fate, 'with very little understanding' of the chaos surrounding them; chaos caused by a 'general with white hair.' The 'general' represents the old-guard method of war, that in this context of war, no longer applies, and no longer works. This war has led to occupation, unprecedented violence, chaos, and great loss. As Israeli troops continued to cut the Third Army completely off from the rest of the Egyptian forces, the soldiers grew increasingly desperate and tired, lacking in basic resources while officials from both sides locked horns. And then, all of a sudden, with the ceasefire implemented on October 28th on the 101st Kilometer of the Sinai Peninsula, the primary fighting ceased, and just as quickly as the situation began, it ended. However, even after the initial ceasefire, the encirclement lasted for months, as negotiations between the Israelis and the Egyptians continued, volleying back and forth between concessions on both ends, with the soldiers of the Third Army continuing their encircled rut.

With the last line, Avidan emphasizes the banality of the cessation of the war; as if immediately following the battle's ending, the soldiers who fought will return to the normalcy of day-to-day life, playing backgammon and chess together as if nothing happened. This line hits home the arbitrariness of war to those stuck in the middle of it, like the Third Army, while the powers-that-be of the United States and the Soviet Union seemingly used Israel and Egypt as proxies in their own larger battles during the Cold War. Thus once again, Avidan highlights the collective emasculation of the Israeli military: lumped in with Egyptian soldiers, passively being told of a ceasefire, they are the pawns within the United States and the Soviet Union's own game of chess. As this war comes to a close, Israeli identity and Egyptian

identity melt together in the face of devastation, relief, anxiety, disappointment and loss.

7. **Noon News**
   The Knesset
   is near death

   Not one inch
   to the Army!

   Peace
   Is a dream

   The Arabs
   Are enemies

   The Jews
   are friends

   The whole world
   are perfect idiots

This section touches on many points in its brevity. Avidan uses brilliant wordplay with each rhyming couplet to highlight and skewer some of the more absurd elements of the war. As the title connotes, these are Avidan's final remarks on a disturbed (and disturbing) war, and he sums up much of his remarks succinctly and in rhyme: The Israeli government is in shambles, after responding poorly and clumsily to a dual-fronted attack, and a Commission is organized to take its Army to task because if it.

Despite holding the Egyptian forces back after their initial siege, and even thrusting into Egypt, causing the significant turning point in the war, the Israeli army is forced to retreat from Sinai, bringing about its eventual return to the Egyptians, a concession that Avidan mocks with this next couplet.

Avidan notes the sharp contrast between ceasefire and 'peace,' noting once again the difficulty in attaining the ethereal and almost impossible-to-define concept of 'peace.'

In the next two couplets, the two warring factions are reduced to typecast: as if all Arabs are this shadowy figure of the enemy, and the Jews have all come together in harmony. Avidan ridicules how

quickly these types of stereotypes and misrepresentations come up in times of battle and immediately following.

In the final couplet, Avidan castigates everyone involved in this war, and their idiotic efforts in futility and absurdity.

8. But to Withdraw is Always Sad Again
(Song for Obedient Kids)

1.

Clearing out a desert is like clearing out a table
You call the waitress, and announce that all is ready
You fold the tablecloth, if there is something to fold
You receive the check, if there is something to receive
You get up and leave, and that's how the forces separate
The meeting of the minds, and then the parting of the forces

2.

Clearing the Canal is like leaving your wife
(Forgive me for the cliché and the worn out statement)

3.

When the minds meet,
Forces separate
Areas are left by the armies
Without protest
The matter, which may have been traumatic yesterday
Becomes almost automatic
And the future of the area stopped being threatening
And the whole world becomes human/universal

4.

For years, we dreamt of peace. All of a sudden, it came.
A contract agreement, with patrons and guarantees
and the force of the UN, and "No Man's Lands"
And all the rest.
But for the Jews, nothing was left.

This section fleshes out the exceptionally jarring and abrupt means in which the ceasefire was called, and the war was over. The United Nations, Egypt, and Israel signed the agreements, land was apportioned and returned, and life attempted to return to normal. Clearing the desert, that is, retreating from and returning Sinai, Avidan likens to clearing a table, as if it was an ordered and measured

response from all parties involved. Clearing the Canal — as in retreating from the Suez Canal following the Ceasefire on the 101st kilometer — however was abrupt, messy, and full of drama, as its clearing necessitated a number of ceasefire attempts, the brinksmanship of two of the world's Superpowers, and the encirclement and crippling of an Egyptian battalion. In the third smaller section of this section, Avidan sarcastically notes how simply trauma can be forgotten, as if the stains of war can be shrugged off, peace can be attained in the besieged area of battle, and a feeling of international unity flows through the entirety of the world. Avidan utilizes the term המבנאם, a play on the Hebrew term בינלאומי, meaning international, implying that a result of this war is international accord and peace throughout. The Jews, however, are left with nothing as a result, a nod to the realization that this sudden 'peace' is a joke: the borders are drawn, the agreements are made, the higher-ups are satisfied, and lives go on for everyone — everyone of course, but the Jews, the perpetual losers. Avidan seems to highlight the perpetuity of Jewish suffering by ending with this line; no matter who started this war, no matter that both sides were 'disturbed,' no matter which sides benefit from the UN Forces and the seemingly countless ceasefires, there will always be some level of fighting going on and the Jews will always lose.

9. **Field Security,**
   Recommended personal essentials for female soldiers:
   Khaki tampons, with an inscription:
   "Soldier, hold your tongue!"

All of these poems demonstrate Avidan's keen grasp, not only of the many complicated situations that plagued Israel at the time in which he wrote them, but how they fit into the larger context of Israeli and Jewish histories and what they mean for the rest of the world. All three poets demonstrate the sometimes uncomfortable role that the past plays in modern day Israel. Wallach laments the problematically large specter of collective nostalgia forever looming over present day, forcing people to remember the past as they are told. Lahav wonders how his generation measures up to the imagined ideals of the generations prior, but Avidan sees a through-line in history.

The abrupt shifts in the tone of many of his poems demonstrate the shift in the general tenor of the nation post-Yom Kippur War, but as shown in “Senior Year of High School 1973,” Israel’s predilection toward lionizing its war-dead for the sake of its national pride was not an innovation specific to one period of time or another. In fact, all of the poetry analyzed in this chapter demonstrates how Avidan sees hubris, shortsightedness, and blind nationalism as Israel’s historical legacy. As such, while the horrors of the Yom Kippur War were by no means deserved, there was a level of inevitability to them, as if the arrogance could only sustain itself for so long before the armor began to chip away.

Conclusion: What Took so Long? The Delay in Writing about Yom Kippur

In an interview with the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz*, for his recently published new book יום כיפור הקרב על הזיכרון 1973 (*Yom Kippur: The Battle for Memory*[121]) historian and Professor Dr. Gideon Avital-Epstein describes the Yom Kippur War as "a trauma that took a long time to break through, to ferment, to penetrate the crust.[122]" Avital-Epstein goes on to list a number of books and films that have the Yom Kippur War as a major, if not primary, subject matter that have only been written and released in the last few years, claiming that "[collective] trauma is always a multi-story construction,[123]" one that takes a number of years to build; fully engage with; process,; and reflect on. The Yom Kippur War in particular, then, stands as a trauma with so many constructs of trauma attached to it, that it is no surprise that only in the last 25-40 years has Israeli society finally been able to grapple with its immediate and long term results.

In addition to the basic trauma of war, a circumstance that in the past had been mitigated by the incredible accomplishments that came as a result – like the War of Independence in 1948 – or the sense of nationalistic pride it brought forth – as in the Six-Day War of 1967 – there were the traumas of, as Avital-Epstein describes, the broken myths. These myths include: the myth of solidarity, that as a country and as a collective, the battle would be fought and won as one; the "sanctity of life" myth, the idea that Israeli government and civil society placed the lives and wellbeing of its soldiers at the utmost priority in every battle it fought; and the myth that of governmental preparedness, the idea that Israel could not, and would not brook any surprises from its surrounding neighbors. All of these shattered

[121] *Ha'aretz*, "Why the artistic response to the 1973 trauma took decades to appear," Sela, Maya 14 September 2013 http://www.haaretz.com/1.546908?v=2D8AEF2419DE4F306E0F7340B6674139

[122] *Ha'aretz* 14 September 2013
[123] *Ha'aretz* 14 September 2013

myths led to an unprecedented generational silence, a cohort of veterans of the war, family members and loved ones of fallen soldiers, governmental officials, and a society of shell-shocked Israelis, until recently at a loss for the ability to make sense of the traumatic events.

I had the distinction, while working on this thesis, of witnessing the level of shell-shock that plagued the generation of the Yom Kippur War, its survivors, its victims, and the society that came about as a result of it. My father, himself a veteran of the war, and many of its bloodiest, and darkest battles, was assisting me in translating some of the poems in the David Avidan chapter, when at an abrupt shift in the tenor of the poem from whimsical to immediately grim, I saw him start crying. I asked him what brought about such intense emotions for him, if it was a result of the sudden shift in the poem, or if it was a recollection of the battles that he fought, and he did not respond. His non-response spoke volumes about the traumas that he personally witnessed during, and after the battles in which he engaged. It connoted not just the immediate trauma of friends and fellow soldiers lost, but a society changed, itself reflecting the abrupt shift in Avidan's poem from whimsical to foreboding; from joyous to cynical; from hopeful to suspicious.

Some of the above poetry was written immediately following the war, in an almost feverish attempt to document the sharpness with which Israeli society had been cleaved from before the war, to after. Some of the poetry – Yona Wallach's piercing critique of gender, sexuality, and identity in Israeli culture – reflects society after a few years of reflection and deliberation. However, much of it – Tamir Lahav-Radlemesser's in particular – is indicative of Avital-Epstein's point, demonstrating a society bursting with the need to expound on the traumas it faced, yet without the right language. 40 years later, Israel is still grappling with the war and its after-effects: the Labour Party has still not come anywhere close to its former stronghold on the Israeli Parliament; many of the domestic economic

issues that plagued Israel have not been fixed, and in some ways have only been exacerbated by other crises; and, faith in the collective of Israel has not been rekindled. However, the explosion of diversity and multivocality that also came about as a result of the dissolution of the collective myth of Israel is still very much alive and thriving in Israel, as new and different voices continue to flesh out and enhance the Israeli identity. In 1998, journalist Rino Tzror called the Yom Kippur War "…the only war that does not end.[124]" There is both a hopefulness and a disappointment in this line; both are reflected in the above poetry, and both continue to play out in the narrative of Israel today.

[124] *Ha'aretz* 14 September 2013

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Poem Appendices

Yona Wallach Poems

תפילין

תָּבוֹא אֵלַי
אַל תִּתֵּן לִי לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלוּם
אַתָּה תַּעֲשֶׂה בְּשִׁבְילִי
כָּל דָּבָר תֵּעָשֶׂה בִּשְׁבִילִי
כָּל דָּבָר שֶׁרַק אַתְחִיל לַעֲשׂוֹת
תֵּעָשֶׂה אַתָּה בִּמְקוֹמִי
אֲנִי אַנִּיחַ תְּפִלִּין
אֶתְפַּלֵּל
הַנַּח אַתָּה גַּם אֶת הַתְּפִלִּין עֲבוּרִי
כְּרֹךְ אוֹתָם עַל יָדִי
שַׂחֵק אוֹתָם בִּי
הַעֲבֵר אוֹתָם מֵעֲדָנוֹת עַל גּוּפִי
חַפֵּד אוֹתָם בִּי הֵיטֵב
בְּכָל מָקוֹם גָּרֵה אוֹתִי
עַלֵּף אוֹתִי בַּתְּחוּשׁוֹת
הַעֲבֵר אוֹתָם עַל הַדַּגְדְּגָן שֶׁלִּי
קְשֹׁר בָּהֶם אֶת מָתְנַי
כְּדֵי שֶׁאֶגְמֹר מַהֵר
שַׂחֵק אוֹתָם בִּי
קְשֹׁר אֶת יָדַי וְרַגְלַי
עֲשֵׂה בִּי מַעֲשִׂים
לַמְרוֹת רְצוֹנִי
הַפֵּךְ אוֹתִי עַל בִּטְנִי
וְשִׂים אֶת הַתְּפִלִּין בְּפִי רֶסֶן מוֹשְׁכוֹת
רְכַב עָלַי אֲנִי סוּסָה
מְשֹׁךְ אֶת רֹאשִׁי לְאָחוֹר
עַד שֶׁאֶצְוַח מִכְּאֵב
וְאַתָּה מְעֻנָּג
אַחַר כְּךָ אֲנִי אַעֲבִיר אוֹתָם עַל נוּפְךָ
בְּכַוָּנָה שֶׁאֵינָהּ מְסֻתֶּרֶת בַּפָּנִים
הוֹ עַד מַה תִּהְיֶינָה אַכְזָרִיּוֹת פָּנַי
אַעֲבִיר אוֹתָם לְאַט עַל גּוּפְךָ
לְאַט לְאַט לְאַט
סְבִיב צַוָּארְךָ אַעֲבִיר אוֹתָם
אֲסוֹבֵב אוֹתָם כַּמָּה פְּעָמִים סְבִיב צַוָּארְךָ, מִצַּד אֶחָד
וּמֵהַצַּד הַשֵּׁנִי אֶקְשֹׁר אוֹתָם לְמַשֶּׁהוּ יַצִּיב
בְּמֻיָּחָד כָּבֵד מְאֹד אוּלַי מְסֻתּוֹבֵב
אֶמְשֹׁךְ וְאֶמְשֹׁךְ
עַד שֶׁתֵּצֵא נִשְׁמָתְךָ
עַד שֶׁאֶחְנֹק אוֹתְךָ
לְגַמְרֵי בִּתְפִלִּין
הַמּוּתְמָשְׁכִים לְאַרְךָ הַבָּמָה
וּבֵין הַקָּהָל הַמַּכֶּה תַּדְהֵמָה.

עברית

בְּשָׁמוֹת מִין יֵשׁ לְאַנְגְלִית כָּל הָאֶפְשָׁרִיוֹת
כָּל אֲנִי – בְּפֹעַל
הוּא כָּל אֶפְשָׁרוּת בְּמִין
וְכָל אַתְּ הִיא אַתָּה
וְכָל אֲנִי הוּא בְּלִי מִין
וְאֵין הֶבְדֵּל בֵּין אַתְּ וְאַתָּה
וְכָל הַדְּבָרִים הֵם זֶה – לֹא אִישׁ לֹא אִשָּׁה
לֹא צָרִיךְ לַחְשֹׁב לִפְנֵי שֶׁמִּתְיַחֲסִים לְמִין
עִבְרִית הִיא סֶקְסְמַנְיַאקִית
עִבְרִית מַפְלָה לְרָעָה אוֹ לְטוֹבָה
מְפַרְגֶּנֶת נוֹתֶנֶת פְּרִיבִילֶגְיוֹת
עִם חֶשְׁבּוֹן אָרֹךְ מֵהַגְלוּת
בְּרַכִּים יֵשׁ זְכוּת קְדִימָה לָהֶם
עִם הַרְבֵּה דַּקּוּת וְסוֹד בְּמוּס
בְּיָחִיד הַסְּכוּיִים שָׁוִים
מִי אוֹמֵר שֶׁכָּלוּ כָּל הַקְּצִים
עִבְרִית הִיא סֶקְסְמַנְיַאקִית
רוֹצָה לָדַעַת מִי מְדַבֵּר
כְּמַעַט מַרְאֶה כְּמַעַט תְּמוּנָה
מַה שֶּׁאָסוּר בְּכָל הַתּוֹרָה
לְפָחוֹת לִרְאוֹת אֶת הַמִּין
הָעִבְרִית מְצִיצָה מִבַּעַד לְחוֹר הַמַּנְעוּל
כָּמוֹנִי לְאִמָּא שֶׁלְּךָ וְלָךְ
כְּשֶׁהַיְתָן מִתְרַחֲצוֹת אָז בַּצְּרִיף
לְאִמְּךָ הָיָה תַּחַת גָּדוֹל
אֲבָל אַף פַּעַם לֹא הִפְסַקְתִּי לַחְשֹׁב
הַיָּמִים עָבְרוּ כַּחֲלֹף הַטּוֹשִׁים
נִשְׁאַרְתְּ יַלְדָּה רָזָה וּמְסֻבֶּנֶת

אַחַר כָּךְ סְתַמְתֶּן אֶת כָּל הַחוֹרִים
סְתַמְתֶּן אֶת כָּל הַפְּרָצוֹת
הָעִבְרִית מְצִיצָה לָהּ מֵחוֹר הַמַּגְעוֹל
הַשָּׂפָה רוֹאָה אוֹתָהּ עֵירֻמָּה
אֲבִי לֹא הֶרְשָׁה לִי לִרְאוֹת
הוּא סוֹבֵב אֶת גַּבּוֹ כְּשֶׁהִשְׁתִּין
אַף פַּעַם לֹא רָאִיתִי אוֹתוֹ טוֹבֵל מַמָּשׁ
תָּמִיד הוּא הֶחְבִּיא אֶת הַמִּין
כְּמוֹ שֶׁרַבִּים מַחְבִּיא אִשָּׁה
כְּמוֹ שֶׁקָּהָל הוּא זָכָר בַּגּוּפִים
כְּמוֹ שֶׁמִּלָּה הִיא זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה
אֵין כְּמוֹ אֵלּוּ דְּבָרִים מְתוּקִים
הָעִבְרִית הִיא אִשָּׁה מִתְרַחֶצֶת
הָעִבְרִית הִיא בַּת־שֶׁבַע נְקֵיָּה
הָעִבְרִית הִיא פֶּסֶל שֶׁלֹּא פּוֹסֵל
יֵשׁ לָהּ נְקֻדּוֹת חֵן קְטַנּוֹת וְסִימָנֵי לֵדָה
כְּכֹל שֶׁהִיא מִתְבַּגֶּרֶת הִיא יוֹתֵר יָפָה
הַשִּׁפּוּט שֶׁלָּהּ הוּא פְּרֵהִיסְטוֹרִי לִפְעָמִים
נוֹירוֹזָה כָּזֹאת הִיא לְטוֹבָה
תַּגִּיד לִי בְּזָכָר תַּגִּיד לִי בִּנְקֵבָה
כָּל אֲנִי יְלִדוּתִי בֵּיצִית בְּטֶרֶם הַפְּרָיָה
עַל מִין אֶפְשָׁר לִפְסֹחַ
עַל מִין אֶפְשָׁר לְוַתֵּר
מִי יַגִּיד מִינוֹ שֶׁל אֶפְרוֹחַ?
הָאִישׁ שֶׁהִטְבִּיעַ יוֹצֵר
לְפָנַי שֶׁהִטְבִּיעַ בּוֹ פַּעַל מֻטֶּה.
זְכָרוֹן הוּא זָכָר
יוֹצֵר מִינִים
תּוֹלֶדָה הָעִקָּר
כִּי הִיא הַחַיִּים
עִבְרִית הִיא סֶקְסְמַנְיָאקִית

וּמַה שֶּׁתַּגִּדְנָה בְּטֶרוּנְיָה פְּמִינִיסְטִיּוֹת
הַמְחַפְּשׂוֹת גֵּרוּיִים מִחוּץ לַשָּׂפָה
בְּאִינְטוֹנַצְיָה הַנּוֹתֶנֶת פֵּרוּשׁ לַדְּבָרִים
סִימָנִים רַק שֶׁל זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בְּמִשְׁפָּט
יִתְּנוּ יָחָסִים מִינְיִים מְשֻׁנִּים
עַל כָּל נְקֵבָה סִימָן, עַל זָכָר סִימָן אַחֵר
כְּשֶׁגַּם כָּל פֹּעַל וּבִנְיָן מְסֻמָּנִים
מָה עוֹשָׂה הָאִישׁ לָאִשָּׁה
מַה הוּא מְקַבֵּל בִּתְמוּרָה
אֵיזֶה כֹּחַ הִיא מַפְעִילָה עָלָיו
וְאֵיזֶה סִימָן נִתַּן לָעֻצֶם
וּלְשֵׁם עֻצֶם מֻפְשָׁט וְלַמִּלִּיּוֹת
נְקֵבֶל מִין מִשְׁחָק טֶבַע
הִתְרַחֲשׁוּת נַפְשִׁית כְּיֵצֶר צָעִיר
מִשְׁחָק שֶׁל כֹּחוֹת טֶבַע כְּלָלִיִּים
שֶׁמֵּהֶם נִגְזָרִים כָּל הַפְּרָטִים
סִימָנִים כְּלָלִיִּים לְכָלַל הָאֵרוּעִים
שֶׁאֶפְשָׁרִי שֶׁיִּקְרוּ בִּזְמַן מִן הַזְּמַנִּים
תִּרְאֶה אֵיזֶה גּוּף יֵשׁ לַשָּׂפָה וּמִדּוֹת
אֹהֵב אוֹתָהּ עַכְשָׁו בְּלִי כְּסוּת לָשׁוֹן

אישים

כֻּלָּם מְפַחֲדִים מֵהַקּוֹל הַזֶּה
זֶה הַקּוֹל הַהִיסְטוֹרִי
כֻּלָּם מְפַחֲדִים מִמֶּנּוּ עַד
שֶׁהֵם מְחַקִּים אוֹתוֹ וְנִהְיִים הוּא
כֻּלָּם הָיוּ אוֹהֲבָיו וְלֹא יָדְעוּ לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בּוֹ
בִּפְעֻלָּה נְכוֹנָה זֶהוּ קוֹל אַחֵר לְגַמְרֵי
קוֹל הַכִּשּׁוּף קוֹלוֹ שֶׁל מְכַשֵּׁף גָּדוֹל
זֶהוּ קוֹל הַדְּמָמָה הַדַּקָּה שֶׁכָּל אֶחָד פּוֹחֵד
שֶׁמָּא כְּשׁוּפָיו יִפְּלוּ עָלָיו

מַה קּוֹרֶה
הוּא הוֹפֵךְ לִיצִיר הַיִּסְטוֹרִי

הַהִיסְטוֹרְיָה כְּבְרִיָּה בְּמֹחַ פָּרָנוֹאִי מְצִיצָה מִכָּל כִּוּוּן
מֵאַחַר שֶׁלֵּדָתָהּ בְּזִוּוּג וְהַאֲנָשָׁה סוֹפָהּ בְּהַאֲנָשָׁה
נֶהְפָּכוּתָהּ לְאָדָם לַאֲנָשִׁים
זֶהוּ מִיתוֹס יְוָנִי קְלַסִּי הַיּוֹצֵר אֱלִים
וְהוֹפֵךְ אֶת הַדָּם מָנוֹעַ לָהֶם וְנִתָּן לִשְׁלִיטָתָם
אִי בְּנֵי אָדָם חֲרֵי אֵינָם יְכוֹלִים לִהְיוֹת
מְשׁוּם כָּךְ כְּאִלּוּ אֵינָם
אֵלּוּ חֻקֵּי הַקִּיּוּם מַמָּשׁ חֲשׁוּבִים כְּמֵתִים
עוֹלָם הַהִתְיַחֲסוּת שֶׁבּוֹ נִשְׁמָר שִׁפְיוֹן הַדַּעַת
עִם הַחַיִּים לַטָּוּחַ הָאָרֹךְ בְּיוֹתֵר
שֶׁנִּתָּן

הַתַּת הַכָּרָה מֵרֹב פַּחַד מִזְּמַן מִקְרֵה הַחֲשָׁשׁ
שֶׁקּוֹל מָתוֹק הַמְפַתֶּה מִקּוֹל מִכֹּל יֹאמַר
הַתִּרְצִי שֶׁפְּתֻפֵּךְ תִּגְּדַע וַתַּעַשׂ לוֹ
עַד כְּדֵי כָּךְ אֲנָשִׁים אוֹהֲבִים הִיסְטוֹרְיָה
הֵם מְחַיְכִים חִיּוּךְ הִיסְטוֹרִי מָתוֹק מִתַּחַת לַחַלּוֹן
וְשָׁרִים בְּקוֹל הִיסְטוֹרִי מָתוֹק וְדַק כְּקוֹל נָשִׁים
מוֹנוֹטוֹנִי בְּדַקּוּתוֹ שֶׁרַק לְקוֹל פְּנִימִי מֻתָּר
לִהְיוֹת כָּזֶה בַּחוּץ הוּא מָוֶת
כָּל הַגַּסּוּת וְהַפְּרָאוּת הַמּוֹנוּמֶנְטָלִית שֶׁיֵּשׁ
טוּוּת לְהָגֵן עַל הֶעָנֹג הָרַךְ
הָאַמִּיצִים בּוֹכִים לְיָדוֹ עַל אָבְדָן וְכִשָּׁלוֹן
וְיוֹצְאִים מֵהַדַּעַת תּוֹךְ אָבְדָן הַדְּרָגָתִי
וְהִתְבּוֹנְנוּת בְּתַהֲלִיךְ הַחָרְבָּן הַמַּפְתִּיעַ
עֶבֶד זֶה וּשְׁמוֹ הִיסְטוֹרְיָה כִּי יִמְלֹךְ
הַמְמַלֵּא כָּל רָצוֹן כִּי יִמְלֹךְ
וְהַמֵּבִיא נַחַת רוּחַ רַבָּה לִבְעָלָיו
זְרוֹעוֹת הַבִּטָּחוֹן

לִהְיוֹת יֶלֶד יוֹתֵר מְיֻלָּד
כִּי הַמְבֻגָּרִים הֵם גְּמוּרִים
לְהִתְוַכֵּחַ עִם הַיְלָדִים נֶגֶד הַמְבֻגָּרִים עַל הַחָבְרָה
וְעִם תִּינוֹקוֹת נֶגֶד הַיְלָדִים עַל אֱלֹהִים
וְעִם הָעֲבָרִים נֶגֶד הַיְלָדִים עַל לִפְנֵי הַהֶיוֹת
וְלָדַעַת וְלִהְיוֹת תִּינוֹק יוֹתֵר מִתִּינוֹק
וְלָדַעַת שֶׁכָּל הַדְּמוּיִים הֵם שְׁקָרִים וַאֲסוּרִים
נִשְׁמָתֵךְ הִיא גְּדוֹל אַבְּסְטַרַקְטִי חוֹלֵנִי

הַטֶּרֶף הַצַּיִד שֶׁל חַיָּה מוּזָרָה דְּמוּנִית
הַמְּגִיחָה מִבַּעַד לְפִתְחֵי הַהַכָּרָה
זוֹלֶלֶת מְבַפְנִים אֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ
וְשֶׁמְּאִירָה שֶׁלֶד נַפְשִׁי מֻכְרָסָם וּמָצוּץ
הַכֹּל אַחֲרֵי כֵן מָצוּץ מִן הָאֲצַבַּע
שֶׁל יְצוּר הִיסְטוֹרִי טַפִּילִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בִּפְנִים הַהַכָּרָה
וּמְפַטְפֵּט הִיסְטוֹרְיָה בְּלִי מַעֲצוֹרִים

Tamir Lahav-Radlemesser Poems

(2)

הָפַכְתִּי אוֹתוֹ, עַכְשָׁו שָׁכַב עַל גַּבּוֹ. לֹא רָאִיתִי פָּצַע, לֹא כֶּתֶם שֶׁל דָּם. גִּלְגַּלְתִּי אוֹתוֹ עַל צִדּוֹ. לֹא פֶּצַע לֹא דָּם. עַמִּי נָהָג אֶת הַנִּגְמָ״שׁ, יוּבַל צָרַח פְּקֻדּוֹת מִצְרִיחַ הַמְפֻקָּד. הָפַכְתִּי אוֹתוֹ שׁוּב, עֵינָיו הָיוּ פְּקוּחוֹת, זְרוֹעוֹ נִשְׁמְטָה לְאָחוֹר. עַכְשָׁו רָאִיתִי אֶת הַפָּצַע: חוֹר גָּדוֹל, חַף מִדָּם וּשְׁפָתָיו חַדּוֹת. רְסִיס הַשֵּׁיל שָׁקַע עָמֹק בְּבֵית הַשָּׁחִי. הַנִּגְמָ״שׁ הִטַּלְטֵל עַל הַדְּיוּנָה וּשְׁנֵינוּ נֶחְבַּטְנוּ בַּדָּפָנוֹת. גּוּפוֹ פָּרְכֵּס. לֹא יָכֹלְתִּי לִפְתֹּחַ אֶת אֲרִיזַת הַתַּחְבֹּשֶׁת הָאִישִׁית. יוּבַל הִתְפּוֹפֵף וְצָעַק: ״הַכֹּל בְּסֵדֶר?״ לֹא עָנִיתִי. נָפַיְתִי לִקְרַע בְּשִׁנַּי אֶת הָאֲרִיזָה, נִסִּיתִי לְהָסִיר אֶת חֶלְצָתוֹ.

חֲבֹשׁ אוֹתוֹ חֲבֹשׁ, אַתָּה לֹא
רוֹאֶה שֶׁצָּרִיךְ לַחְבֹּשׁ, מַהֵר לַחְבֹּשׁ, אַתָּה
לֹא רוֹאֶה שֶׁהוּא בְּקֹשִׁי נוֹשֵׁם, אָז
חֲבֹשׁ אוֹתוֹ מַהֵר, חֲבֹשׁ אוֹתוֹ כְּבָר, תַּפְסִיק
כְּבָר לַחְשֹׁב וַחֲבֹשׁ אוֹתוֹ כְּבָר אֵין דָּם אֵין
דָּם אַתָּה אוֹמֵר, אֵין דָּם, אֲבָל לַחְבֹּשׁ
צָרִיךְ, צָרִיךְ לַחְבֹּשׁ, מַה לַחְבֹּשׁ מַה
לַחְבֹּשׁ אֵין מַה לַחְבֹּשׁ, מַה כְּבָר
אֶפְשָׁר לַחְבֹּשׁ נִשְׁמָתוֹ
כְּבָר יָצָאָה וְאֵין
דֶּרֶךְ לַחְבֹּשׁ
אֲנָחָה

(3)

יוֹם כִּפּוּר, שְׁתַּיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים דַּקּוֹת: הַמְּטוֹסִים תָּקְפוּ וְנֶעֶלְמוּ. רֵיחַ שֶׁל אֵשׁ. יָצָאנוּ מֵהַמַּחְפֹּרֶת, עַמִּי נָהַג אֶת הַנִּגְמָ״שׁ אֶל עֵבֶר הַמְּגוּרִים. הַבְּנִין חָטַף פְּגִיעָה יְשִׁירָה. לָהָבוֹת אַדִּירוֹת, רֵעַם צְנִיחַת הַגַּג, קְרִיסַת הַקֵּירוֹת. הַחוֹבֵשׁ עוֹמֵד מוּל הַפֶּתַח הַבּוֹעֵר, רַק אֶתְמוֹל סַפַּח לַפְּלֶגָּה. הוּא זָקוּף, צִיּוּדוֹ עָלָיו.
וּבוֹהֶה.
דָּוִד מֵטָל בְּחֵיקִי.
הַחוֹבֵשׁ עוֹמֵד.
״תְּזִיז תַּ׳תַּחַת שֶׁלְּךָ, זוּז כְּבָר.״
הוּא עוֹמֵד וְשׁוֹתֵק.
״בּוֹא וְטַפֵּל בּוֹ, אוּלַי עוֹד אֶפְשָׁר לַעֲשׂוֹת מַשֶּׁהוּ, זוּז כְּבָר,״
הוּא נָצַב וְהַלָּהָבוֹת בְּגַבּוֹ.
דָּוִד מֵטָל.
״בּוֹא הֵנָּה, בּוֹא הֵנָּה כְּבָר.״
אֲנַחְנוּ גּוֹרְרִים אֶת דָּוִד וּמוֹצִיאִים אוֹתוֹ מֵהַנִּגְמָ״שׁ.
הוּא לֹא זָז.
״בּוֹא כְּבָר, אָמַרְתִּי לְךָ, בּוֹא כְּבָר.״
דָּוִד בָּחוֹל.
״טַפֵּל בּוֹ.״

נוֹסְעִים הָלְאָה מִשָּׁם, אֶל הַמִּלְחָמָה. דָּוִד בָּחוֹל. הַחוֹבֵשׁ זָקוּף לְצִדּוֹ.

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כָּל הַמִּלְחָמָה דִּבַּרְנוּ. בָּרוּר שֶׁדִּבַּרְנוּ. בִּצְעָקוֹת, בִּלְחִישׁוֹת,
בִּתְנוּעוֹת יָדַיִם, בְּהַטָּיוֹת רֹאשׁ, בְּמַבָּטִים. עֶשְׂרִים וְחֵשַׁע שָׁנִים
אֲנִי מְנַסֶּה לְהַזְכִּיר בְּדָבָרִים שֶׁאָמַרְתִּי, שֶׁאָמְרוּ לִי. שֶׁאָמַרְנוּ.

בְּיוֹם כִּפּוּר, בְּשָׁתַיִם וַחֲמֵשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה דַּקּוֹת אָמַרְתִּי:
"טַפַּל בּוֹ."
עַד כָּאן אֲנִי זוֹכֵר כָּל דִּבּוּר. וּמִכָּאן – דָּבָר.

(4)

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
הַבֵּט בַּשָּׁמַיִם דָּוִד / הַבֵּט / כְּחֻלִּים / שַׁבָּת / שְׁקוּפִים הַשָּׁמַיִם /
כְּחֻלִּים אֻפְּרִים / בְּשַׁבָּת / כִּי יָכֹל אֱלֹהִים / נָשֹׁב / כָּאן / עַל
גְּבְעַת הַחוֹל / וְחֻזֵּינָה עֵינֵינוּ / בַּשָּׁמַיִם / בַּחוֹל מִלֹּא הָעַיִן חוֹל /
יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאל / נִסְתַּכֵּל / נַעֲשֵׂן סִיגָרִיָּה / נַבִּיט בַּשֶּׁקֶט / (צִפּוֹר לֹא
צִיֵּן) / וְנַבִּיט / שָׁמַיִם לְמַעְלָה / חוֹל לְמַטָּה / נַבִּיט / הַבֵּט
בַּשָּׁמַיִם / דָּוִד / הַבֵּט בַּשָּׁמַיִם / הִנֵּה מְטוֹסִים / מָטוֹס אֶחָד / דָּוִד
/ מָטוֹס שֵׁנִי / דָּוִד / וּשְׁלִישִׁי / וּרְבִיעִי דָּוִד / הַבֵּט כַּמָּה יָפִים /
כַּמָּה הֲדוּרִים / כְּסוּפִים / חֲגִים / עִגּוּלִים בָּאֲוִיר / מָטוֹס עוֹקֵב
אַחַר מָטוֹס אַחַר מָטוֹס אַחַר מָטוֹס / כַּמָּה נָאִים / שָׂא עֵינֶיךָ דָּוִד
וּרְאֵה / נָדִים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם / הַמְּטוֹסִים / חֲגִים וְנָדִים / זֶה בִּזְנָבוֹ שֶׁל
זֶה / דָּוִד / הִנֵּה הֵם מַנְמִיכִים / מַנְמִיכִים / חֲגִים וּמַנְמִיכִים /
רְאֵה דָּוִד / כָּל־כָּךְ נְמוּכִים / לוֹחֲכִים חוֹל / הַמְּטוֹסִים / הִנֵּה
הַטַּיָּס בְּחֻפָּתוֹ / וְהַשֵּׁנִי וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁי וְהָרְבִיעִי / דָּוִד / הִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ
מַסְתָּרִים בְּסֵתֶר כַּנְפֵיהֶם / הַבֵּט דָּוִד / הַבֵּט / אֵשׁ בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם / אֵשׁ
/ הַבֵּט / אֵשׁ נִשְׂלַחַת מִשָּׁמַיִם / אֵשׁ / אֵשׁ / אֵשׁ מִשָּׁמַיִם / אֵלֶיךָ
דָּוִד / אֵלַי / אֵשׁ נִשְׂלַחַת / קוּם וְרוּץ / דָּוִד / קוּם וְרוּץ / הַבֵּט
דָּוִד / הִנֵּה הַמַּקְלֵעַ / הִנֵּה שָׁלַי / שָׁכַב עַל הַגַּב / דָּוִד / שְׁכַב /
קָנִים לַשָּׁמַיִם / קָנִים לַשָּׁמַיִם / לְחַץ דָּוִד / לְחַץ / אֲנִי לוֹחֵץ /
אֵשׁ מִשָּׁמַיִם / אֵשׁ הַמַּקְלְעִים / אֵשׁ בָּאֵשׁ בָּאֲוִיר / הִנֵּה הֵם חֲגִים
/ שׁוּב / חֲגִים / אֶחָד וּשְׁנַיִם / וּשְׁלִישִׁי וּרְבִיעִי / חֲגִים / אֵשׁ
בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם / אֵשׁ וְרֵעַם / בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם / לְחַץ עַל הַהֶדֶק / דָּוִד / לְחַץ
/ אַל תִּרְפֶּה / אַל נָרְפֶּה / אֵשׁ עוֹלָה לַשָּׁמַיִם / אֵשׁ יוֹרֶדֶת / שָׁמַיִם

וָאָרֶץ / יוֹרֶדֶת אֵשׁ / רַחֲמוּ שָׁמַיִם / רַחֵם שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים / אֵשׁ
בְּאֵשׁ נוֹגַעַת / הִגֵּה עֵינֵי הַשָּׂיְחַ / הִגֵּה עֵינָיו בְּעֵינַי / הִגֵּה אֵשׁ
פּוֹרֶצֶת בִּכְנָפָיו / פָּגַעְנוּ דָוִד / פָּגַעְנוּ / אַל תַּרְפֶּה / אַל נַרְפֶּה /
פָּגַעְנוּ / דָוִד / לֹא פָגַעְנוּ / הִגֵּה הָרֵעַם / הִגֵּה נִמְשָׁכִים נַהֲרֵי אֵשׁ /
אֵשׁ אוֹכְלָה אֵשׁ / בָּנוּ הָאֵשׁ / הִגֵּה הַחוֹל בָּאֲוִיר / הִגֵּה אַתָּה נוֹחֵת
/ דָוִד / נוֹחֵת / עָלַי / נוֹחֵת / דָוִד / קוּם דָוִד / קוּם / אַתָּה כָּבֵד
דָוִד / קוּם / דָוִד / וּלְחַץ עַל הַהֶדֶק / קוּם וְנִצָּא מֵהַחוֹל /
מֵהָעָשָׁן / מֵהָאֵשׁ / דָוִד / קוּם אִישׁ חֲמוּדוֹת / טַלְלֵי אוֹרוֹת
רֹאשְׁךָ נִמְלָא / קְוֻצּוֹתֶיךָ רְסִיסֵי לַיְלָה / גּוּפְךָ נָקֹבִים נְקֻבִים /
חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים / גּוּפְךָ כָּבֵד עָלַי / קוּם אָמַרְתִּי / קוּם אָמַרְתִּי /
תֵּכֶף וּמִיָּד / קוּם / אָנָּא דָוִד / עוּרָה נָא / הִתְעוֹרֵר נָא / עָמֹד נָא
/ הִתְיַצֵּב נָא / קוּם נָא / דָוִד / קוּם / תֵּכֶף וּמִיָּד / נַקְשִׁיב לַשֶּׁקֶט
/ נִתְבּוֹנֵן בַּשָּׁמַיִם / שְׁקוּפִים הַשָּׁמַיִם / כְּחֻלִים אֲפֹרִים / אֵשׁ
בְּשַׁבָּת / כִּי יָכֹל אֱלֹהִים / נַקְשִׁיב לַשֶּׁקֶט / דָוִד / כָּל־כָּךְ שֶׁקֶט
כָּאן / וְחַם / אוֹקְטוֹבֶּר וְחַם / דָּם חַם / דָּם חַם / אֶצְבְּעוֹתַי
בִּנְקָבֶיךָ / בַּחֲלָלֶיךָ אֶצְבְּעוֹתַי / חַמּוֹת חַמּוֹת / אֶצְבְּעוֹתַי בִּנְקָבֶיךָ /
שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁטֹף דָּמְךָ / שֶׁלֹּא יָצִיף / שֶׁלֹּא יֶהֱמוּ מֵעֶיךָ עָלֵינוּ / שֶׁלֹּא
תֶּאֱזַל / דָוִד / שֶׁלֹּא תֶּחְדַּל / אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן בָּאֵי בָּאֵשׁ
/ לְמַעַן בָּאֵי שְׂרֵפָה הֶרֶג וָחֶנֶק / עֲשֵׂה / לְמַעַן יְשֵׁנֵי עָפָר / עֲשֵׂה /
תֵּכֶף וּמִיָּד / עֲשֵׂה / עֲשֵׂה אָמַרְתִּי / עֲשֵׂה / עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן
שְׁמֶךָ / לְמַעַן יַאֲרִיכוּן יָמֵינוּ / עֲשֵׂה / מִיָּד עֲשֵׂה / מִיָּד / עֲשֵׂה /
הַחוֹל מְבַעְבֵּעַ / הָאֵשׁ מִתְגַּבֶּהֶת / הָרוּחַ / הָרוּחַ / עֲנָנִים אַיִן /
גֶּשֶׁם אַיִן / רוּחַ אַיִן / דָּם / כְּבָר אַיִן

(5)

עֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים שֶׁרֵת אַבָּא בְּחֵיל הָאֲוִיר. לְמַעְלָה מִשְּׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה הֵטִיס
מְטוֹסֵי בּוֹאֵינְג בְּשֵׁרוּת אֶל־עָל. עַל הַמַּדָּף בְּחַדְרִי, לְצַד
אֲנְצִיקְלוֹפֶדְיָה תַּרְבוּתִית, עָמְדוּ בְּשׁוּרָה מוֹפְתִית, מֵרֹאשׁוֹן וְעַד
אַחֲרוֹן, כָּל פִּרְקֵי בְּטָאוֹן חֵיל הָאֲוִיר. קָרָאתִי אוֹתָם בַּלֵּילוֹת, אֶת
כֻּלָּם, עַמּוּד אַחַר עַמּוּד, תַּצְלוּם אַחַר תַּצְלוּם, סִפּוּרֵי אַפְסָנָיָה
וְשָׁלִישׁוּת, רֶכֶשׁ וְהַצְטַיְדוּת, סִפּוּרֵי גְּבוּרָה, קְרָבוֹת אֲוִיר, וְהַמַּרְתֵּק
מִכֹּל: רֵאָיוֹן שְׁנָתִי מִפֹּרָט עִם מְפַקֵּד הַחֵיל. וְהַטּוֹבִים לַטַּיִס. הָיִיתִי
יֶלֶד קָטָן בְּמִשְׁפַּחַת חֵיל הָאֲוִיר.

יַחַד עִם אַבָּא וְעִם הַחֵיל נִכְנַסְתִּי לְעֵדֶן הַסִּילוֹן: מְטוֹסֵי מֶטֵאוֹר,
מְטוֹסֵי אוּפָנָן, הִתְרַגְּשׁוּת גְּדוֹלָה עִם כְּנִיסַת מְטוֹסֵי הַמִּיסְטֶר
לְשֵׁרוּת מְבָצָעִי, מְטוֹסֵי הַוּוֹטוּר וְהַסּוּפֶּר־מִיסְטֶר, אוֹ־לָה־לָה־
סוּפֶּר־מִיסְטֶר, אֵיזֶה שִׁיק! רַק הַמִּירָז׳, בַּעַל כַּנְפֵי הַדֶּלְתָּא
הָאֲלֶגַנְטִיּוֹת, יִהְיֶה יָפֶה מִמֶּנּוּ. לַכֶּלֶב שֶׁלִּי קָרָאתִי מִירָז׳ וְגַם
לְשׁוּשִׁי, הַיַּלְדָּה מֵהַכִּתָּה, שֶׁפָּנְיָה מְשֻׁלָּשׁ מֻשְׁלָם. וְהַפְּקֵזְיהוֹק
הָאֲמֶרִיקָנִי וְהַפַּנְטוֹם הַכָּבֵד, בַּעַל הַזָּנָב הָאֲחוֹרִי הַשָּׁמוּט וְכוֹנְסֵי
הָאֲוִיר הַמַּלְבִּנִּים, אֵיזֶה רַעַשׁ הוּא מַקִּים, אֵיזוֹ צָרָחָה בַּשָּׁמַיִם.

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יוֹם רִאשׁוֹן בַּבֹּקֶר, הַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי לַמִּלְחָמָה, הַנַּגָּמ״שׁ שֶׁלִּי מוֹבִיל
קְצִין אַרְטִילֶרְיָה לְקוֹ הַמַּיִם מוּל מַצַּב "מְמַצֵּחַ". מִימִינֵנוּ טַנְק
אֶחָד, מִשְּׁמֹאלֵנוּ טַנְק שֵׁנִי. זֶהוּ. אֵין עוֹד כֹּחוֹת בְּכָל הַגְּזָרָה, אֵין

מִי שֶׁיְּצַוֵּר אֶת הַמְּצָרִים מִלַּחֲצוֹת אֶת הַתְּעָלָה. חֲלִיוֹת שֶׁל מַפְעִילֵי טִילֵי סָאגֶר מִתְחַפְּרוֹת בַּמִּדְרוֹן הַמַּעֲרָבִי שֶׁל סוּלְלַת הֶעָפָר וּמְשַׂגְּרוֹת. אֵשׁ מַקְלָעִים, עָשָׁן, טִילִים וְרַעַשׁ מַכְשִׁירֵי הַקֶּשֶׁר. וּמְטוֹסִים. אַרְבָּעָה מְטוֹסֵי סְקַיְהוֹק חוֹזְרִים מֵהַפְצָצָה. הֵם טָסִים נָמוּךְ. שְׁלֹשָׁה מְטוֹסִים חוֹצִים אֶת הַתְּעָלָה, הָרְבִיעִי חוֹצֶה וּמִתְפּוֹצֵץ. אֵיזֶה יְפִי אֵיזֶה יְפִי אֵיזֶה רַעַם הִנֵּה אֵשׁ יֵרָדָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵיזֶה מַחֲזֶה מַרְהִיב מִן הָאֵשׁ יוֹצֵא בָּרָק וְתִימְרוֹת עָשָׁן אֵיזֶה יְפִי מִתְנַפֵּץ בַּקַּרְקַע וַתִּרְעַד הָאָרֶץ, זְקוּקֵי דִינוּר וַעֲמוּד אֵשׁ בַּדְּיוּנָה וְטַיָּס לֹא צוֹנֵחַ.

(6)

בַּתְּחִלָּה –
לֹא הָיָה פַּחַד
מָוֶת.

בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי –
נֶהֱרַגְתִּי.

אִידְיוֹט, זֶה שֶׁלָּנוּ, מְטֻמְטָם, מָה הַשְּׁמְחָה, זֶה שֶׁלָּנוּ, זֶה סְקַיְהוֹק, אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ לְזַהוֹת סְקַיְהוֹק, בָּנִיתִי מוֹדֶל, רָאִיתִי תְּמוּנוֹת, עָבַרְתִּי קוּרְס, רָאִיתִי אוֹתוֹ טַס, מְאוֹת פְּעָמִים טָס, אִידְיוֹט, אֵיזֶה יְפִי אֲנִי אוֹמֵר, אֵיזֶה רַהַב אֵיזֶה מָוֶת מִפְאָר – סוּפָה וּסְעָרָה וְלַהַב אֵשׁ. אָרוּר אֶהְיֶה לְעוֹלָם, הוּא נִשְׂרַף וַאֲנִי אוֹמֵר שִׁירָה.

וּבָא הַפַּחַד
וְשָׁכַן

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זָרַקְתִּי אֶת כָּל הַכָּרָכִים שֶׁל בִּטָאוֹן חֵיל הָאֲוִיר.

כְּשֶׁמָּטוֹס חוֹצֶה שָׁמַיִם, אֲנִי עוֹבֵר לַצַּד הַמּוּצָל שֶׁל הָרְחוֹב.

(7)

זִכְרוֹן יַלְדוּת: אֲנִי בֶּן שָׁלֹשׁ, עוֹד מְעַט יַתְחִיל מִבְצַע קָדֵשׁ. אַבָּא נוֹסֵעַ בִּשְׁלִיחוּת חֵיל הָאֲוִיר. נְסִיעָה אֲרֻכָּה – חֹדֶשׁ, חֳדָשַׁיִם. אַבָּא חוֹזֵר מְצֻרְפַּת וּמֵבִיא מַתָּנָה: אַגָּס. גַּם אוֹפַנַּיִם. עַל הָאוֹפַנַּיִם אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ מְצֻלָּחִים בְּשָׁחוֹר לָבָן. אֶת הָאַגָּס אֲנִי זוֹכֵר. הָיָה לוֹ טַעַם שֶׁל אֶרֶץ אַחֶרֶת, רֵיחַ שֶׁל מֶרְחָק.

תּוֹסֶפֶת לְזִכְרוֹן יַלְדוּת: כְּשֶׁפָּרְצָה הַמִּלְחָמָה, אִמָּא וַאֲנִי נָסַעְנוּ לִירוּשָׁלַיִם, לְסַבָּא וְסַבְתָּא. בְּקֶצֶה הַשְּׁכוּנָה, לְיַד מַאֲפִיַּת אַנְגֶ'ל, הָיָה מַסְלוּל נְחִיתָה לְמְטוֹסִים קַלִּים. בְּאַחַד הַיָּמִים נָחַת שָׁם מְטוֹס פַּיְפֶּר כְּצָבַע חָקִי. רַצְתִּי עִם כָּל יַלְדֵי הַשְּׁכוּנָה לִרְאוֹת אֶת הַפֶּלֶא. הִתְקָרַבְתִּי יוֹתֵר מִכֻּלָּם. אִישׁ אֶחָד הֵרִים אוֹתִי בְּזְרוֹעוֹתָיו, לִטֵּף אֶת רֹאשִׁי וְנָשַׁק לְמִצְחִי. הַיְלָדִים קָפְצוּ וּבָקְשׁוּ גַּם. אוֹתִי הִפְחִידָה הָרְטִיָּה הַשְּׁחוֹרָה עַל עֵינוֹ.

זִכְרוֹן נְעוּרוֹת: שְׂדֵה הַחַרְצִיּוֹת הָיָה לִשְׂדֵה שׁוּחוֹת. חָפַרְנוּ וְחָפַרְנוּ עַד שֶׁרָאשֵׁינוּ לֹא נִרְאוּ עוֹד מֵעַל הָאֲדָמָה. תּוּרְגְּ'מָן קָטוּעַ הָאָצְבָּעוֹת לֹא גֵּיֵס וְנִשְׁאַר הַגֶּבֶר הַיָּחִיד בַּשְּׁכוּנָה. "לֹא נוֹרָא," אָמַרְנוּ לוֹ, "יֵשׁ לְךָ סְבָּה," אַךְ תּוּרְגְּ'מָן הִצְנִיעַ עַצְמוֹ בְּתַחְתִּית הַשּׁוּחָה וְשָׁתַק. אֲנַחְנוּ, הַיְלָדִים, שִׂחַקְנוּ הֶנְדֶּד־אַפ וְרָצִינוּ נוֹרָא שֶׁתִּפְרֹץ כְּבָר מִלְחָמָה אֲמִתִּית, וְלוּ רַק לְיוֹם־יוֹמַיִם אוֹ לְשִׁשָּׁה יָמִים.

זִכְרוֹן בַּחֲרוּת: אֵיזֶה מַזָּל, מִלְחֶמֶת הַהַתָּשָׁה נִגְמְרָה, אֲנִי אֶשְׁתַּזֵּף שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים עַל גְּדוֹת תְּעָלַת סוּאֶץ.

(8)

רְאֵה, הִנֵּה
עַל הַחוֹל הוּא
שׁוֹכֵב: אֵין
פָּנִים לוֹ אֵין
מַרְאֶה
חֻלְצָה מֻשְׁלֶכֶת
עַל רֹאשׁוֹ לְכַסּוֹת.

תַּחְבּוֹשׁוֹת, מַזְרֵקִים, שַׁקִּיּוֹת אִינְפּוּזְיָה רֵיקוֹת.

רְאֵה, הִנֵּה
עַל הַחוֹל הוּא
שׁוֹכֵב: מִכְנָסַיִם
מַפְשָׁלִים תַּחְתּוֹנִים
סָבִיב בִּרְכָּיו עַל
הַחוֹל הוּא
שׁוֹכֵב.

אֲלוּנְקוֹת, אַמְבּוּלַנְסִים, אֲלוּנְקוֹת, אֲלוּנְקוֹת.

רְאֵה, הִנֵּה
עַל הַחוֹל כֻּלָּם
עֶרְוָתוֹ הַמֻּתָּה כְּכֻלָּם
צְהֻבְהַב שֶׁל שֶׁמֶשׁ
אוֹקְטוֹבֶּר נִצְרֶבֶת.

לֹא הָיָה זְמַן. פְּנִינוּ פְּצוּעִים, הוֹרַדְנוּ אוֹתָם זֶה אַחַר זֶה מֵהַגַּמָּ"שׁ
וְהִשְׁכַּבְנוּ אוֹתָם עַל אֲלוֹנְקוֹת שֶׁהֻצְּבוּ בְּשׁוּרָה אֲרֻכָּה עַל הַחוֹל
בְּצַד הַכְּבִישׁ, לֹא הָיָה זְמַן. אֶת הַמֵּתִים הוֹרִידוּ מֵהָאֲלוֹנְקוֹת
וְהִשְׁכִּיבוּ עַל הַחוֹל, הָיָה מַחְסוֹר. לֹא הָיָה זְמַן. בַּגַּמָּ"שׁ שֶׁלִּי
שִׁשָּׁה פְּצוּעִים שׁוֹכְבִים זֶה בְּצַד זֶה, זֶה בָּזֶה, אֵין מָקוֹם, פָּצַע
בְּפָצַע, עוֹר בְּעוֹר, דָּם בְּדָם, אֲנָחָה בַּאֲנָחָה צְעָקָה בְּצְעָקָה גְּנִיחָה
בִּילָלָה זְעָקָה בִּזְעָקָה צְוָחָה בִּצְוָחָה בְּכִיָּה בְּרַעַשׁ מְנוֹעִים. לֹא הָיָה
זְמַן. לֹא הָיָה.

אֵין זְמַן וְאֵין
שְׁמִיכָה לְכַסּוֹת כֻּלָּם
שֶׁמֶשׁ אוֹקְטוֹבֶּר

הִנֵּה
מִכְנָסַי תּוֹפְחִים וְאֵין
מַכֶּה וְעֵינַי
מְסַתַּמְּאוֹת מֵאוֹר
רַךְ שֶׁל שֶׁמֶשׁ

אוֹקְטוֹבֶּר, הוּא
הָאַכְזָר בַּיָּרֵחִים.

(9)

בְּכֹתָה י"א הוּא הָיָה הַיָּפֶה בַּבָּנִים.
רָאִיתִי אוֹתוֹ שׁוּב בְּבֹקֶר הַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי
כַּאֲשֶׁר פִּנִּינוּ פְּצוּעִים לְ"נוֹצָה":

הוּא הִשְׁתָּרֵךְ בְּצַד הַכְּבִישׁ,
קַסְדָּתוֹ בְּיָדוֹ וְחֻלְצָתוֹ פְּרוּמָה.
שְׂפָתָיו נָעוּ. הוּא דִּבֵּר אֶל עַצְמוֹ.

הוּא לֹא שָׁמַע אֶת קְרִיאוֹתַי,
לֹא רָאָה אֶת נְפְנוּפֵי הַיָּד שֶׁלִּי.

הוֹרַדְנוּ אֶת הַפְּצוּעִים בְּפֶתַח הַמִּנְקָר.
בָּעֲרֶב הַמַּצְרִים כָּבְשׁוּ אֶת הַתָּעוֹז.

(11)

אַבָּא אַבָּא מַה הָיָה
מַה הָיָה שָׁם
מַה קָּרָה
בַּיְּעָרוֹת
מַה בַּמַּחֲנוֹת
סַפֵּר סַפֵּר
שֶׁאֵדַע
מַה קָּרָה
לִי שָׁם

David Avidan Poems

תיכון־חובה 1973 / מחזור־סיום

אִישׁ צָעִיר גּוֹמֵר בַּגְרוּת הוֹלֵךְ לְהִתְגַּיֵּס
לֹא בּוֹעֵר לוֹ בֵּינָתַיִם לֹא אוֹהֵב לְהִדָּחֵק
אֵין לוֹ מַיִם בַּבִּרְכַּיִם
אֵין לוֹ סִיד בַּמִּפְרָקִים
הוּא יִהְיֶה בֵּין הַמַּכִּים וְהַמֻּכִּים

אִישׁ צָעִיר גּוֹמֵר בַּגְרוּת הוֹלֵךְ לְהִפָּגַע
אֵין לוֹ רַחַשׁ בְּאָזְנַיִם עוֹרַתּוֹף עוֹד לֹא פָּקַע
אֵין לוֹ פִּיחַ בָּעֵינַיִם
אֵין לוֹ דָּם עַל הַבְּגָדִים
הוּא חֲנַךְ לִהְיוֹת אָדוֹן בֵּין עֲבָדִים

אִישׁ צָעִיר גּוֹמֵר בַּגְרוּת הוֹלֵךְ לֹא לַחֲזוֹר
יֵשׁ לוֹ דֹּאַר כָּל יוֹמַיִם וְשֵׂעָר אָרֹכְשָׁחוֹר
חֲבֵרָה בִּגְבָעָתַיִם
חֲבֵרִים בְּפַלְמָחִים
הוּא שַׁיָּךְ לָעַם הַשַּׁיָּכִים

אִישׁ צָעִיר גּוֹמֵר בַּגְרוּת הוֹלֵךְ לְהִגָּמֵר
כְּבָר הָלְכוּ לוֹ תּוֹךְ יוֹמַיִם פֹּה חָבֵר וְשָׁם חָבֵר
תִּסְפְּרוּ לוֹ עַד אַלְפַּיִם
תִּסַּכְּמוּ לוֹ עַל מַחְשֵׁב
הוּא מַחְזִיק עוֹד בֵּינָתַיִם הוּא יוֹשֵׁב

אִישׁ צָעִיר גּוֹמֵר בַּגְרוּת מֻחְזָר בַּאֲרִיזָה
שְׁתֵּי רַגְלַיִם שְׁתֵּי יָדַיִם לֹא שָׁמַן וְלֹא רָזָה
רוֹחֲצִים אוֹתוֹ בְּמַיִם
מַחְלִיקִים אֶת הַמַּדִּים
יְקַבְּרוּ אוֹתוֹ שָׁלֵם בֵּין יְהוּדִים

ביטחונות

1. פקודת־יום

נִרְמְסוּ וְלֹא נִפַּצְמוּ
נִכְבְּשְׁמוּ וְלֹא נִתְיַרְמוּ
מַרְכְּבוֹת פַּרְעֹה וְעָרְאפַאת
רָמָה בָּיָם

2. ביטוח־חיים־צמוד

סְמוֹךְ עָלֵינוּ
שֶׁנְּגָרוֹם לָךְ
לִסְמוֹךְ עַל עַצְמְךָ

אֲנַחְנוּ נַחְזִיר לְךָ
אֶת הַבִּטָּחוֹן־הָעַצְמִי
שֶׁאִתּוֹ נוֹלַדְתָּ
וְשֶׁאוֹתוֹ גָּזְלוּ מִמְּךָ
מַעֲרֶכֶת־הַתִּנּוּךְ
הַהוֹרִים
הַמּוֹרִים
הַהִסְתַּדְּרוּת הַכְּלָלִית שֶׁל הָעוֹבְדִים הָעִבְרִים
עֲבוֹדָה עִבְרִית
בַּפַּרְדֵּס וּבָעִיר
שְׁכֶם הוֹפֶכֶת זָקֵן עַל צָעִיר

אֲנַחְנוּ נִבְטַח אוֹתְךָ בֶּזְוֹנָה
גַּם נֶגֶד אִמְּךָ הַזּוֹנָה
וְגַם נֶגֶד לָקוֹחוֹתֶיהָ
וּבְעִקָּר נֶגֶד הַסִּפּוּן הֶחָמוּר
שֶׁאַתָּה מְהַוֶּה לְעַצְמְךָ וְלַאֲחֵרִים
וּנְפַצֶּה אוֹתְךָ בְּכֶסֶף טוֹב
אֲשֶׁר לְעוֹלָם לֹא הָיִיתָ זוֹכֶה
לְהַרְוִיחַ בְּכָל דֶּרֶךְ אַחֶרֶת

אָז רַד מֵעָלֵינוּ אַרְצָה שָׁכֵב
אֲנַחְנוּ עוֹלִים עָלֶיךָ עַכְשָׁו

3. הפיתרון הסופי בעיני אידי אמין הלבן

הַפִּתָּרוֹן הַסּוֹפִי שֶׁל הַבְּעָיָה הָעֲרָבִית
הוּא לְשַׁנּוֹת אֶת הַמִּבְנֶה הַפְּרוּדָתִי שֶׁל הַשְּׁכֵנִים

כָּל דִּמְיוֹן בֵּין פִּתָּרוֹן זֶה
לְבֵין מִלְחָמָה בִּיּוֹלוֹגִית אוֹ חִימִית
הוּא מִקְרִי בְּהֶחְלֵט

אֵין לָנוּ שׁוּם דָּבָר נֶגֶד הָעֲרָבִים
כָּל מַטָּרָתֵנוּ הִיא אַךְ וְרַק
לְהַפּוֹךְ אוֹתָם בְּמֶשֶׁךְ הַשָּׁנִים
לְעַם קָטָן וְאֵיכוּתִי

לְתַמְצֵת אוֹתָם
לְמַשֶּׁהוּ יְצוּגִי וְקוֹמְפַקְטִי

מִשְׁהוּ שֶׁלֹּא זָז בִּשְׁטַח
מַשֶּׁהוּ שָׁזָז בְּתוֹךְ עַצְמוֹ

כָּל מִטָּרָתָהּ שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינָהּ אֶלָּא
לְהַפּוֹךְ אֶת הָעֲרָבִים מִכַּמּוּת לְאֵיכוּת

וְכָל מַטָּרַת הָעֲרָבִים הִיא
לְהַפּוֹךְ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶפֶס־כַּמּוּת

וְכָל מַטָּרָתָן שֶׁל הַשּׁוּרוֹת הַנ״ל
הִיא כָּל מַטָּרָתָן שֶׁל הַשּׁוּרוֹת הַנ״ל

4. לא כדאי להצטער יותר מדי

לֹא לָקַחַת לַלֵּב
הַמִּבְנֶה הַפַּאלִי
שֶׁל הָעַצְבָנוּת הַבִּטְחוֹנִית הַיִּשְׂרְאֵלִית
מְמֻלָּא לֹא הִתְאִים
לָאֵישִׁיוּת הַוָּגִינָלִית
שֶׁל תְּעָלַת סוּאֵץ
סִבָּה טוֹבָה כְּשֶׁלְּעַצְמָהּ לְסֶגֶת
עִם אוֹ בְּלִי וְתוּרִים
אוֹרְגַּזְמַת הַנֶּפֶט קְצַת בְּעִיְתִית
חֲתוּלָה חֲמוּצָה
מְעֻבֶּרֶת כְּרוֹנִית
אֲלָוֹ הֶרֶר דּוֹקְטוֹר
אֶטָנאס נוֹיֶס
שָׁמְעֵנוּ עָלַיִךְ

עוֹד בְּרֶחֶם
בְּרֶחֶם אִמֵּךְ
יְרֵחַם אָבִיךְ
כָּל הַזְּכִיּוֹת שְׁמוּרוֹת לְסַאדַאת

5. ללמוד ליפול

הַקֶּשֶׁר הָאֶפְשָׁרִי בֵּין מַחְלַת־הַנְּפִילָה לְבֵין הוֹמוֹסֶקְסוּאָלִיּוּת
אֵינוֹ טָעוּן הוֹכָחָה
וְיוֹלְהֶלֶם שְׁטֶרְקֶל
הִצְבִּיעַ עָלָיו פַּעַם שְׁנָיָה בְּ־1922
מֵהֲדוּרָה חוֹזֶרֶת בְּאַרְבָּעִים וְתֵשַׁע
אֶת וִילְהֶלֶם שְׁטֶרְקֶל קוֹרְאִים לְאַט

טָעוּן שֶׁשְּׁטֶרְקֶל לֹא חָשַׁב עָלָיו
הַקֶּשֶׁר בֵּין מַחְלַת הַנְּפִילָה לְבֵין הוֹמוֹסֶקְסוּאָלִיּוּת
בָּרוּר וּמִתְבַּקֵּשׁ
מִשּׁוּם שֶׁכְּשֶׁגֶּבֶר בּוֹגֵר נוֹפֵל
הוּא זָקוּק בֶּאֱמֶת לְמִישֶׁהוּ אָמִין לְהִשָּׁעֵן עָלָיו
וְעָדִיף לְהִשָּׁעֵן בְּמִקְרֶה זֶה עַל גֶּבֶר
מֵאֲשֶׁר עַל אִשָּׁה

מִבְּחִינָה מִסְתַּמֶּמֶת כָּל צְנִחָן הוּא בְּעֶצֶם חוֹלֶה נְפִילָה
כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּל נֶהָג הוּא בְּעֶצֶם חוֹלֶה הֶגֶה
וְהָעִתּוּי הָאִידֵאָלִי שֶׁל הַהִתְקֹף
הוּא כְּמוּבָן רֶגַע הַצְּנִיחָה

חוֹלֶה הַנְּפִילָה מַתִּיז אֶת רַקּוֹ בֵּין שָׁמַיִם לָאָרֶץ
וּכְשֶׁהוּא מַגִּיעַ לַקַּרְקַע
הוּא מוֹחֶה אֶת פִּיו
וְוֹוחֵל מְאֻשָּׁשׁ לְעֵבֶר הַיַּעַד

סִיסְמָה אֶפְשָׁרִית שֶׁל חוֹלֵי נְפִילָה עִם כַּנְפֵי צַנְחָן:
צוֹנְחִים הַנּוֹפְלִים רִאשׁוֹנָה

7. דו״ח של איש המישמר האזרחי

מִפְעָלֵנוּ לֹא מַעֲנִיק בְּטָחוֹן
מִפְעָלֵנוּ מַעֲנִיק בְּטָחוֹן־עַצְמִי

מִי שֶׁמַּעֲדִיף בְּטָחוֹן
עַל בְּטָחוֹן־עַצְמִי
אֵין לוֹ מָה לְחַפֵּשׂ אֶצְלֵנוּ

אֲבָל מִי שֶׁמַּעֲדִיף בְּטָחוֹן־עַצְמִי
עַל בְּטָחוֹן
יְוַכַּח שֶׁיֵּשׁ לָנוּ לְהַצִּיעַ לוֹ
הַרְבֵּה יוֹתֵר מִשֶּׁמַּצִּיעַ הַפֶּנְטָגוֹן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל

הַצָּעוֹת מְפַרָטוֹת תָּבוֹאנָה

6. מה לא ומה כן

הַנָּדוֹן חִפּוּשׂ בְּטְחוֹנִי עַל הַגּוּף

בָּדַקְתִּי אֶת הַחֲשׁוּדָה בַּפְּנִיסָה לַקּוֹלְנוֹעַ

מָצָאתִי שְׁנֵי רְמוֹנִים חַיִּים
וּפְצָצַת־זְמַן

עָבַר זְמַנִּי

האצבע האחת עשרה

(מתוך תערוכה מושגית, שנשארה מושגית)

חֲמָרִים:

אֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים
נֵר־נְשָׁמָה
עַמּוּד־הַתֵּיכוֹן
מַצֶּבֶת־נֵצַח
מִשְׁגַּל־עֵד
זַיִן
חֶרֶב־הַנָּקָם
חֶרֶב־הַשָּׁלֵם
מַקֵּל־נַעַם
מַקֵּל־חוֹבְלִים
אוֹר גֹּז מַה

בְּצוּעַ:

הַשִּׁיר הַזֶּה
כָּל הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה
נִכְתַּב בְּאַחַת עֶשְׂרֵה אֶצְבָּעוֹת

הָאֶצְבַּע הָאַחַת עֶשְׂרֵה
הִיא כָּל הָעִנְיָן
אֱלֹהִים
וְשָׂטָן
וּמַס־הַכְּנָסָה

הערות שפויות על המלחמה המופרעת

1. דובר צה"ל מודיע

פּוֹחוֹתֵינוּ – אִוּלוּ

2. סקופ

לִידִיעָתְכֶם, אֲנִי –

א. הָאָדָם הַשָּׁפוּי בְּיוֹתֵר בְּרֶגַע זֶה עַל
כּוֹכַב־הַלֶּכֶת אֶרֶץ;

ב. יוֹעֲצוֹ־הַסּוֹדִי שֶׁל קָארְטֶר לְעִנְיְנֵי
בְּרֶז'ִינְסְקִי;

ג. יוֹעֲצוֹ־הַסּוֹדִי שֶׁל בְּרֶז'ִינְסְקִי
לְעִנְיְנֵי קָארְטֶר;

ד. הָאָדָם הַיָּחִיד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁבְּגִינוֹ,
דַּיָּן, וַיָּצָמַן וְאָרִיק שָׁרוֹן מִתְמַשְּׁבִים
בְּדַעְתּוֹ;

ה. סַפָּק־הַשָּׁמַיִם שֶׁל צַמֶּרֶת הַסִּינִים;

ו. מְאַמֵּן הַקָּאראטֶה שֶׁל צַמֶּרֶת הַקְּרֶמְלִין;

ז. זַיְן.

לָכֵן יֵשׁ לָשִׂים לֵב אֶל הֶעָרוֹתַי בְּעִנְיָן
בִּלְתִּי־חָשׁוּב זֶה, שֶׁשְּׁמוֹ הִסְכְּסוּךְ בֵּאֲזוֹרֵנוּ.

3. מה מופרע, מי מופרע

הִגְדַּרְתִּי פַּעַם אֶת מִלְחֶמֶת־יוֹם־הַכִּפּוּרִים כְּ"מִלְחָמָה
הַמֻּפְרַעַת". אֲנִי זוֹכֵם אֲפִלּוּ לְהוֹצִיא בְּהַזְדַּמְנוּת
סֵפֶר־שִׁירִים שָׁלֵם בְּשֵׁם "שִׁירֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה הַמֻּפְרַעַת".

מַשּׁוּם שֶׁשְּׁנֵי הַצְּדָדִים הַלּוֹחֲמִים הָיוּ וְנִשְׁאֲרוּ מֻפְרָעִים.
מַשּׁוּם שֶׁהִפְרִיעוּ לָנוּ לְהִסְתַּדֵּר בִּלְעָדֶיהָ.
מַשּׁוּם שֶׁהִפְרִיעוּ לָנוּ לִפְתֹּחַ בָּהּ.
מַשּׁוּם שֶׁהִפְרִיעוּ לָנוּ לְסַיֵּם אוֹתָהּ.
מַשּׁוּם שֶׁמַּפְרִיעִים לָנוּ אֲפִלּוּ לְהַגְדִּיר אוֹתָהּ.

אִם לֹא יַפְרִיעוּ לִי לִכְתּוֹב אֶת הַסֵּפֶר הַשָּׁפוּי הַזֶּה,
הוּא יֵצֵא לְאוֹר, בְּלִי הוֹדָעָה מֻקְדֶּמֶת, עִם לְפָחוֹת
אַלְפַּיִם עֻתָּקִים מְשֻׁרְיָנִים עַל הַגָּבוֹל וְעִם כַּוָּנָה
בְּרוּרָה לַחֲצוֹת אוֹתוֹ וְלֹא לְבַזְבֵּז זְמַן עַל כְּתוּרִים.

4. זמר קיומי

פִּתְאוֹם אַתָּה חוֹזֵר אֶל אִשְׁתְּךָ
אֶל אִשְׁתְּךָ שֶׁאָהַבָה אוֹתְךָ
שֶׁאָהַבָה אוֹתְךָ כָּל הַשָּׁנִים
וְשֶׁיָּלְדָה לְךָ שְׁלוֹשָׁה בָּנִים

עָבְשָׁו אַתָּה חוֹזֵר אֶל אַרְבָּעְתָּם
וְהֵם לֹא נִשְׁתַּנּוּ וְהֵם אוֹתָם
הֵם אוֹהֲבִים אוֹתְךָ וְזֶה אֶת זֶה
וְגַם אַתָּה אוֹתָם אַתָּה כָּזֶה

עָבְשָׁו אַתָּה חוֹזֵר לְיוֹם אֶחָד
לְיוֹם אֶחָד קָצָר וּמְיֻחָד
וְהֵם אִתְּךָ וְגַם אַתָּה אִתָּם
אַתָּה וְהִיא שְׁלִשְׁתָּם וְאַרְבַּעְתָּם

וְאַתָּה אַתָּה אוֹמֵר שָׁלוֹם
אַתָּה חוֹשֵׁב שָׁלוֹם זֶה רַק חֲלוֹם
אַתָּה חוֹזֵר לִיחִידָה וְאָז
נוֹעַ נוֹעַ בְּנִי הַכּוֹחַ זָז

נוֹעַ נוֹעַ בְּנִי אַתָּה מוּנָע
עוֹבֵר מִמִּתְקָפָה לְמִגְנָנָה
אַתָּה בּוֹלֵם וְאָז אַתָּה נִבְלָם
וְזֶה הַכֹּל אֵין צֶדֶק בָּעוֹלָם

5. חופשת־מינלואים

נוֹעַ נוֹעַ בְּנִי עַל אִשְׁתְּךָ
עַל אִשְׁתְּךָ שֶׁאָהַבָה אוֹתְךָ
עַל אִשְׁתְּךָ שֶׁהִתְעַפְּקָה עִם הַשְּׁכֵנִים
עַל אִשְׁתְּךָ עִם הַשָּׁדִים הַקְּטַנִּים

הַיְלָדִים כְּבָר יְשֵׁנִים שְׁלִשְׁתָּם
מְאוֹנָנִים בַּחֲלוֹמָם עַל אֲחוֹתָם
עַל אֲחוֹתָם הַחֲמוּדָה שֶׁלֹּא נוֹלְדָה
נוֹעַ נוֹעַ קְצִין־הַהוֹלָדָה

נוֹעַ נוֹעַ בְּנִי וְאַל תִּבְלוֹם
בְּשָׁבִיל כָּל הַמִּלְחָמָה וְהַשָּׁלוֹם
נוֹעַ בְּנִי בִּשְׁבִיל הַחֲבֵרִים
שֶׁנִּשְׁאֲרוּ לְדַפּוֹק אֶת הַמִּצְרִים

נוֹעַ נוֹעַ יֶלֶד צָא מִשָּׁם
תִּהְיֶה טִיָּס תִּכְבּוֹשׁ אֶת הָעוֹלָם
עַד שֶׁיִּפָּגַע בְּךָ קַרְקַאוִיר
וְאֶת הוֹרֶיךָ יְבַקְּרוּ מִקְּצִין־הָעִיר

6. שיר־ערש לארמייה השלישית

הָאַרְמִיָּה הַשְּׁלִישִׁית בַּגְּדָה הַשְּׁנִיָּה
כַּתְּרָה כַּתְּרָה בַּפַּעַם הָרִאשׁוֹנָה
הָיוּ לָהּ הַרְבֵּה נְדוּדֵי־שֵׁנָה

הַרְבֵּה טוֹיְלִים וּמְעַט הֲבָנָה
לְמַצָּב שֶׁנּוֹצַר
לְיַד הַמִּדְבָּר
בְּגִלְגֵּל עִם שֶׁעֶר אֲפַרְפַּר
אוֹ הַיְנוּ־הוּ הַמְּמֻגָּנִים עָלָיו
חָסְרוּ לָהּ מַיִם חָסַר לָהּ חֶלֶב
חָסַר לָהּ דֶּלֶק וְחָסְרוּ תְּרוּפוֹת
וְלַיְלָה מְאוֹד פְּרוֹבְּלֶמָאטִי חָלַף
וּמַקְהִיר הִגִּיעוּ תְּשָׁדּוֹרוֹת דְּחוּפוֹת
לָצֵאת מֵהַכְּתוּר לָצֵאת לְאַלְתַּר
לְפָרוֹץ בַּשְּׁנַיִם כָּל מִצְרַי וְמַר
וְאָז הוֹפִיעַ הַמַּלְאָךְ הַגּוֹאֵל
עַל הַכְּבִישׁ בַּקִּילוֹמֶטֶר הַמְּאָה וְאֶחָד
וְחַיָּלֵי מִצְרַיִם וְחַיָּלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
שִׁחֲקוּ שֶׁשְׁבֵּשׁ וְשִׁחֲקוּ שֹׁחְמָט

7. חדשות הצוהריים

הַכְּנֶסֶת
גּוֹסֶסֶת.

אַף שֶׁעַל
לְצַהֲ"ל.

הַשָּׁלוֹם
הוּא חָלוֹם.

הָעֲרָבִים –
אוֹיְבִים.

הַיְּהוּדִים –
יְדִידִים.

כָּל הָעוֹלָם –
אִידְיוֹט מֻשְׁלָם.

8. אבל לסגת תמיד עצוב

(שיר ילדים צייתניים)

1.
לְפָנוֹת מִדְבָּר זֶה כְּמוֹ לְפַנּוֹת שֻׁלְחָן.
קוֹרְאִים לַמֻּלְצָר, מוֹדִיעִים שֶׁהַכֹּל מוּכָן.
מְקַפְּלִים אֶת הַמַּפָּה, אִם יֵשׁ מַה לְקַפֵּל.
מְקַבְּלִים אֶת הַחֶשְׁבּוֹן, אִם יֵשׁ מַה לְקַבֵּל.
קָמִים וְהוֹלְכִים, וְכָךְ נִפְרָדִים הַכּוֹחוֹת.
נִפְגָּשִׁים הַמּוֹחוֹת, וְאָז נִפְרָדִים הַכּוֹחוֹת.

2.
לְפָנוֹת תְּעָלָה זֶה כְּמוֹ לַעֲזוֹב אִשָּׁה
(סְלִיחָה עַל הַדִּמּוּי הַנָּדוֹשׁ וְהַשּׁוּרָה הַנְּדוֹשָׁה).

3.
כַּאֲשֶׁר נִפְגָּשִׁים הַמּוֹחוֹת,
נִפְרָדִים הַכּוֹחוֹת.
שְׁטָחִים נֶעֱזָבִים עַל־יְדֵי צְבָאוֹת
לְלֹא מְחָאוֹת.
הָעִנְיָן, שֶׁהָיָה רַק אֶתְמוֹל טְרַאוּמָאטִי,
נֶהְפָּךְ לְבִצּוּעַ כְּמַעַט אוֹטוֹמָאטִי,

וַעֲתִיד הָאֵזוֹר חָדֵל לְאַיִם
עַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם הַמִּתְבַּנְאֵם.

4.
שָׁנִים חָלַמְנוּ עַל שָׁלוֹם – פִּתְאוֹם הוּא בָּא.
הֶסְדֵּר־חוֹזִי עִם פַּטְרוֹנִים וַעֲרָבָה.
וְכוֹחַ־אוֹ״ם וּפֵרוּזִים וְכָל הַשְּׁאָר.
וְרַק לַיְהוּדִים כְּלוּם לֹא נִשְׁאַר.

9. ביטחון שדה

צִיּוּד אִישִׁי מֻמְלָץ
לְכָל חַיֶּלֶת:
טַמְפּוֹנֵי־חַאקִי
עִם כְּתֹבֶת:
״חַיִל, נְצוֹר לְשׁוֹנְךָ״.