

THE POEMS OF BIALIK

from

1904 - - - - 1914

and

TRANSLATED

and

WITH NOTES

With some original poemlets, Bialik-influenced
and otherwise.

BY -

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B I B L I O G R A P H Y

1. Margolis & Marx -- "History of the Jewish People"
2. Baron -- "Social & Religious History of the Jews"--4
3. Dubnow--"History of the Jews in Russia and Poland."

1. Hebrew Reborn-- Spiegel.
2. "Selected Poems by Chaim Nachman Bialik.
translated from the Hebrew by Maurice Samuel...
3. Poems from the Hebrew of Chaim Nachman Bialik...
edited by L.V. Snowman
with introduction by Vladimir Jabotinsky.

4. כתבי ח. נ. ב' אשכנזי
5. 1'8 הקורא

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Chaim N. Bialik, born in 1783, in Rudi, Volhynia. ^{The forest-beauty about his home/} ~~His nature~~ bewitched the Yeshiva-attending youth. His father, a studious innkeeper, died; his mother supported a large family. After two years at the Volozhm Yeshiva, Bialik joined Ahad Ha-hem's circle at Odessa; his stay was interrupted by the death of his grandfather at Zhitomer. After marriage, the poet, plagued with poverty since youth, busied himself with soul-torturing jobs in little Polish and Russian towns. In 1905, Bialik established a publishing house at Odessa, which enriched Hebraic Israel spiritually, and Bialik financially. After living in Odessa many years, the poet went to live and die in Palestine.

שירי החורף

1904.

I

The morning-cold, the raven's cry
have roused me and I'll rise,
I know not why but all at once
joy, festive, touched my eyes.

Who poured the pure drop in
my heart, I do not know
and why my bedroom's face
gave joy and banished woe.

The hoar-frost on the window pane-
look! Now my window, changed,
has reared, like Aaron's rod, at night
a grove on glass arranged.

Snow-laden cyprus-groves
the form of palms and oak-
good morn! hail, winter trees!
frost-buds make by a stroke!

Oh healthy light, so clear and cold
my room you've flooded yea! restored
as if last night celestial joy
an angel brought straight from the Lord.

Oh! healthy light so cold and still
you've filled, restored, my heart profane
as if a winged angel pure
flew down and washed it clean of stain.

III

The frost still holds the window pane
before the sparkling rays
but on the pane's midst! Look! Behold!
A flame shaft sits ablaze--

Morn, bubbling o'er with wantonness
caught her rays in a snare -
With tassels of her light, she hangs
upon a tree-branch there.

And there struggles the giddy morn
shiv'ring the frosty-top-
Yearning, in vain, to burst with gold
then-morn shakes down a drop.

After a second drop, a third-
some clean glass is laid bare
then sunlight breaks spouting in
to set my room--afire.

1904

The sun sure layed in wait for me
 he saw me, rose full length-
 hurled all his spears at me then-in
 me poured whim, glory, strength.

Then once again upon the pane
 a wintry day shone bright
 then once again my heart awoke
 'twas strong, proud, full of might.

Lo! My arm of steel had returned
 Let me up-root a hill.
 Give me a lion to cleave--~~Ag~~ or
 Goliath to kick still-

Right now,--give me a staff and cloak
 to clothe my body round.
 Ahiking I'll go there to think
 on the heights of the town.

With love for the world clothed in light,
 wondrous drunk is my heart.
 Where is my cloak? Give me my staff
 to greet earth now; I'll start.

III

Still on the threshold of my house
 a host of flame walked on ahead.
 then suddenly nine measures full
 a light deluge rose o'er my head.

Before I knew how many suns
 poured all their gold as I did go-
 life's ^{flame} flush like a maid bursting thru
 all street-ways, set aflame the snow.

To all eyes famished-all the earth
 spread o'er itself a satin light
 all glittered as if everything-
 rose up this day to greatness, might.

The hardened ice, like molten iron
 held sway and in its ruling sphere
 the light and frost together served.
 one with arrow, the other, spear.

By my soul, if not in the night
 by high decree, the ruler died.
 next day a feast--^{Get} linen new.
 let not things naked here be spied.

Pure linen white and diamonds rare-
 arrows of light and golden drops
 gleaming at the head of streets
 hang from tree-boughs and garden-tops.

1904

The new snow sparkling bright, as if
still falling from the heaven's dome,
spread table cloths on ev'ry wall
on top of ev 'ry ledge and home.

The snow spread glitt'ring coverlets
on ev'ry hill top and its folds-
and chains of silver pure hung from
hooks and arms of telegraph poles.

On roofs the snow spread out its sheets
with ripening of crystal wheat.
in all the world's expense, a day
of festive white ruled ev'ry street.

The satin snow spread out, unbarred--
in the sky-a strange hand of old
weaves yellow threads and binds the head
of day with ~~the~~ rare crowns of gold

One tree, encased in glitt'ring glass
all girded round with wintry birds,
tingled aloud with morning joy-
joyous, alive and full of words

I V

Oh! Let the frost enfold me round
let ice, burn, singe, scorch, pierce, astound.
let my breath harden on my beard,
let iron flow in my veins seared.

Come be to me as a sharp knife
as a sword's edge, my strength of life,

With iron will embrace my breast
lest from restraint, it burst with zest-

Oh! frost, play on the fool, inject
burn, singe, scorch, prick, give me no rest

Stretch out all muscles of my hand
let my breath gulp me where I stand

A sparkling on the flakes, O sun.
ray-laden, rule-thy will be done--

V

On the noise of the wintry wheels
rose breath-wreathes and loud bells ahead -
in the whirlwind passed coats of fur
pair after pair with faces red-

It was as if all had gone mad
from hunger; revived, they did mend
their souls by breathing deep-one breath
in flight-on God's road, end to end.

1904

All is free, free-the wag on flies -
 lift me up, too, press on and soar -
 Oh! Cast me to the tumult great
 and throw my soul to winds that roar.

Press forward! Drive! Where? Do not ask-
 there must be still-a little spot
 where yet some life does penetrate
 where yet a little blood boils hot.

Yes! A Talmudic student--I
 my forehead, snow; my face, of lime-
 but, like the winter, I've heaped up
 beneath my frost-coat, strength sublime-

From ~~my~~ ^{the} frost fragrance rare will waft
 upon the wind of spring, bliss-filled-
 A wondrous spring-by whose rare form
 no mortal eye has yet been thrilled.

Why are you mad, telegraph lines,
 with a desolate wintry ire?
 In my heart the fount of life yearns-
~~before the stranger drink it-bold-~~
~~Woods, says:- in me glows yet much fire!~~

And with a mighty, mighty gulp
 let us drink down, the whole cup's length-
 with festive joy let us pour down
 a sea of warmth, a world of strength.

And when my heart is emptied clean-
 all life poured out unto the base-
 far from the city in a wood
 escort me there; then halt my pace.

A wood of mighty oaks dwell there
 in winter, peace clasps ev'ry tree.
 Each pure tree there does purify-
 Does no one know this fact save me?

As a tree full-branched, proud and cold
 let him stand then-in secret pride
 with a pure gift in a cup pure
 let him to the God wondrous, stride!

From 'twixt the rows of trees will shine
 the pure white snow free from all marks
 amongst the leaves I'll find there hid-
 A hammer-anvil lacking sparks-

1904

I'll draw out my heart from my breast
as one draws a knife from its sheath-
the first born of the frost I'll cleanse
and place it on the anvil's teeth.

With my sharp iron I'll pound and pound
strike blow on blow yet stronger still
despite itself, the wood echo
will answer: tree, keep firm thy will.

My heart then filled with courage new
it never knew that it possessed
will return once again to me-
seven times stronger-full of zest.

MIN '7010

1904

After my death mourn thus for me
 A man was-look! he is no more-
 He died before his fated time
 in middle life his song was stopped.
 Alas! Left to him was a song-
 behold this song forever lost-
 the woe of it! He had a harp
 which was a living speaking soul,
 when e'er the poet spoke through it,
 the harp told him of all his woe;
 the harp-strings that his hand did pluck
 told him his heart's full misery.
 About, About his fingers danced-
 one string alone he did not pluck,
 Speechless its stands unto this day-
 How very, very great the woe!
 During her days the string ~~it~~ shook, quaked,
 shook silently, quaked very still
 for her song--for her love defiled.
 She wanted, thirsted long, pined, yearned
 as a torn soul yearns for more gold.
 She waited thus--each day she hoped.
 with sighs concealed, she called to him-
 He waited, tarried did not come.
 The pain was very, very great.
 A man was--look! he is no more-
 He died before his fated time -
 In middle-life his song was stopped.
 Alas! Left to him was a song
 Behold! This, song forever lost
 forever lost! forever lost--

WHERE

:7 '16

1904

From secrecy, my only one,
 and God-head of the dreams I've spun-
 reveal thyself, come, run a race
 Unto me in my dwelling place,
 While still I can be saved, come, free
 my soul. My fate govern for me.
 Just one day my robbed youth-return-
 make me for my lost Spring-return.
 'Neath thy lips let my flame turn low
 from twixt thy breasts each day I'll go
 as butter-flies flutt'ring at Eve
 'Mongst fragrant blooms Death's charms receive.
 Who, what you are I do not know-
 thy name trembles on my lips, though.
 Like fiery coals at night in bed
 your image burns within my head--
 Sleepless, I bite my pillow, weep
 Recalling thee, I waste in sleep;
 All day twixt lines of sacred love,
 in a Sun-ray, in cloud-form pure-
 in chant soul-cleansing-thoughts divine-
 in sweet dreams-in words of the mind-
 my soul seeks for thy form-just thine-
 just thee, thee, thee, I've sought as mine.

The flaming coal upon thy shrine, cast off,
 O Seer, abandon it to villians vile-
 Let them roast brown their meats, set down
 their pots
 And warm their palms with its bright glow. ~~the spark~~
 Within your heart, cast out, and let them light
 and puff smoke clouds from out their lighted-pipes
 to bring to light their heartless smile, that lurks
 Theif-like, beneath musta hios-to show
 The lust within their eyes. Behold, they come-
 The villians come, go with chants you've taught on
 Their tongues. Your pain, their pain; your hope, their hope;
 Yet they lift their souls toward the altar ruined;
 Thereon-they fly unto the heap; upon
 Debris, they dig-dislodge the scattered stones
 And sink them in their house-floors, garden walls,
 And make them monuments on their own graves.
 And if they'd find your burnt-out souls-in parts-
 They'd fling it to the hungry dogs for food.
 Hence-kick over thy shrine, kick with a foot
 of shame and strip it of its incense, smoke-
 And with one pluck, blot out the spider's web
 Stretched o'er thy heart as strings upon the lyre.
 A song of rebirth, rescue's dreams, I'll weave
 For thee,--a prophecy, untrue-ear-false--
 To hollow winds you'll cast them wand'ring torn
 And light-on a clear day at summer's end.
 No silver thread nor gossamer will find
 its mate; on winter's day first rain they'll cease.
 Thy iron hammer cracked from pounding much
 On hearts, on hearts of stone to no avail--
 You now shall take a shattered part and from
 it forge a spade to dig for us a grave.
 And if God's wrath bein thy mouth-a curse-
 Be not afraid to let thy lips speak forth.
 And if thy word be bitter death yea! death
 Itself-let it be heard-that we may know.
 Behold! Abundant Night has hid, crushed us-
 And like men blind we've groped upon the Night.
 The world divine fell between us and no
 One knows what fell and no one tells or sees
 Whether for us, the sun has risen, set
 Or whether it forever more has sunk.
 And great the vanity and fearful, too,
 The utter emptiness that plagues us round.
 And if we cry unto the dark or pray
 Who will give ear to us, who will give ear?
 Or if the cruel curse of God, we curse
 On whose head will divine reproach descend?
 Or if we grind teeth, clench a fist of wrath
 The void shall swallow all of them, the wind
 Shall blow them off like chaff; destroyed, destroyed;
 No aid, no power left, no place to go.
 The heavens looked down in their silence ~~deep~~

→ on whose head will the vengeful fist
 come down?

1904

The Heavens kn w they've sinned; hell, too, has sinned,
In Silence, they lift up their trespasses-
But, if, God, you've a word Divine, speak out
Speak out, Speak out, Speak out, Speak out, Speak out.
Should we fear Death? Death's angel rides now on
Our shoulder and his bridle bites our lips-
If need, with rescue's cry and laughter's about
Let's leap with bravery into our graves.

→ *though it be bitter death,
though Death itself.*

The world is bathed in light and song
life's wealth, beyond account, lies round.
'Twixt wood and field on a path long
We too walked on without a sound.

We trudged down a path without end
embraced by butterflies and grain
each tree with leafy head did bend
with gold spears each, to greet our lane.

Was that a cherub flutt'ring o'er
a swift cloud high? His form did tour
a distant clime. My thought as pure
rose high on its wing evermore.

Skies glare with blue on end again-
You walk ahead--I'll trace your heel-
The sheaves stand straight with ripened
grain,
the brightness like your eyes--all feel.

For a flash--it seemed that those leaves
Possessed a leaf that went--returned.-
a treasure hidden on the breeze
Preserved of old for us who've yearned.

Then--the branch shook--from rim to rim
light rays o'er the sea's face did fling-
Ah! who poured snow-filled to the brim,
like flocks of white birds wing to wing.

A butterfly caught like a burr
on thy braid's edg'd, danced on thy girth,
as if to hint:--"Youth rise, kiss her
go to her-like this wing of mirth-

Were you moved by the butterfly
and me? Did you hear my caught soul
sing; aflutt'ring, hanging, yearning
for rescue from thy braided hair.

I watch and ask an answer from
your eyes--the same sky doves of grace
Your eyes; your braids that swing and come-
what mean they when they say "Apace."

"Quick, quick my sister, let us fare
'neath a leaf-tent where I'll declare
my soul--my love hung on a hair-
Let us two die with a kiss there.

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1904.

On thy heart's wall still cling and hangs the stem
of roses of last year--
Soul Delight! Look! Twixt' tree and garden bed
A new spring leaps with cheer.

The hoe has now touched, struck and scooped out earth--
the garden bed is dug
the Spring will stay and new blooms will grow up
to climb the wall--to hug--

From tree to tree the pruning shears have leaped
to clip brush not alive
Soul joy! Things withered the dust will lick up
But human kind will thrive--

Have you breathed the scent of stems new and green
mixed with smell of pine;
Thus grows the sucking orchard nursed and live
with hosts of boughs in line.

Toward eve, a fair pure maid the gardner's child
came to the grove to clear
All fell twigs-pruned - for to-night she will burn
all shoots of yester year.

1905

הכניס'ני מתת כנפך

Now, hide me deep beneath thy wing -
 Be mother, sister, give me rest -
 And let my head still housing dreams
 Exiled by kin, receive thy breast.

When pity rules at eventide -
 bend down, I'll fill thy heart with woe -
 This earth, they say, bears youthfulness -
 Where is my youth fled years ago?

One secret more now I'll confess:
 Love once made my heart flame, flame, flame!
 Love still glows on the earth, I'm told -
 What love? Is it still called by hame?

The stars once cast their eyes at me
 'Twas but a dream--that, too, has passed -
 Now emptiness embraces earth -
 There's nothing left for me--at last.

Now hide me deep beneath thy wing -
 Be mother, sister, give me rest -
 And let my head still housing dreams
 Exiled by kin, receive thy breast.

'143 WTP

Rise come, my sister bride
rise come, at once, rise come -
Spring tidings I've brought thee -
behind my garden hedge
a bud, a bud has come -
The swallow chirps near home!

From dawn, sun rays of joy
guarding thy window sill
have kissed thy mezu²oth.

Seek them, O sister pure
for they will bathe, refresh -
and we will guard thy eyes.

God's mercy passed o'er earth
on wings of gorgeous light -
Joy's fallen in bright streams -
The spring has come! has come!

The garden trees now bloom
the cherry ripens red.
Come back to me, renew
the fruit of fragrant love -
Go, bless it in thy spring
and I, yea, I will cause
my blessed Spring to dwell
in Thee! You'll understand.
A robe of light, I'll give -
A blue crown for thy head!
Come then, an aery dream--!
You'll sparkle joy and laugh -
A laughter full of charm.

Your perfume--apple-tinged.

Together we will cleave
the field, the hill, the vale -

There I'll pluck souvenirs--
I'll surely nick up pearls
of dew-rare pearls of dew -
a necklace for thy neck.
I'll surely gather rays
of light-bright rays of light
among the roses red.

I'll bind thy ^{fore} ~~laze~~-head pure
with light, with little crowns
of glittering gold, I'll wreath
thy head. Descend we will
unto the wall. Like thee,
joy-laden, bright and gay
beneath God's dazzling sky -
With mirth and freedom vast
My song will shine yea! ring!

A forest I know: in the wood
 I know one modest, little pool
 'mongst leafy leaves, apart from life,
 in the oak's shade, sun blessed, stormed-schooled-
 Alone it dreams a lasting dream,
 and harbors goldfish quietly
 but no one knows what's in its heart.

The sun baths the proud forest's braids
 and pours a gold flood on its locks.
 The oak entangled in gold nets
 at his wish, stands, caught like Samson,
 within the hand of Delilah-
 with laughter light, he tests his strength,
 his face shines like a lover bright
 in a gold net, of his own choice.
 He bears imprisonment with joy
 and lifts his crowned head 'neath the great
 might of the sun, as if to say:-
 Engulf, take hold, imprison me,
 do with me all your heart may wish-

Then--- -- the pool whether clear or not
 rests in a shaft of golden light,
 wrapped in the shade of her full-branched
 defense whose roots take quiet suck,
 from her waters they quench their thirst,
 as if she secretly rejoiced
 in her calm fate which made her fit
 to be nurse to a forest giant.

Perhaps she dreamt in secrecy
 who knows--that net only its form
 took suck from her, but also the
 whole tree took root within her depths.

In the Moonlight

When secrecy lies heavy on
 the wood and hidden light pours still
 between the branches of the trees-
 a stealing, passing o'er its trunks
 embroidering there in silver, blue
 its handiwork of colours rare -
 Hush! ev'ry tree and ev'ry bush
 each tree ~~grows~~ ^{grows} dark upon its top
 and thought ~~thoughts~~ ^{thoughts} in its humble heart.
 The forest ~~stands~~ ^{stands} vast-planned and filled
 with secrets of a kingdom great
 precious, aged, as if there from
 of old, with strength artfully hid-
 on a gold couch, from mortal eye
 concealed, she sleeps, with beauty rare
 like a crown of renown, or like
 a secret ~~eternity~~ ^{eternity}-
 the daughters of an ancient queen-
 who was bewitched! but lo! the trees
 attentive, still stand guard to count,
 to keep a sacred watch o'er her

unharm'd, virginity, until
 a prince, her lover come, a prince
 her redeemer, her love, shall come.

Then the pool, whether clear or not
 in a bright ray thinned from on high-
 draws to herself in the full shade
 of her shield, many branches thick-
 and goes again calmly to bed
 as if the image of the wood
 was mirrored there, enthralled within
 the looking glass of all her days
 of peace. Who knows, perhaps she dreamt
 about things hid: that, in vain, would
 the prince wander and search around
 in woods and waste-lands and upon
 the ocean floor, for the princess
 lost-the pool rejoiced secretly
 in her own glory great, for was
 not the princess hid here within
 the heart-depths of the sleeping pool?

On the day of Storm

On the wood's head already were
 collecting, clouds of rain; within
 their hearts was war. they yet restrained
 and checked their wrath a moment more
 in secrecy. The storm stirred up
 the bellies of the wind. Yea! cloud
 on cloud, as if announcing woe
 before the dim, hurled lightning spears
 and cried out: "Be Prepared." Before
 one knew who was the foe: from whence
 he came and why: the whole woodland
 now covered with dark stood prepared
 for all the punishment on earth.
 Then suddenly a spark--a flash
 of lightning white--the wood turned pale-
 the earth shivered - alas! alas!
 the storm broke forth--the forest shock-
 the raging storm was boiling mad.
 millions of winds untuly, seen
 but yet not seen, with savage yells
 swept o'er the grandeur of the wood-
 then seized the forest by its locks
 and dragging trees, struck down their heads.
 Storm wave, storm wave upon storm wave.

From the storm's midst rose up ~~as a~~ a cry
 confused, from the lips of the wood, ~~it~~
 a lusty cry: laden with woe
 like distant waves that break upon
 the mighty seas: each one shouting
 Storm! Storm! Storm! Storm--

At this time of tumult-the pool

fenced by a wall of forest giants,
 Still housed within its secret depths
 the fishes gold-just as a child
 with eyes closed seeks concealment on
 a day of wrath 'neath the wings of
 its mother dear and with each flash
 of fire its eyelids quiver fast--
 So shook the pool's face, gloomy, dark;
 she drew ^{her} herself within
 the shade the shield ~~and~~ with branches thick.
 and all the pool trembled with fear
 and who knows:-
 Whether she shook at the pride of
 the forest's majesty or at
 the height of the splintered tree-tops.
 Perhaps she felt too narrow in
 the beauty of her humble world
 Shining with dreams and visions pure-
 Suddenly o'er her face the wind
 passed o'er and ruffled up her brow-
 a throng of visions glorious
 and swellings great of her deep heart
 reflections of both night and day
 at the storm's touch she put to flight.

At Dawn

The forest silent yet disturbed
 a-trembling ~~retreats~~ ^{retrenches} itself
 behind its leaves in secrecy -
 but already, mist, milky, hot
 and creeping things of earth began
 to burn incense unto the Dawn-

In vain, do straying vapors hang
 their curtains on the forest-tops;
 small tongues of wind sweet and luke warm
 like a babe's tongue soft on the cheek
 of its mother, already went
 forth in a flock to sooth the woods
 from the sharp watchful spear of Night.
 They tiptoed lightly, gently, soft
 'mongst leaves, wandering from bush to bush
 from tree to tree, soothing the heart
 of the white mist-or perching on
 a nest to rock it while the bird
 within, feath'ry, tender, asleep-
 knew not-----

And there upon the heights
 of the wood, sailed a family
 on high-a group of clouds--Are they
 not clouds of glory and of dawn
 who seem a group of chieftains old
 noble elders, bearing aloft
 the secret scrolls--(the wraths of Kings-)
 from one world to another world.
 Then,- the forest stood trembling; Still-

choked up, with fear; it held its breath
 with ev'ry move and flutter of
 a rousing bird, the forest spoke
 trembling, and the fear of glory.....
 at that time the pools slumbering
 enwrapped itself calm, warm and smooth
 in a soft sheet-a pearly mist--
 Then she slept the sleep of the dawn.
 Who knows-she might be dreaming yet
 if the honored of heaven and
 the princes of on high had not
 in vain awand'ring gone to seek
 another world beyond the seas,
 in the most heavenly abodes.
 But this other world is so near,
 so near. Behold! it's here below
 here in the modest pool's own heart.
 During my youth, my wondrous days
 when the wing of the Shechiquah
 first hovered over me, my heart
 then knew longing and marv'ling, sought
 in ~~secret~~^{secret} the covert of
 prayer. I cut my way clean thru
 the summer heat unto a realm
 of wondrous peace, unto a home
 of leaves. There twixt the trees of God
 the voice of the axe is not heard--
 only the wolf and hunter great.
 Whole hours did I stray here alone
 with my heart and my God as I
 cut thru and passed'twixt nets of gold
 until within the wood I came
 to the Holy of Holies rare
 unto the apple of its eye.

From beyond the curtain of leaves
 lies a small carpet green with grass--
 a little worldlet of its own
 a sacred place concealed with calm
 among the lotuses of trees--
 elders, wide boughed, in breeches wool--
 its ceiling a bit of blue sky
 upheld and borne by earthly trees--
 its floor-glass, a pool bright and clear--
 a silver glass enclosed within
 the midst of a succulent field--
 within it still a smaller world
 a second world, whose midst possessed
 within its midst, a little pool.
 One world, the other faced. two stones
 fast fixed, rare carbuncles, stones large
 and wondrous bright and clear--~~twosans~~^{Suns}.

As I sat on the lake's lip there
 watching the mystery of two
 worlds, twins, not knowing which came first--
 below my head 'neath the pool of
 the ancient wood drip shadow, light
 and song and flame together one--
 I felt amid the bubbling soft
 as if new freshness had come to

my soul. My heart, sacred, thirst-parched
 went there and filled itself with calm
 and hope, as if it yearned more than
 before for the awaited face
 of the Shechinah or the sight
 of Elijah. My watching ear
 forever yearned. My heart did strive
 for holiness, and hoped, pined, yearned.
 The voice of God too long concealed
 then burst forth from the silence round
 "where art thou?"

The woody delves with noise were filled
 the cypresses of god, natives,
 joyous, beheld me in the pride
 of their renown, amazed and still,
 as if to say: What is this now
 between the two of us. What, what?
 The lips of the gods now are still-
 their tongues are silent, too. Neither
 a voice nor sound is heard-only
 the shade of shades; therein one can
 rare magic hear-glorious forms
 and hosts of visions, too. In this
 tongue, God makes known himself, unto
 the chosen of his heart; thru it
 the princes of the earth make thoughts,
 the artist, fashioning, enfolds
 the meditations of his heart
 with it; and finds answers to dreams
 undreamt. For does not a language
 of visions great reveal new truths
 of the expansive firmament.-
 of the pure clouds of silvery-white-
 of the dark shapes that haunt the sky-
 of a shiv'ring stalk of golden corn-
 of the might of the cedar proud.

Of the hovering white-winged dove
 of the sharp slant of eagle's wings
 of man's beauteous body wrought
 of the splendor of an eye glance
 of the roar of the angry sea
 and the surge of its scornful waves
 of the abundance of the night
 and of the quiet of falling stars-
 of quivering light and the roar of
 a sea aflame at sunrise and
 at eventide: In this tongue, tongue
 of tongues, the pool also told me
 its riddle eternal, hid there
 in the shadow cheerful and quiet
 in peace: Her beauty is mirrored
 in ev'rything; all is mirrored,
 in her. Were all changed then 'twould seem
 as if she wore an open eye
 of the prince of the forest great
 with secrets vast and thoughts replete.

81λ 8'2

Midst foliage of yellow, gold
the summer now must cease-
the purple hills and red-tinged clouds
bathe in their purple peace.

The naked orchard now upholds
lone-hikers, few, who lift
their guiding eyes on the last flight
of storks departing swift-

O orphaned heart, quite soon the rain
will softly tap the sill
Have you patched boots, repaired your cloak?
Potato-sacks, go, fill-

1905

וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע יְהוָה בְּקוֹל יְהוֹנָדָב
 This, too, is God's censure + harsh rebuke

This, too, is God's censure and harsh rebuke
 That you have dealt falsely with your own heart.
 Your sacred tears You've sown on ev'ry sea
 and strung them on ev'ry false ray of light-
 Your soul, you've sunk in laps of foreign stone.
 While still 'twixt glutton's teeth your blood drips down-
 The food of your own soul you've fed their mouths.
 For their joy you built Pitōm, Ramesis-
 Your children were their bricks for pyramids.
 When from wood, stone, their cry sought out your ears-
 Their cry died e'er it reached; died e'er it reached.

And if an eagle reared among your sons
 took wing, you sent him from your nest for aye-
 And ~~he~~ ^{he} mount sun-thirsty for the heights
 no lamp of light will he bring down for you.
 Should his wings cleave a cloud or cut a path
 for a ray ~~on you~~ ^{on you} the light will not fall.
 Estranged from you on rock-tops he'll cry out-
 but his echo's voice will not reach your hearts.
 Thus one by one you will bereave choice sons-
 in mournful childlessness you'll fast remain.
 From your household Renown will cease and your
 tent beaten down, will harbor heart woe.
 God's mercy on your threshold will not tread
 Nor joyous rescue tap your window pane.
 If you should come back to the Ruin to pray,-
 you want; you'll seek a tear of comfort and
 you'll find it not. Your heart dried up will be
 a grape-bunch squeezed, left in the nook of a vat-
 which gives no juice to liven up the heart
 or to restore a soul oppressed. And should
 you touch the Ruin's hearth, lo! cold its stones
 will be- in ashes cooled the cat will wail.
 And you'll sit mournful, desolate; without,
 eternal rain; within, white ashes, dust.
 Your eyes will greet death-flies upon your pane,
 and spider-webs in corners desolate-
 The chimney- wail of poverty shall clasp
 Your heart--the walls of Ruin quake with cold-

If an angel asks, for thy soul, my son,
say this: "Dreaming earth-go seek ~~it now~~ it now."
On earth a leaf-walled hamlet calm exists
that owns a boundless firmament of blue -
in the midst of the blue expanse there hangs
a lonely cloudlet floating white and small -
and during summer noons a lonely boy
there smiled, left to his soul tender, alone -
adreaming-that boy, my angel, was I,
Then-once the world grew faint and quiet ruled,
and two eyes now drawn heavenwards
beheld the cloudlet lonely bright and pure.
His seeking soul went forth, as a dove from
its cote unto the cloud-

Will my soul melt?

There is, angel, a sun, too, in the world-
Amerciful sun-ray rescued my soul
and on the wings of light it fluttered on
for many days like a butterfly white.
One dawn my soul rode down a golden ray
to seek a pearl of dew among the grass,
A tear pure, simple, trembled down my cheek.
The sun-ray quaked-my soul felt lost within
my tear. And will my soul dry up? No, for
it dropped on the Gemorrah's sacred page-
parchment worn-out by grand-paternal eyes-
and in its womb, two hairs of his white beard,
Zitsoth threads wound in his own Talith small
and signs of many drops of tallow-wax.
In Gemorrah, in bowels of letters dead
fluttered alone my soul. Were you checked, soul?
No, angel, my soul quiv'ring now sang out
with letters dead my song of life rang forth-
Souls in books of grandfather's Ark, breathed like life -
men chanted songs of mine-of a cloud, small, bright -
of a golden ray--of a glist'ning tear -
of Zitsoth fringes cut, of drops of wax.
But--one song-youth and love, my soul knew not-
that exit sought, sighed deep--no solace found,
then fainted dead, and died in bitterness.
When I again reviewed my worn-out text-
Behold my soul within the book had flown--

Yet still in space my soul floqts to and fro
meanders, strays aloft, with peace unfound.
On calm nights at the start of ev'ry month
when the world gives prayer for the moon's rebirth--
it beats against the gates of love with wings--
it beats, knocks, weeps with sickness on its lips-
for love, my soul prays,--love denied, denied--

PK N882N
A Scroll of Fire

All night the flaming seas boiled and flames of fire scorched the Temple on the mount. Stars leapt from the parched heavens and poured forth sparks and sparks upon the earth. Was God overturning his throne and smashing to bits his crown? Rent clouds ruddy, laden with fire and blood wander in the highway of the Night revealing between the distant mountain tops the wrath of a vengeful god and declaring His anger among the Desert rocks. Did God tear up his purple robe and scatter its parts to the winds? And God confounded the distant mountains and anguish seized the raging desert rocks.

The god of Vengeance, the god of vengeance has shown forth.

Behold! He is the god of vengeance in his majesty and might, Calm full of awe he sits on the throne of fire in the heart of the blazing sea; his mantle, flaming purple; his footstool, burning coals. Galloping flames surround him; a cruel dance leaps about his head; the flame rears up about his head, gulping with thirst the slain of the world. He, calm, awful sits with his arm placed on his heart; the glance of his eye spreads wide the flames and the nod of his eye enlarges the fire. Ascribe to the Lord, O ye galloping leaping flames. Ascribe to the Lord the dance of flame and fire.

And when the dawn flashed over mountains and pale mist spread o'er the vale and flaming seas grew quiet and tongues of flame that burnt god's temple on the mount--sank down and the ministering angels gathered--as was their wont--in holy choirs to sing a song of dawn; they opened the windows of heavens and looked out opposite the Temple on the Mount to see whether the Temple doors were opened and if an incense cloud rose from the shrine. They looked. Behold! The God of hosts, the ancient of days, sat with the ruddiness of the dawn among the Ruins--his mantle, columns of smoke--his footstool, ashes, dust; his head cast down ^{was} between his arms and mountains of woe upon his head. Silent and desolate he looked upon the Ruins. The wrath of all the world darkened his eye-lids; in his eyes great silence was congealed. All the temple--Mount still smoked--ash heaps and mounds and smoking fire-brands together thrown--and tons of hissing coals

glittering like carbuncles in the quiet of the dawn. The fiery lion stretched before the altar day and night--his flames were also quenched and are no more. But one orphaned lock from his mane baked trembling ^{by} ~~over~~ the burnt stones in the calm of ^{the} dawn. The ministering angels realized what God had done to them--. They feared exceedingly and all the morning stars quaked with them. The angels hid their faces in their wings, for they feared to look on the painful face of God. Their song that dawn was turned into a low pitched ~~d~~arge--a still small wail--. Each angel silently spread wing and wept, each angel to himself and the whole world wept in the quiet with them.

One sigh, soft, deep from the ends of the world, rose up and spread abroad a sigh broken in the silence of tears. The world's heart broke yea! broke! Then God could no longer restrain his will. He awoke, roared like a lion and clapped his hands. The Shechimah rose and went ^{up} in silence from the ruins.

*III

The morning star shone with pious woe upon the Temple Mount. From the canopy of blue into the Ruins, she gazed and her silver eyelashes trembled in the quiet. One little angel, mournful-eyed and pure of wing kept pearl-tears hidden in a cup of woe. From the dawn she saw the lock of fire--the remnant of Israel baking trembling among the burnt stones on the Temple Mount. The heart of the angel trembled; it ^{warned} him exceedingly lest god's last ember be ^{put out} destroyed ~~the sacred flame effaced from earth - the spark of God's people destroyed~~ and His house forever gone. He hastened and flew from the morning star, a censer of fire in his hand. He went down upon the Ruins of the Temple Mount and he trembled as he went unto the altar shrine. From the heart of the flame, he plucked the fire of God, then spread his wings and flew.

A pearly tear fell from the angel's eyes, fell boiling on an ember heap. This was the only tear the angel lost from the cup of dumb woe. A tear of salvation and mercy for the saved Remnant of God's flame. The angel soared 'twixt clouds of white, the holy flame in his tight hand; he pressed it tightly to his heart and

touched it to his lips. Before him danced the morning star, and his heart was a well of comfort, hope.

He brought it to a desolate island and placed it on the ^{table} of a molten rock. He lifted up his mournful eyes on high, and his lips whispered in silence.

"O God of mercy and salvation, let not thy last ember be forever more extinguished." God saw ~~into~~ the heart of the angel pure of wing and he revived the flames. He commanded the morning star and said:-

Take care, my daughter, let not its glow be extinguished; for it is the apple of my eye. Stand! Look! What shall be wrought thru her. The morning star stood in the firmament opposite the little flames and blinked at her from distant heights with silent love and with quivering longing. On an island desolate she guarded the flame; mornings she visited it with her radiant light and spread upon it a ray of mercy and comfort.

The little angel, mournful-eyed flew to his place to guard the tear hid in the cup of dumb woe--as was his wont--but his eyes grew more deep and mournful and on his heart and lips a sear of flame ~~rested~~ - whatever the holy flame has burned can never more be healed--no remedy will help.

IV

At that time the foe brought captives in ships from Jerusalem, 200 lads; 200 maidens--all of them--pure-born offspring--wellborn--from hills Judean. The dew of youth still rests upon their locks and Zion's heaven still pours from their eye; their father, the stag of Israel, their mother, the mind of the field. Belittled in the eyes of the enemy who maltreated them and defiled forever the youthful songs of their lives were these Israelites. The foe still sought to end their souls in desolation and to kill them with a death of prolonged hunger, and thirst. The enemy stripped them naked and sent them to that island bare--the youths to one part--the maidens to another, and he left them there. For the evil foe said:-- Let them be divided that one burden of woe be twice as great. Let one group not find or see the other until their souls dry up, their hearts

dissolve and the light of their lives be ^{quenched} ~~extinguished~~. And when only a step separates the two groups and their hands are outstretched, one to greet the other, their faces shall suddenly bow down, their knees totter, and falling to the ground, they shall die a death convulsive on an earth of iron and under skies of bronze with no pity and no ^{burial} ~~grave~~ divine.

Three days they walked upon th island desolate but they found no food, no water; and mournful, still, they walked and spoke out not a word. Their eyes were glued to burning sand; their heads bent under the flame of the sun-with rous of flame the edges of the rocks smote them; the scorpions of the rocks mocked at their woe; for the Lord had cursed the island from of old and left it barren naked rock which grew only stones and scorpions--not a blade of grass, nor a cubit of shade, nor a sign of life, but only the silence of drought and scorching flames were around and about. Their eyes grew--watching barrenness; their hearts fainted within them, and their souls melted. The breath of their nostrils were threads of fire and the breath of their troubles were the flame of their souls.

Alas! The echo of their footsteps died beneath them in solitude and where'er their shadow fell--it was consumed. Their will of life sank down, grew still; their souls folded up in a corner dark; desire failed; power was gone; the eye shut of its own accord and no soul knew where he or she was going.

All were darkness in their midst; all, dumb. Then suddenly from the darkness came the voice of a step firm, fixed--like the marching of beating feet or like the beating of a calm and peaceful heart. No one knew from whence it came or whose step it was; for they heard that step from the bottom of their hearts--from the midst of all, the sound went forth. They knew a strange soul entered within them and the hearts of all were in his heart. They were drawn after the step of this strange man but their eyes were still blinded. Their soul, joined unto his heel, fell between the steps of his feet, but one youth took in strength and opened his eye which set apart from all the youths, two youths alike in height and prowess. The two towered above, the other youths, but their eyes were opened wide. One

One youth, tender and bright-eyed, looked heavenward. He was as one who sought the stars of his life. The second, possessed fierce eyes; he looked downward as one who seeks his soul's Ruin. No one could decide which of the two guided their steps, whether, they ^{young} with tender, bright-eyed, or the fierce-eyed man.

On the third night, all purple and with stars, the lads came unto the river great and black as pitch and shouted--Water! Water! They flew to the stream and gulped; then stretched there on the lips of the river to rest. Suddenly two youths cried, "Mallow, Mallow". They rushed to the mallow and licked it; then returned to stretch out on the lip of the river. They knew not they had drunk from the Rivers of Ruin and that their food was the Root of Satan. Only one, the youth, tender, bright-eyed, drank not from the river nor ate of the mallow. He alone lay on a ledge of the rock and dipped his eyes into the blues of heaven. His ears were tuned to the song of his soul and his look penetrated into the abyss of Night.

Suddenly the Man of Awe, angry-browed, rose, approached the congregation of youths and said:

My brethren, surely you've not forgotten the song of Hate and Shame. The youths were still and answered not a word for they were ashamed to confess that they ever knew that song. But one youth, golden-locked took courage and lied and said with tongue deceitful: Hast the young lion forgotten his roar--or-- An arrow burning from the eyes of the strange man killed the lie of the boy while it was still on his lips. The strange man snarled angrily:-

"The young lion has become a desert dog."

The youth reddened, cast down his eyes unto his feet and his fingers played with a pebble. But the night hid him and no man knew him in his humiliation.

The strange man sat on the lip of the river; his dark eyes were lost in their cavernous depths. The youths were silent and restrained their spirits, for a divine fear fell upon them and their hearts trembled with secret terror; their ears cleaved unto silence, as a thirsty man in the desert puts his ear to the dumb rock, hoping to find a bubbling stream hidden in the heart of the rock. ^{came from the strange man. To himself, to himself, the singer} In truth, at that moment a soft melody like a still small voice rose and sang

and his voice was low, low. Mysteriously, hidden and soft as night itself came the song concealing hearts with its wood-land calm; and no one knew whether from a cave of darkness in the soul of the strange man this song came forth like a black ^do_uder and slid into the water, and or whether the eyes of the strange man had drawn it from the depths of the River and to his soul, had taken it.

Let's sing of Ruin's depths deep, black-
and Death's riddle let's puzzle out-
the woe and cry of all the world
have sunk like stones within their depths.
There is Rescue, she worships Stars
and plays the whore with all their gods
adorned with timbrels she whirles on-
the top of rocks before the stars.

The youths sat silently and listened, their faces were lost on the River. The Abyss of Ruin whispered Terror to them and the golden stars haggled with them from the black depths. The youth concealed, lifted a small stone from the bank of the river and cast it into the water. The heart of the river shook, its face wrinkled and winced; the golden stars darted about like small fiery serpents, squirming and scattering hither and thither in haste and trembling to and fro. The hearts of all the youths shook and trembled exceedingly without knowing of ~~for~~ the what or why. A black fire sparkled in the eyes of the Strange man. It was the Devil's flame; his voice suddenly changed, and grew stronger with a trembling rage:

From Ruin's Depth rose up a song
of havoc black as your heart's flames-
lift 'it mongst nations; scatter-with
god's wrath; its coals scrape on all heads.

Your song will fling havoc and woe
On all their persecution sad
round the four cubits of each man.
Your shadow--when the garden rose ~~death-black~~
shall pass o'er it will be black-with death-
your eye that greets a stone god, sculpted,
shall break to bits like pottery.

Your laughter bitter gall +
cruel
containing death - take off with
you.

The bright-eyed boy who stood on all the time alone, resting on a cleft of the rock seeking his star on high, approached with joy the youths who were in the rear. His eyes, like theirs, were wedded to the heavens; he asked beseechingly:-

The song of consolation and the latter day, do you know?

But the youth heard not his request; they stirred not nor lifted their eyes from the river; for the song of the Strange man swallowed the souls of them all. They sat on the lip of the stream, silent, dumb; their forms were like black monuments upon their own graves. Only the yellow-haired youth perplexed, who sat and played with the pebbles of the stream alone in silence, hastened, also, to reply again. He took courage and answered with a cunning tongue.

Have you forgotten the yearning cry of the gazelle or.....

The youth finished not his lie; his heart could not contain it, for two blazing eyes rested upon him. He put his small finger between his lips and the ^{grooved} goodness of his cheeks burst with a laugh of shame. He felt like a simple boy who had lied and been caught. The bright-eyed boy laughed also a laugh of pardon, but he was exceedingly grieved in spirit. He went and stood in his place; his eyes hung down between stars as before.

The song of the Strange man on the lip of the river grew increasingly strong and roared and raged. Into the lashing of its waves, all the youths were dragged; and they, too, roared like whelps. Whenever they roared, so roared the waves of Hate stronger than Death in their hearts,—waves passing over them, intoxicating them, screwing up their faces, and kindling black flames in their eyes. The murky river shook unto its very depth hither and thither from lip to lip as a child rocks in a cradle. Whenever it shook, serpents of fire from stars of gold in the abyss swarmed forth and multiplied.

Did not the song of wrath, the burning flames
pierce ⁱⁿ the night of sin
with blood of youth and old and holy scrolls
of Carthage-fame ~~went~~ in the din?

At that moment the yellow-haired youth jumped to his feet, his hand pointed to the head of the rock, precipitous, on the bank of the opposite shore. He cried aloud; Look! Look! Behold! The youths lifted their eyes and their hearts melted. From the top of the rocks opposite, beyond the cliff and inwards came tripping and dancing

down, like a society of swift angels, a straight row of maidens, white, soft, tender, and wondrously wrought. In a straight row they came with upright feet and hands stretched heavenward, caught on the rays of the moon; their eyes shut as if moon-sick. Crowns of thorns on their heads and on their faces ingrained, pains of the Messiah. Beneath the covering of their eye-lids slept peace-everlasting and on the threshold of their lips slumbered a bright smile.

The youths looked, trembled exceedingly and their hearts died; for they saw the maidens and lo! they were approaching with closed eyes unto the lips of the cliff stretched out like a steep wall and shedding darkness on the river. Another moment and only a step would divide them from one open abyss below. All hastened from their places, clapped their hands, and cried out with a loud voice but the maidens seemed to neither ^{to} hear nor see. They continued to come forward in a straight line with a foot upright and swift and with their eyes closed. Lo! The last step! A long string of eyes suddenly opened, twinkled like stars for a moment and then went out--the maidens flew down like a flock of white storks into the black waters.

The youth leaped with a trembling cry to wrestle with the waves; their locks stood up like the ~~manes~~ ^{manes} lions of diana and their hands pierced thru into the womb of the deep; wave-breaking and swimming, piercing and cutting, they rushed to the opposite bank. Lo! Their heads were swallowed by the weighty shadows of the rock. Lo! Their they were in the midst of the stream. The river's belly roared and wailed and knew no peace. A breaker great and black rose like a mountain of fear ~~from the womb of~~ fear from the womb of the depths and fell behind the impudent youths. But the impudent ones dared and climbed the crest of the wave; the waves grew still and restrained. A wall of water stood and in its midst lurked violent thoughts--the youths climbed and pierced, climbed and rose until they mounted on its crest. And Lo! the cry of the youths rose beyond the breaker. There suddenly the mountain was cut beneath, split in half and it became a valley of the shadow of death. The youths slid ^{down} on the slope of the open abyss.

There in ~~sheel~~^{shell} below, their heads struck the heads of the maidens who were floating toward them. Heavy silence ensued; Abundant silence of Destruction crouched suddenly on the river. The valley closed over the impudent ones and on the face of the river black and vast, there suddenly passed softly a form heavy and great and black, something that came in silence behind the bouies wave-dragged. Was it a black barge or a floating bier? The youth tender and bright-eyed who was left alone apart from the youths near the cleft of the rock, suddenly gazed to the ground, buried his face in his hands and wept, wept, wept.

vi

When the youth rose full-length from kneeling, he lifted his eyes heavenward as was his wont, and he saw and Lo! there on the heights of the rock opposite, innocent and pure as an angel, modest and humble--a maiden stood before him fair-fleshed and bright-eyed. Her eyes gazed straight ahead and over her head shone the morning star.

The heart of the youth pounded. He lowered his eyes to the ground in modesty for the first time in his life. His glance fell upon the river and rested on the shadow of the maiden mirrored there with the morning star. It was the first time the youth had looked that Night into the abyss of Ruin. Suddenly the youth stopped and bowed his knees before the form in the water. His eyes were fastened to the abyss in the pain of love, and his lips spoke with longing desires. O my sister ~~art~~^{art} thou she? The youth blushed; he could not speak another word, for the tumult of his heart had overpowered him and his soul was lest within itself. But after a moment he arose, and opened his deep-seated^{set}, dreamy eyes; his soul was mortally wounded by the wound of love and a stream of blood flowed in its depths. The youth closed his eyes in the pain of his heart, faithful and great and the murmur of strange things, the thought of pain hidden and concealed, like the ~~bubbling~~^{bubbling} of a living spring beneath a cloak of grass at eventide, flowed from his mouth in a stream of prayer saying:-

Are you my only one, the lamp of my life and the angel of my heart from of old unto this day, who appearest now unto me from the summit of the rocks on the island

of destruction under the wings of the dawn and the morning star. And I—with a thousand voices, my soul has cried unto thee from the depths of my life all these days and in myriad paths hid and crooked, my soul has fled from thee unto thee. In the dawn of my youth my eye then saw thy beauty and desired in the secret nights and dawns thy treasured light. Between the hills of Samaria, under the grapevines, my mother gave me birth.

My cradle was made of cut reeds and willows. The song of my nurse was the voice of a bird. Tall corn stalks and fields of offering blessed my youth; ~~green~~ forest groves and cyprus branches hid me in their secrecy. I loved the God of earth, the God of mountains and vallies. I feared the God of heaven. Yet toward dawn, toward dawn, when the horn of the first shepherd broke the stillness of the Night from the top of the hills, and holy reverence concealed and sweet, enveloped me, I stole alone from my cabin bed and ascended the joyful hill. My feet were bathed in the dew of morn and my eyes were fixed on the heavenly blue. I saw thy glory in the morning star and thy divine essence in the brilliant modest star; You beckoned to me from on high with a silent love and made my heart tremble with the trembling of thy eyelids. I loved all the heavens too, and the fullness thereof for the sake of thee.

The youth continued to speak with fainting breath. After that, I was orphaned alone. My father died of wounds in war; the curse of god was in his bones; my mother defiled her heart with hands full of barley in a foreign land. I was left alone; I traversed all the streams alone, betwixt mountains. At night, I embraced Rock. Foxes walked about me in the darkness and the raven made me shiver with its wail. I tender, alone, meditated with nothing save a soul trembling like a bird and eyes watchful, wond'ring—then you appeared to me—shining, bright 'twixt the darkness of the Night. Early you came unto my stone-pillows and unto the Rock, my dwelling. At dawn from the mountain-top you appeared unto me and you caused me to seek mercy in the ray of thy Deliverance; with the care of a Mother, thy golden eye watched o'er me. You taught my heart the woe of secrecy the pains of silence and the

chastisements of love.....My eyes, also, would look for thee as a vigil from the mountains of affliction and at Night I would watch and look, as a weaned child for its mother. During one of those days an old man from Judah wand'ring along the hills with the dawn found me. The man was clothed in a mantle hairy and he walked gloomily and sullenly. A Nazirite, he, a holy man of God and fearful of glory--his appearance was as the appearance of a cloud of glory or like ^{hoar-} the frost before dawn. On me, the old man took pity, brought me into the secrecy of his tent and in the shadow of his white beard, he tremblingly protected me. Of his ways, he taught me, he made me serve his gods. He severed my soul from all bodily delight and taught me to look heavenwards. All the blossoms of my youth he cut one by one and brought them to his gods. To heavens he sanctified my chief desires. My days, like his life, were fasts; my nights, like his nights, prayers. As a blossom, winter; so feared I exceedingly the face of the old man. My face grew thin; my forehead, pale from day to day. My hair grew into locks but in my heart a forest green of dreams grew fast. I felt lost in the thick darkness of that forest like a hunted stag among the cedars of Lebanon. Then it came to pass that the forest in my heart was changed, it became an orchard and all the blossoms thereof, with their choice fruit, were dipped in the glow of the sun and behold! thou like a daughter of God, embroidered in light, dawn-clothed, walked to and fro among the beds of spices, with laughter on thy lips which made the blossoms thrive. I, like a quiv'ring dove of love, cooing, perched on thy shoulder white. In those days I was still pure, humble modest; my soul was pure within me like a dew-drop in a lily's throat; my heart was as clear as a drop from the waters of Shiloah on the lip of crystal glass.

The powder of a woman cleaved not to my cloak and her fragrance knew me not; but a thousand wells of life sprang up in my heart. My soul yearned for love multitudinous. Thy form blossomed before me in my dreams. Then suddenly, there rose from my soul the form of a maiden, a daughter of God; I knew not when or how

her form was wrought into my soul. Lo! It seemed as if thy staff divine was in my heart from of old and forevermore; or that in days gone by, in one of the stars or in a dream of old, I came to thee and you called me by name. Thy remembrance was carved before my eyes with a fire of love. The fragrance of thy pleasantness mingled with the secrets of thy distant youth. I brought back to mind; and from its silent dreams, I heard thy voice divine, with echoes divine. When I walked by day, with eyes cast heavenwards, I groped for thy shadow roundabout as if blind and in the restlessness of Night I sought thee on my couch.

The aged man would rise at night to greet the dawn; he'd stand before the window facing East, his eyes were fastened on high and his lips sang out with the morning stars a holy prayer to the Creator. I, at that time, lay near on my bed in the dark; my whole being burned with the fire of love and oozed with the juice of hidden desires. My soul hoped and quivered as a fatted lamb betwixt the teeth of a hungry lion. I wept, gnashed my teeth and whispered with trembling desire a prayer of sacrifice to the God of my life. The prayer of the old man came unto me as a pure spring in a troubled sea. Very little in my own eyes, I was sorely vexed. Rash vows I made in the darkness of my soul. The old man I feared lest he might find my soul polluted and burn it with his eyes of glowing coals. I dared not lift my eyes heavenward any more, but lowered them in the abyss of the darkness of my soul. Like a worm on a rainy day I burrowed.

But you the pure, modest, the merciful one watched o'er me and did not hate me in my woe. From above, thru' the lattice, you looked in at me in bed and poured light upon me. Your brilliance as in days of old purified me; and the glory from the ^{hyssop} heights of thy rays upon my heart shook white as snow. Then I went forth unto the river to purify myself before heaven with a ^{ablutions} blotness of the dawn and to give my soul entirely to God. An abundance of joyful holiness returned to me the winds of the dawn from all the hills and I was as one who goes to greet the Holy of Holies. The power of the Lord filled me; my heart was new, my spirit, upright, my soul, a joyful shouting. I knew not myself. My eyes unto heaven I widened, lifted my head and walked down unto the river. Suddenly, lo! the sound of the

water and moving waves washed o'er me like a stream of crystals and swept o'er my ear like the sound of ^{harps} ~~heros~~. I looked and was struck dumb. There in the river opposite, I beheld a maid washing and the fairness of her glistening flesh quite intoxicated me.

I almost leapt upon her as a leopard; but the form of the Nazirite, the old man, glittered before me; I strangled my desire with the fury of a lion. Hiding in the cleft of the rock I stole glances of her fair body. My eyes consumed her naked white flesh; my soul tremblingly fondled her virgin breasts. I grit my teeth raised my fist and knew not whether to look at heaven that tempted me or unto Satan who haggled with me. A fist of wrath, like a hammer, I raised, ~~an~~ the cleft of the rock and dashed it to bits. My feet ground the gravel beneath them. When my intoxication had passed o'er, the darkness of fear poured over me; and I feared myself greatly. The abyss of Ruin I feared, for I saw my ~~lonely~~ ^{mixture} soul Lo! , black and white, a ~~picture~~ ^{mixture} of black and white. My heart I saw lo! had the hole of an adder and an eagle's nest. Is that why my soul thirsts to greet the sea and my heart yearns for twilight? I sat there on the lips of the desolate river--my eyes were on the water, my head was bowed under the weight of its gloom. I was as one who sat at the crossroads of a curse and a blessing. Suddenly, I saw my many long and heavy locks hanging and shedding dark upon me like a curtain of black serpents plotting evil for my soul from the bed of the river. I leaped up and consecrated my locks to heaven. The cliff bowed. In the fear of my heart I revealed my secret to the old man; he blessed me with his glance and sent me at dawn to Jerusalem. Into the gates of God I brought in my hand sacrifice and meal-offering. I saw the Temple. The glory of the His youths and His priests and the Tumult of His courts I saw, but my spirit arose not in me. I cut off my locks, consecrated, upon the blood of my sacrifice. I cast my locks before the fire of the sanctuary and in a flash, my locks rose in sacrificial flames heavenward. The glory of my youth became as ashes - a savory offering unto the Lord.

A wave black as altar-smoke, like the enmity of death, suddenly leaped forth from my soul and covered my eyes. ^{I sought to roar like a lion.} ~~is right to roar like a lion~~ But at that moment there appeared unto me a company of Levites. A sea of song swept o'er me. The blare of trumpets and the sound of harps drowned out my youthful roar. My heart was led astray and lost by the sound of the sound of timbrels and castanets. Powerless, I lay prostrate before the revered priest, linen garbed. My head I concealed in the fold of his garment and between the bells and the pom-egranite I wept, confessed and wept again. As I came forth from the sacred court I saw one small lock of my locks saved from the fire, beside the sanctuary near the ashes. My lock I stole, emblem of my vow, from the table of the Lord. Hiding it in my bosom, I fled. As a seal on my heart, as a charm about my neck, I hung it. When my hair began to grow again, I took, kissed and ^{cast it} ~~cast them~~ to the wind and returned the theft to heavenward.

Now! See! Lo! The heavens have mocked me and enveloped me in a cruel lie; my youth, all, they took from me and gave nothing as a ransom. Humble as a slave I lifted my eyes to them always. In silence, like a dog, I've asked for my portion and without a cry I have hoped for a token of my fate; but the Heavens, silent in their arrogance, ate up my youth in righteous deceit. Lo! Again I am alone on a desert island. My Springtime, appressed, departs from me sad and tired, without the blessing of parting; yet I still pursue and yearn to clutch it like a boy licking and kissing its feet, seizing the hem of its garment--quivering, crying:- Don't leave me.

Then suddenly you appeared unto me, my prop, and queen of my soul. Behold, you stand before me in the fullness of your beauty. In your right hand the wand of happiness and on thy forehead the crown of salvation. As soon as I beheld thee, all my jailed desires suddenly rushed forth, like snakes, from their holes, their bodies half erect; trembling, famished and thirsty, they rushed toward thee, thee alone, with a strange rebellious fire in their eyes. Lo! The fullness of my heavens of silver and gold I'll give thee for one handful of thy love, for one touch of the tip of thy wand. For what avail is thy heaven's now, since you've forsaken them for my sake, and since thy charm has left them? For lo! The columns of the dawn have been shattered, and the temple of the lord destroyed, and his throne broken to bits, and the gate of the Lord, has become as a gate of dunghills; But I've grown powerful and strong and handsome, the pride about my neck is not broken, and the roar of the lion is in my heart, and you are with me. Order me! and I'll cast away my locks, and crumble the heavens, quivering above my head, like stubble! Say the word! And I'll plunge my life into this abyss of Ruin; ^{if} ~~when~~ I cast down my eyes upon thy form therein, so will I never again lift them heavenward. Take me, have mercy upon me, lift me up, Oh, my sister! lo, I'm in thy hands. Put me as a seal upon thy heart; as a stool unto thy feet. As a dog I'll crouch near the folds of thy garment, and watch for a blink of thine eye, and the beckoning of thy finger, or like a young lion I'll leap upon thee, and drag thee away to a jungle haunt. The youth suddenly restrained himself and his voice spoke out beseechingly, "Or heavens new I'll make for thee! ~~if~~ Thee, I'll envelope with new sky and new light. Thee I'll set as a sun in the wheel of my life, and thy remembrance I'll weave into the song of my soul. Crowns made of prayer I'll bind to thy head, and with blossoms white I'll pave the way of thy feet. I'll hover o'er thy throne like an eagle of fire, and I'll cause a flame from my wing to fall on thee. To heights uncharted I'll fly at thy bidding; and unto distant suns my cry of joy shall

reach. The eyes of ^{the} youth opened, in them wrestled brilliance and fire; his fists trembled and he cried out in anguish of soul, and in his great pain: Fire! Fire! Fire! And from the summit of the cliff opposite the river an echo replied: 'Fire, fire.' The river of Ruin shook into a mad flare and all the island became a roaring fire. After the roar--great silence, - the silence of dawn came on. The head of the boy dropped listlessly upon his breast; his eyes were fastened to the depths of the river. In silence he wondered about the secret of Ruin; then he measured its depth with his eyes. All was still in the darkness around him;--all became silence in the darkness of his heart; and the black wing of mourning spread over his head; and the woe of his thoughts--ravines of the deep. But in the bosom of the heavens, above and opposite the head of the boy, one eye looked kindly on him, an eye of vast gold shining, heeding. Was it not the eye of the star of dawn? The morning star stood high, and whispered from afar the blessing of God over the head of the boy; it leaned and beckoned unto him--but he knew it not. Suddenly the boy awoke; and withdrawing his eyes from the abyss of ruin, he dipped them into the vault of the heavens; it was as if he were weighing them in the balance of his eyes; saying unto himself: Heavens or Ruin? The bath of heavenly blue cleansed his eyes--their sparkle returned; and they became as bright and modest as before; but he knew not that the flame had licked them. The peace of dawn came into the heart of the boy--like balm poured o'er the wound of his soul; and his soul subdued, rested. When his eyes returned to the head of cliff, he looked; and Lo! there on the rim of the world beyond the cliff--a lonely cloud, small, hung hovering o'er. The cloud was bright with silvery wings, and the form of a hand stretched forth from under its wing and stretched towards the morning star. Was it the form of an angel or the form of a maiden? His eyes stretched forth to the morning star, and his soul was seized between its rays. Lo, it was a beauteous light and the purity of its luster stood in its brilliance, and clarity as in days of old; its lamp had not been quenched; nor its flame put out. At dawn, at dawn, when strange men, great, lonely men and orphans of the world

come forth to wonder in solitude among the misty clouds and to trudge the first paths on the summit of the mountain; there, too, alone and secretive like them, the morning star goes forth ~~and~~ ^{to} greet them, with its modest light, and its everlasting blessing in the one hint of its eyelid is "be pure, be pure, be pure;" it gathered all ~~their~~ souls, gathered there, unto one point of glory unto the apex of the dawn, ~~A~~ soul-longing, unbearable, seized the youth; and a love of god stronger than death swept o'er his heart with the waves of its longing, and he drank the heavenly blue with his eyes unto intoxication. He stretched out full length, and lifting his hand cried out, "O God! Even the fire in my bosom I consecrate to the heavens!"--In the eyes of the boy a great light sparkled, after he had taken his sacred oath. He saw the morning star, and lo, the morning star glittered upon him; and its light made him rejoice; it was exalted by the blessing of God, newly made. He believed and trusted in his star. He knew that God called him and he answered with the fire of his heart, and that God had summoned him to a task on that island,--but he knew not what the task was. He arose; and starting from his place walked straight to the lip of the river to meet with trusting heart, that which was in store for him. ~~The~~ ^Q noise of the fire sounded in his ears; and ruddy bands of dawn shown in his eyes. The image of the maiden upon the waters; and the bright clouds, in the sky--they too, moved from their places and went before him. The youth marveled not at the wonder, for a wonder greater than this had entered the dwelling of his heart as he went silently to greet the star of dawn.

vii

When the youth had gone someway he looked; and behold, he had come upon the lip of the river which grew higher and higher until it was as tall as the cliff opposite; then, the two cliffs seemed to come closer to each other until the stream between them was shut in darkness; they seemed like two enemies who conspired against Ruin; and sought, by trickery, to trap it between their steep sides, and to choke it there in the darkness. The youth looked calmly into the mouth of the

abyss, and he asked in his heart whether a man who went down into the valley of the shadow of death could ever ascend alive. The youth did not check up his step; he hastened to ascend. He continued to go up along the top of the ledge. The cloud in the heavens and the shadow on the water went ever on before him. Suddenly, the bright cloud stood still at rest o'er the height of the world on a tooth of a rock; The youth looked into the distance and saw lo, a kind of gray and black peak looming up there in the mist of the dawn. The peak lofty and steep, rested on the shoulders of the cliff; below it, flowed the river of Ruins, ~~at~~ ^{On} the head of the peak a small light flickered; the heart of the boy smelled the sacred incense from afar and his spirit beat wild. Lo! the treasured lamp of God flickered among the clouds of the waste and trembled from the summits of the cliffs. The light flickered and trembled and hinted to him as if to ask for redemption. Who kindled that lamp on the peak of the rock, and who was innocent and pure enough to merit lighting it? Indeed was this the task that God had appointed for him on this island; the wondrous joy of a God without ^{the} pain of delight flowed like a mighty stream into the soul of the youth. He rejoiced ~~in with~~ the trembling hope and faith. His feet flew lightly, and his steps tripped o'er the earth as he went forth to greet ~~his~~ the lamp of God.

The noise of the flame tingled in his ears and in his heart the blessing of the dawn beat. The spark of the flame grew ever brighter in his eyes; Lo! his eye was like a small tongue of flame dancing with love before its sister the morning light. Lo, it was like a hair-braid of flame and its eye was like the flame of Ariel which he saw on the day of his consecration, ~~and~~ ^{The} youth recognized the holy flame, and the eagle in the nest of his heart awoke, and flew through his mouth with a cry on high, and shouted: "The fire of God, the fire of God." The youth forgot Sh'el beneath and leaping to the head of the rock, ~~he~~ flew to the sacred flame and waved it heavenwards. He stood on high, exalted in the prime of youth and in the glory of his locks. He raised upright his crowned head. The torch of rescue burned in his hands; the bright cloud's wing sheltered his head, and the star of dawn blessed his strength. And a great

shout of joy rested on the lips of the youth. But at that moment there appeared unto him again in the form of the maiden from the abyss of Ruin; and lo, it was she; she and all her glorious delight. In the fullness of her glory she appeared; with a diadem of her glory on her brow; her eyelids looked straight towards him; and she cast her passion into the depth of his soul. In silence she drew up to him on high; and in silence she drew him down to her to Sheol; and her hands were stretched out towards him; stretched out to take and to give. Her look had love of death and moments were accounted as eternity to her. The youth grasped the torch of holiness to his heart and closing his eyes in fear cried out, "Heaven--Ruin you are! He fell from the head of the rock into the arms spread out in the abyss of Ruin. The lamps of God went out on high; heavens grew pale; they looked mournful and naked like the heavenly fields after the harvest. And there in the corner of the field cast away like a vessel without use lay the sickle moon; a bright cloud trembled and melted into air, the morning star quivered and faded out. The lion of the dawn had awakened in her den and strode with royal strength on the edge of the firmament. Crowned with her golden mane she roared and scattered her golden light unto the uttermost hills.

The waters vomited up the youth on a very distant land; a strange land, a land of exile. He wandered through all the provinces and came amongst the sons of exiles. He past among them like an ancient legend, or like a vision of the future; amongst them he was strange;--a puzzle to them all.

viii

The waters vomited the youth unto a very distant shore, unto a strange land, a land of exile. He roamed thru all the provinces and came among fellow-exiles. And he passed amongst them like an ancient legend like a dream-to-come. He was a stranger and man of mystery unto all of them. He gazed at heaven and lo! they were strange to him, and he looked to earth and lo! it was ^{foreign} foreign. And he ^{trained} framed his eyes to look before him unto the ends of the world even as the form ^{him} of the maiden had looked upon that dawn.

What had he seen in that dawn?

The youth wandered on the earth as an outcast star in the expanse of the world--and he went naked barefoot--and straight ahead looked his eye. He had nothing save a flame in the depths of his heart and the quivering lights of dawn in the depths of his eyes.

When had the fire crept down into his heart?

For lo! The heart of the youth has been thoroughly smelted in a three-fold furnace and a great three-fold flame burnt in it. Was this not the fire of God and the fire of Satan and more mighty than both--the flame of love--.

And he ^{carried} ~~carved~~ that fire unto the four corners of the world and he kindled hearts with the breath of his mouth; in eye-closing-light, he kindled lamps.

And unto his exiled brethren he went and saw them in their low spirit and their affliction. He felt all their pains and cried their cries, and one heard in their cry the moan of heaven and Sheol--the zeal of God and the whirlwind of wrath--the groan of a soul dying in the pains of love that came not, and the sigh of the world on the night of Ruin. And the youth was still in his pain, and his cry was still, but there was no sorrow like the sorrow of the youth; no pain like his pain, still though he was.

And no man could stand before his steady gaze. Some would cause their eyes to flee heavenward before the glance of the youth; others would hide their gaze in earth. And the youth would gaze in silence at such people until they had gone away--and he would pity them with a great pity. And the men of anger and hate also met the youth--~~And the men of anger trembled.~~ And the men of anger and hate trembled before his glance and departed in haste and darkened their foreheads and their brows and looked to the ground. They put their hands upon their hearts as if to conceal some hidden treasure from the eyes of the youth--this person of mystery.

But the man of mystery saw into their hearts and went into their souls as if he entered a city smitten. There he found all their hidden ills and the struggles of their hearts were his struggles and seven-fold he suffered all their affliction. And if his eye found a heart peaceful and trusting, his eye would pierce that

that heart so that it would be sick unto death, and rest would flee from it forever more and that peaceful man would never more know the sleep of peace at night. And many came and bowed their heads in silence beneath his blessing and his curse and they sought rebuke and prayer from his lips--and from his eyes--mercy and hope. A sea of pity moaned in the heart of the youth, and its consolations fell like morning dew upon the stricken hearts. He gazed upon them with mercy, and his eyelids were the eyelids of the dawn. Also the mighty rays of the sun, the youth bore in his heart and the thoughts of the night with their secrets, but his eyes thirsted only for the dawn. The light of dawn became a seal upon his heart, the ruddy streaks of day-break the song of his life. And in the great affliction of his heart, dreams great and painful found and met him like the waves of the sea.

And the youth would go forth at dawn outside the city and rest there beneath a tamarisk on the lip of the sleeping river. He would lift up his eyes unto the morning star and seek its shadow in the waters of the river. He would shut his eyes and peer into the abyss of his soul for a long time; He would be still, like the world, in his great woe, his great woe, alone. And the young mournful eyed angel with the pure white wings, above one morning star, would lift the cup of silent woe and drop from it tear after tear in the quiet of the dawn.

1906.

בין נהר קברט ונהר

Twixt the Tigris and the Euphratie:
 on the mountain rose a palm tree-
 in the palm where the branches fold
 nested a canary of gold.
 O bird of gold! Haste, be not late.
 go-seek for me my long-sought mate.
 As soon as you behold his face
 bind him and bring him to his place-
 but if you have no scarlet thread.
 send greetings to my groom instead.
 What shall you say? Just tell my dove-
 my soul goes forth to him, my love!

Tell him the garden flourishing
 is closed to ev'ry mortal thing-
 there--a pompegranate gold blooms
 but no hand to bless it now looms..

Tell him too, that upon my bed
 at night I am to hot tears wed-
 from underneath my flesh of white
 my pillow is burnt ev'ry night.
 If he believe, tell him the rest
 All is prepared in my home chest-
 linen and silk--in my attire
 shirts twenty needle-wrought--my sire.
 Soft plumage I have guarded long
 plucked by my mother's hand when strong.
 Precious sleep from her eyes she drew
 to make my litter-cushion, too.
 In its refuge, needled with gold
 my bridal veil waits as if old -
 my threefold dowry I've arranged
 Why is my groom from me estranged?

Food, victuals, much rare I'll buy-
 Then sang the bird upon the sky:-
 "Tonight I'll fly unto thy love
 thy secret I'll tell to thy dove-
 And I'll send him greetings from thy heart
 thy form, of his dreams I'll make part-"
 Suddenly he'll leap from his sleep-
 riding on a broomstick, he'll leap-
 He 'll come and say: Here love am I
 life's joy--the apple of my eye
 you are, with a dowry of gold--
 I'll wed you--our love can't grow old.-

What means your wealth or poverty
 why all this linen, silk for me?
 Thy worth, rare silk-thy breast repose -
 thou art my treasure free from woes.
 I have a dowry great, in truth-
 my raven locks and fiery youth-
 these two are thine-then with foot fleet
 come, greet, thy lover, my bride sweet-
 then the night twixt he ps

1906

of clouds--the bird races and leaps
the bird rose up thru heaven s wide-
its prophecy did not abide--

Both morning, noon and ev'ning too,
my eyes watch clouds upon the blue-
clouds snowy white--but still my love-
my hearts chosen is not above-

1906

leaping o'er peaks, mountain peaks, clouds come and lightning
 cleaves their eye. The storm roars, shouts, then quickly bursts ⁱⁿ ~~above~~
 the desert trembling moves--the rocks quake 'neath your feet,
 and you rise, stunned, blind and smitten and dumb-struck ^{to},
 from light to darkness plunged until the light and dark
 are dipped in black. You spread your hands to clouds. Your eyes
~~just as fine~~, cry out for rain; but clouds of blessing pass--all go
 just as they came; their thund'rous laugh, they leave, not rain.
 And you'll stand barren, sad, 'mongst desert thorns and stones.
 A last prayer on your lips shall fade like a curse low --
 you'll ask death for your souls; you'll melt in your own fear.
 Call to the clouds and lift your woes beyond the sea.

77 SIN-D7 70 88

1906

On a cliff-top by this dead sea
rising aloft an old fort lies -
guns from its walls the eye can see
and turrets that pierce thru the skies..

Majestic ships of earth came there
on days when men did war declare,
then guns and ships spoke out their mind--
when they thundered and rage unfurled
this sea and the ~~great wide~~ ^{vault of the} world
trembled before the Lord divine.

The sea is dead--the cliff bereft
of friends; the fort has toppled down
just weighty layers of ruined stone
surround the shattered wall alone--
Still hanging with its old flag left-
its flag joined to its shoulder worn-
the dark is spread to breaking point
like shrouds on those who can't greet dawn-
On its crest a cloud hurled alone,
there slumbers on without a moan
and all muse here in peace alone:
"The sea is dead--the sea is dead."
Of old in the heart's sea an island here
rose up--they called it Hope--a wondrous place
within, the cedar, cyrus green did rear--
on the cliff's head a light-house shone thru space.

Borne up by wings of white the ~~moving~~ ^{bring} ships
to the light-house cut thru the ~~brine~~ ^{brine} space apace!
bringing with them life's joy there for all lips--
pouring gladness o'er hill and vale thru space,
the silent light use ^{do} blessed them with cheer.
From the summit of the precipice near
a blessed abode this island was for ships -
here dwelled the grace that shone on God's own lips.

The island died: ~~san~~ cedar and cyprus-
in it the thistle with the hyssop bloomed-
on the rock one thing stayed-witness of wreck-
the Tower on the summit of the cliff-
Alone, it stood and when it glowed with light
a secret hand lit the lamp strange within
its head, as if when it ~~shone~~ ^{shone}, he would shine-
What man made the Light shine? Do tell me why?

About, the Dead sea ran a hundred miles,
a hundred miles about him waste held sway.
The boats no longer came to its domain:-
one was blown off on waters long congealed-
another lost its way in the dark night-
and one found a grave on the Ocean's floor
during a night when Tempests ruled the waves-
and no man knew neither did man behold-
The island died and all on it turned waste.

1906

Lonely, silent apart from all the world
there stood, its beacon shedding light on waste
and all mused here in silence: who and why?

~~o'end map~~
1906-1907

1906.

I know, at night like a star I'll grow dim
at once, no star shall know my grave but my
wrath will still smoke after me, like the peak
of Peritzim after its flame goes out.
Among you- all the more shall live the days
of Gilgal's rage and the wrath of the Deep.
Alas! Would that your deep travail fasted-locked
within the bosom of His universe,
might irrigate the poplar trees of God
and trees of mine and stars above and fields-
to bring you life, that you might grow old and
be renewed with them, wither, bloom again--
without fame, form, without a native land.
For aye, your wrong enduring to the end
sends voice and words shall cry to heaven, hell-
and retard the redemption of the world.
At the End when the sun of falsehood, -vain
deceit, shall rise o'er the graves of your slain,
a banner of falsehood, red as your blood,
with impudence 'gainst God shall flee 'er o'er
your shrine. The seal of God upon the flag
engraved shall bore out the eyes of the sun.
The dance of the proud foot and festival
of falsehood shall make your bones sacred quake
within the grave. The light of sky will shake-
then suddenly grow dim in your distress-
your blood, guiltless, the sun will turn to stain-
Cain's mark will be upon the forehead of
the world; the mark of woe, on the shattered
seed of the Lord. Star unto star will quake:
Behold the fearful lie! The great travail!
The God of vengeance hurt at heart will rise
and roar and with his great sword he'll go forth--

o'end map

Call serpents! Let your wrath pass to the end of earth
for desert brought you were--fined to the naked rocks.
The world's bareness, God's silent curse-grips you about-
Removed from earthly fields, a mother's fragrant breast
you have forgot; the view and smell of grass after
the rain--the might of woods, too, and the sounds of streams-
the shadow of the tree of life always fresh, cool.
Your soul-blossom shall rot with its last fruit and stem,
When sand will be your food and you'll lick flint from thirst-
your chants-the hiss of snakes; your hopes highways of waste
Your path shall hold nothing to quicken heart and eye
for there God's hand condemned--there his ill eye-a slit-
misruddes fleet clouds and wings of wind from flutt'ring o'er.
Your lives will waste in woe--all will be naked, dry-
for your souls you'll seek death and cry out from life's pain--
Call eagles! Lift your cry unto the heaven's heart.
For lo! The rain and wind searched for your desert land-
from earth rose remote bearers of rebirth-a herd
of clouds, rain filled and swift, to greet parched souls.
Awaiting them, with rebirth from afar--rain filled
for parched and yearning souls; a storm sleeps in their breasts;
flame dances on before; wrestling between hilltops

ה'ק 278 ת'ק'ג

1907

Real witches twine, spin 'neath the moon
 Glittering silver threads.
 One cloak they weave for High Priests and-
 for keepers of swine heads.

'Twas summer eve, all left their home
 to pace the garden, sit-
 Man yearned for passions great-his wont-
 small ~~wee~~ to commit.

Impatient man! Hope flees his eyes
 He lifts this chant of wee:-
 Quick, show, O modest stars, above,
 and harlots, here, below!

Then a tune swift, mad, now awoke
 the garden quaking light-
 betwixt the trees a veil trailed black
 an apron's end showed white.

Like procurers, the stars called, winked,
 their eyes sought gold to own-
 a whorish wind pressed down the fields
 of grass and highway stone.

From the stream's midst, from balconies
 behind hedges about
 came laughter-window shades pulled down-
 then candle-lights snuffed--out.

Alas! Flesh stinks, the drunkard wastes
 wine love songs clutch him fast
 mind-lost, he rolls in his own flesh
 and vomits his repast.--

Real witches twine spin 'neath the moon
 glittering silver threads.
 one cloak they weave for high Priests and
 for keepers of swine heads.

1907

Also, I see, your dime I've sought
and lost my dollar's worth -
while ~~A~~omedai standing behind,
sneers, laughing, at my dearth.

You're going from me--go in peace
 let only favor lamp thy path
 for peaceful soul where'er you go
 For me? Don't fret, I'm not alone--
 The sun will still go up and set--
 the unfogged stars divine still blink--
 No--I'm not bankrupt yet--
 my well of comfort still gives drink.
 Of course, I'll miss you much--yet still
 I have much left:- a world complete
 the beauty of the green of spring
 of summer's end--gold, winter, white--
 my heart an oracle of dreams
 still nests pain divine, woe restrained,
 while an angel, pure, as you are
 still hovers o'er me as God's love
 And trembling lips a prayer restrained--
 as mother's tears by Sabbath-lights
 fall slowly in the sacred calm--
 or as a quaking star on high
 that eyes me, wondrous, in the dark
 and strokes me with its golden wand.

I know

The nights of summer will still spread
 their purple curtain, gold-embossed
 like swarthy flesh of Cushites fair--
 and pleasant night, lamp-lighted, warm
 inlaid with black, dotted with stars,
 and pleasure-drunk, weary with thoughts
 of sin, the earth ^{earth will die} lies on night's breast.
 Then, promptly, peace great, vast shall rise
 and quiv'ring want shall sweep the earth
 a host of stars, down-shaken, fast
 shall rain, dissolved on earth, as when
 prey is dropped near the Temple gate.
 And those lust-parched, consumed by want--
 each one will go in hunger, thirst
 to touch walls as if blind--clasp stone,
 beat out the earth, crawl belly-wise
 to pluck one golden shard, one crumb
 of his star cast to him by winds,
 to find a scrap of joy of love.

When yearning over-powers you
 and your mournful eye, tired, strays wild--
 when hope bereft, you pace the dark
 to seek your God and happiness--
 lift up, like me, your eyes, above,
 and let your heart learn calm from stars.

Behold! these stars and those are lost
 as oft as night to heaven is--
 Yet they're at ease with all their wealth
 and feel no pain when they're destroyed
 as if their gold had not been plucked.

1908

I have a garden and a well
 a bucket hangs within its dell.
 When my beloved comes to sleep--
 she drinks clear water from the deep.

Alas! the whole world is at rest
 the apples, pears sleep, too--with zest--
 my father and my mother, ~~too~~ dear--
 but I and my heart leap with cheer.

The pail, like my heart, ^{goes} is pell-mell.
 gold drips down the mouth of the well--
 it drips and drips with crystals dumb--
 my love does come.....my love does come....

In the garden quivered a mound--
 "Has my love quiv'ring bird come 'round?
 My loved one, hurry, my delight,
 I'll be alone with you tonight."

By the fountain we will sit calm
 head on shoulder: arm ^{up} to arm:
 Riddles I will ask thee: why, why,
 does the pitcher to the jug fly?

Why? Let my heart the secret reap--
 does the bucket in silence sleep.
 splash after splash--without a stop
 from eve to eve--drop after drop.

From whence comes woe that rents apart
 like a worm boring--a man's heart?
 Alas! Have I spoken truly
 that your own heart has fled from me.

My loved one answers thus to me--
 "foes of deceit have wounded thee.
 Another year about this time
 we'll go toiled, my fool sublime."

That bright June day will come, she said
 to pour fine gold upon our head.
 o'er hedges thick, the rich fruit trees
 hang down to bless us with the breeze.

O brother, friend, lover and all
 the great Kehal, man, stranger-call!
 all instruments of song shall play
 and fellow our friends all the day.

1908

The marriage tent, you'll place right here
'Twixt well and garden, do not fear--
There you'll place a ring on my hand--
my polished small nail, understand.

There, I'll say: you are unto me
sacred unto eternity--
my foes shall tremble and behold--
from envy they shall turn to mold.

The branches of the linden fair
stand bending o'er the lake's face there-
all day the tree gazing with care
thinks: how at the end will I fare.

The tree, fragrance from blossoms, throws-
the summer comes and now it goes-
already the cold days draw nigh-
where will the birds fly to on high?

In her chamber, before the glass
stands the whole day a pretty lass.
All day she looks at her form there
and thinks how, at length, will I fare?

She grows and blooms; her fragrance throws
the summer came and now it goes-
days, she watches; nights she sighs-
when will a groom her lips surprise?

P 20 ANJN

1908

To town has come a custom new
 a linen dress and coloured gown
 during the Sabbath 'twixt the trees
 Sweet kisses and ripe pears hang down.
 To town has come a custom new
 bright silken shoes with buckles rare -
 about the neck of a sweet maid--
 hang the forms of two young men fair.

To town a new custom has come
 Last night, Hannah; tomorrow, Pearl.
 but Hezkali' is my delight--
 She's my only, only girl--

78'd2 Kd1 P1'2 K8

1908

Not in the day nor in the night
alone will I go on a hike.

O'er dale and hill will I not fare
lest the acacia be there-

For that tree does rare secrets tell
and brings to light the future well-

I'll ask the acacia tree.
Just who will my beloved be?

Whence will he come? Tree, read my hand!
From Lithuania or from Poland?

In a chariot will he ride
or with, staff, knapsack, meet his bride;

What greetings will he bring to me-
bright strings of pearls and crystals free?

Will his form wear dark-skin or light?
a widower or bachelorette bright?

I'll say to father, kill me first,
then satisfy an old man's thirst.

I'll kneel and fall before his feet
but not an elder, I repeat--

If he's aged, lovely tree
then I'll not hear, nor willing be
I'll say to father-kill me first
than satisfy an old man's
thirst.

F. B. F. 3

1909

The tingling bell dies on the wind--the tingle dies away--
the tingling bell in the wind's hand fades on the light of day--

Why do you hasten to go forth--for you my whole heart yearns --
I have not told you half the thoughts with which my heart ~~yet~~ ^{now} burns.

What woe! Before the time she set, from me she did depart
A word lingered upon my mouth: but my lips would not part.

For weeks ~~yes~~! many moons I fashioned that word in my heart.
she brought that word unto my mouth; yet my lips would not part..

Then suddenly she said: "A life of peace my precious own --
The whips ~~did~~ crack; the wheel creaked loud and I returned alone.

In a dust-cloud you raced and distant to my eye you grew
Lo! Already you've reached the edge of the green forest, too.

And like the white wings of a stork flying wide between the trees--
only the white wings of thy veil moved to and fro upon the breeze.

Already from the forest road, beyond the leafy dell
came tinkling to my watchful ear, the voice of the horse-bell.

The tingling bell dies on the wind--the tingle dies away
the tingling bell in the wind's hand fades on the light of day.

K'7 'N P'K 82' KJ

1909

No body knew just what she was
 from where she came or yearned to go -
 Yet when her person did appear
 the eye of ev'ry man did glow.

We knew that from a distant land
 from a province, remote, afar -
 like a bird, she flew unto us
 Scatt'ring her joy and laughter far.

With joyous gladness she flew
 Awasting light and joy divine -
 and all the people of the town
 were bathed in her breath sweet as wine.-

All things to mortal eye concealed
 that dwell in the forest of green
 grew pregnant with her catching joy -
 her tingling voice--her laugh unseen-

Whether the night had come to stay
 or the heavens still hung with blue -
 all the youths of that little town
 pursued the lace that held her shoe.

Whether the sky still hung with blue
 or whether night had come to stay -
 Fierce discontent began to grow
 'twixt husband, wife both day and night.

The silent air strange magic spoke
 the women darned socks busily
 the town elders gazed up and down
 and scratched their beards quite nervously.

Both fathers, mothers filled with care
 could not sleep nightly on their bed,
 because their sons-in-law strayed wild
 in lanes that were to darkness wed.

One clear day when the sun shone forth
 the maiden chose to disappear
 and no one knew where she did go
 nor why she was no longer there.

The maiden flew, flew far as flies
 the nightingale from a green tree.
 before a soul could lift a prayer -
 before one would move tremblingly.

1909

The roguish laughter died away
the grove took on a mournful face.
no one sought out its leafy shade
no one wanted to seek the place.

And then a day of whirlwind came
a second followed, then a third--
All eyes within the gates wept long
All felt pain but spoke not a word.

At eventide the groom returned
at the time proper to his house
The bride forsaken--overjoyed--
forgave her one and only spouse.

The youthful Talmud scholars sat
and yawned beside their wives in peace--
all of them sought to be embraced--
all sought advice to gain release.

The merry laughter died away
from lanes that we've to darkness wed--
Fathers and mothers banished care
and slept nightly with care-free head.

No quarrel raged within their homes
peace governed ev'ry nook and street--
calm and tranquility held sway
within the town, the wonder sweet!

1909

וְהָיָה כִּי יֵאָרָכּוּ הַיָּמִים

And it shall be that days will be prolonged
 with vanity--like all the days of earth.
 Today, tomorrow and the day beyond
 shall give them one vision of days to be--
 of little joy--much pain. And dread shall clas
 together man and beast. And man shall rise
 at dawn to walk unto the Ocean's lip.
 He'll gaze-lo! the waves have not fled-then yawn.
ut lo! they've moved not-then again he'll yawn-
into the Jordan he will go-behold!

unto the Jordan he will go-behold!

But lo! they've moved not-then again he'll yawn-

ut lo! they've moved not-then again he'll yawn-

The stream has not fled back, he'll yawn again-
 On Orion, and Pleiades he'll gaze -
 Both man, beast together in dread shall dwell
 and burden-some upon their lives, the weight-
 the hair of each man's head shall stand from fright
 and the cat's upper lip shall be all bald.
 Then ancient longings will arise, give forth
 a stink- like fungion the trunks of trees
 decayed; And yearning shall fill all holes, chinks
 with rags chock-full of lice. And it shall be
 when man returns at eventide to eat,
 to dip his bread, herring in vinegar-
 he'll pine-he'll drink the cup of drink, mid-like
 luke-warm-then pine, pine. He'll remove his shoe
 and stocking in a corner of the bed-
 then pine again-Both man, beast together
 shall brood. On the tin-roof the cat will wail
 and scratch. Then hunger will come rise and fall
 the like of which has not been seen-- Hunger
 messianic, - neither for bread nor dreams.

At dawn, at dawn when the first light shall gleam
 each man from bed, from his tent's secrecy
 oppressed by wonder-lust, dream-filled, soul-void,
 shall rise with threads of sleep disturbed, still in
 his eyes and night-horror within his bones.
 The waiting cat with scratching paws still digs
 into his brain and cuts within his soul-
 He'll hasten to the window pane to wipe
 the vapor off-or to the threshold of
 his tent he'll go at dawn to move his hand
 upon and lift his eye, long troubled, sick
 unto the little path beyond, behind
 his plot--before the ash-heap's side facing
 his house-He'll seek the Messiah; From 'neath
 a cloak a woman rises, shows herself
 with hair disheveled; her flesh--bruised; stained,
 her soul. Her dry breast she pulls from the mouth
 of her infant: she bends her ear and gives
 attention close: Will not "Messiah come?"
 Will not the bray of his donkey ascend?
 The babe lifts up his head from its cradle and-
 the mouse peers from his hole. "Will not, will not
 the Messiah come forth, or will not the
 bells of his donkey ring? A maid that blows

1909

tea from behind hearth--stones, thrusts out her face
covered with grimy soot and cries aloud:-
will not the one anointed come-or will
his Shofar's sound no longer greet the ear.

728 N P'78 JAN 27

1909

Already they shake off the dust and rise from woe
 On the day they rise, I
 shall pull off both my shoes and give my head to dust.
 with hope--dumb--I'll sit by.
 Dumb, I'll sit before the wall of thy silent shrine
 But I won't pray a bit--
 for whom, for what? Their shrine still stands in its old place
 but God is not in it.
 Woe weighs down my whole soul; grief pours dark in my heart--
 in innocence, they've left--
 all--but I've pulled off my sad shoe. I sit alone
 trusting, silent, bereft.
 If I should waste, wrath-worn on the wrecks of your shrine--
 without fuss let me die.
 Don't touch my bones and don't defile my memory
 with false tears from your eye!
 If I rot in the grave, -- I'll surely rot, alas!
 I'll dream of your decay--
 worm-food, my skeleton shall mock and burst laughing
 at your shame night and day.

1909

728 N 278 J N 57

acrostic

They cast off dust, already they rise from
 their woe and I, when they rise, come,
 will take off my two shoes and cloth
 my head with dust; hopeful and dumb
 I'll sit before thy silent Temple walls
 but my chant will be heard no more--
 for whom, what? Their shrine yet rests in its place
 but God long since has left its door--
 Woe loads my heart, pain burns within my soul--
 they all shall pass with guileless will--
 but I'll remove my shoe of woe, alone
 I'll sit, I'll sit, hopeful and still
 before thy silent Temple wall--I'll sit
 but my chant will be heard no more.
 For whom, what? Their shrine yet rests in its place
 but God long since has left its door--
 if in the grave I'll rot; I'll surely rot--
 there I'll dream of your rotting name--
 my skeleton, worm-food, shall mock your woe
 and with terror at your shame crack.

8x6x 100-3

1910

A vine dropped on a hedge-then fell
Asleep--so sleep I now.
The fruit fell-what 's my fruit, my stem
What's mine? What's on my bough-

After-----the stormy nights prolonged
Rest, sleep held not my bed-
Alone- I struck about the dark
My own wall hit my head.

The fruit fell, the bloom was forgot
the leaves alone were left -
One day a mad wind blew--They fell
down to the earth to death.

Again spring blooms and I alone
shall hang on to my root
A barren rod sans blossom, bud--
Without a leaf or fruit.

ידן נזר ק'י

1910

She sits by the window-
and combs her hair, demure
in her eyes, she is bad
in my eyes, she is pure.

Great bitterness, I feel
my heart is filled with woe
if my lamb is not there-
whither then shall I go?

The tongues of people wag
and bear about false tales
but Rachel--she is mine.
and I, I am Rachel's--

At eve, where'er I go,
where the corn paths ^{roll}
if Rachel be not round
I feel I have no soul.

Ears of corn and long stalks
send love unto my lamb-
they say if you'll delay
I'll die just where I am--

17210 124 'N8

1910

One has a jewel rare -
one owns a bright pearl band -
one has six fingers there
growing on his left hand.

I have three daughters fair
maidens like cyprus trees -
breasts, like turrets, they were wear-
their thick locks whip the breeze.

Themselves to tasks they'll yoke
if they get men who'll woo--
but their flesh has no cloak--
their feet have not a shoe--

It seemed all grooms on earth
had pledged themselves to get-
a cash dowry of worth
before the day was set.

The suitors came and went
entered and left again
at length, their hearts were bent
their shamed faces wore pain.

Dainties they did afford
have been prepared in vain -
from table to cupboard
from cupboard back again.

Yes! this is fruit of love -
the oranges so hard-
witnesses silent of
the nights the maids kept guard.

These pistachios-stay
still 'neath their watchful eye -
but youth does fade away
and suitors grow more shy.

Youth hastens to go quick
year after year away -
among the girls' locks thick
already glitters grey.

The orange-fragrance fades
the home-baked bread now stales -
worms cut the nuts like blades -
the samovar now fails.

And so! good luck, good luck!
one owns a bright--pearl-band
one has six fingers, too--
growing on his left hand.

And I three daughters have....

D? M? SAK

1910

One, one, two, two, three and four
 God wants you wed--delay no more-

Go-tarry not, please, don't delay
 lest another take her away.

Yea! I've sought and found honey, gold.
 But none upon my lips have rolled.

Not for aye could they be pearls rare-
 aloof and pleasant, beauteous, fair.

Happy the one their faces saw
 Both of them my heart did adore.

But one could not declare or post
 which one of them I loved the most.

Time flew--how much I know not-where?
 I wasted here and wasted there.

Then the Devil--snatcher appeared
 with mighty locks and large lips weird--

And I, fool, alone to this day-
 an aged fool will be for aye.

This teaching I give ev'ry youth
 replete with wisdom and with truth.

One, one, ^{two} two and three and four
 God want you wed--delay no more.

Go, tarry not-please don't delay
 lest another take her away.

וְהִנֵּה כִּי וְכִי

1910

If you find the scroll of my heart
 swallowing in silt-
 say thus: This man was honest, plain-
 now weak--he starts to wilt.

The man worked, lived in innocence
 but hid within his heart.
 He took gently sans blessing, curse
 of all life made him part.

The man came, went with honesty -
 straightforward was his way
 small men he met; great, he praised not-
 things hid, he brushed away.

If great events came, went, unasked -
 in a majestic way,
 the man would stand; then look amazed-
 he'd bow; then go his way.

If things hid stayed or tapped his door
 he gathered them not in-
 he hated them as fierce dogs do,
 the rabbit ~~face~~ ^{face} of sin.

An attic small the man possessed
 that had a window-bay
 there---stayed his soul--o'er which no host
 nor devil did hold sway.

In woe he sang one chant from there
 that climbed the starry-way--
 bowed near the pane--trembling afire
 in stillness did he pray.

The chant prolonged as were his days
 did not please the host High Divine-
 what he sought not, he found, but what
 he sought, he could not find.

Unto the end unsparingly
 the man hoped mercy would be won,
 but in the middle of his chant.
 his word ceased--he--was done.

1910

' 2 7 0-10

My peacock gold soars thru the air
where do you fly, a peacock gold?
--I'll wing my way beyond the sea--

You'll see my beloved of old--
I'll see and bring a note to you--
the note will have a precious line--
Our wedding, if God wills, shall be
the Sabbath after Chanukah.

1910

18 21 4165

One owns the treasures of Korath
another, the ten plagues -
but Deborah our neighbor dear
has just a model house of cheer
with six sweet doves within her nest.

One is dark-skinned and one is brown
one--dimpled in her cheeklets round
and every one rare blood and fire -
who would not all six doves desire
would be a fool complete or blind.

One man possesses a sweet wine
another a thin onion shell
But, if you wish some brandy strong -
with honey cakes to go along
go to my friend, Deborah, ~~too~~ fool.

Her house is small and bright and clean
the plates and samovar do shine -
the tablecloth white--garments six -
sweet cakes and eyes blazing like sticks
all--with their fragrance the house line-

A thousand wives Solomon had
I, forsaken, had just one "pest".
Think me not sinful if at night
I slowly go to her house bright
to fill my hand with joyous rest.

When the six doves behold my face
with shouts of joy they hug me, kiss -
on my back on my shoulder blade
on my hands, feet, they make a raid
while their mother' clasps hands in bliss.

1910

אני לא יודע
אני לא יודע

A Rav you say that I should be
I don't know ^{how} Divine -
If you say, then a merchant be
no cash for goods is mine.

My luck, my luck is very bad.
Not this nor that have I -
Whither, therefore shall I go, lad--
what is life, what am I?

No coin in my pocket is laid
no forage in the stall--
my horse is dead; I have no aid
my wheel turns not at all.

My throat is dry: I've not a drop--
my wife's a plague to me--
On the stone 'neath the mountain top
I sit, weep, bitterly.

If you should say a tailor be
no needle, thread have I -
if you say: undertaker be
I am a coward, I.

Perhaps a bartender, you'll say--
I have no keg of wine -
then perhaps a porter, you'll say
Woe! such strength is not mine.

You might suggest: "open an inn
I haven't a house-sign -
You might say thus: in lots you'll win -
No coin claim I as mine.

Perhaps a good weaver you'll make -
where is my flax and wool?
You'll say a marriage portion take
my wife-of health-is full.

Perhaps you'll say a jester be -
my smile long since has died.
You'll say: a gun-armed bandit be -
perhaps they'll break my thigh.

Perhaps you shall a Shohet be -
a slaughter-knife I dread.
Perhaps you'll say a teacher be -
for thought I have no head.

Go seize an owl; perhaps you'll say -
its end is lost-to wit -
a cubit of good earth you'll say
forbid//ing is a bit.

A water-carrier you'll be
my buckets are clean smashed
perhaps you'll say: a wet-nurse be

I have no breasts;
my hopes are dashed.

1910

Kie Ninu? n2

Don't trust, O brother in vain hopes
 Believe not in a star -
 for they are deceitful and vain -
 thieves among thieves they are.

From youth one star appeared to me -
 before my home it winked its eye -
 with bits of gold cast down to earth
 it sent me blessings from on high.

With cunning eye it winked at me
 I trusted its Ideal.
 Lo! Now I am still wretched, poor--
 in want--in this world real!

Lo! Star divine with eyelids gold
 why have you enticed me.
 Where is reward for a just heart -
 for my integrity?

Don't trust, O brother, in vain hopes--
 Believe not in a star--
 For they are deceitful and vain -
 thieves among thieves they are.

ס'רדוה ארן יבס

1910

Guard well, my pledge of peace,, ancient of scrolls
Accept now, my mouth's kiss, O hoary dust-
from islands strange my roaming soul's returned-
as a wand'ring dove's wing-weary, afraid
taps once again the nest-door of her youth.
Will they know me, still? I, anonymous!

Your bosom's child of old, chaste-hearted son,
of all rare things of God on this vast earth,
Have not just you alone known of my youth?

You were a garden in the summer's heat,
as pillows in the wintry nights, to me.
Scrolled-wrapped, I learned to know my spirit's store-
my holy dreams were mortar to your lines.

Do you remember still--I've not forgot
in the roof-room--the lonely Study House?
I was the very last of all the last.
On my lips struggled, died paternal prayer
and in a hidden nook there, by the ark,

For me, the Nar Tamid had gone clean out.
At that time I was still a little boy-
no tender blossom yet bloomed on my cheek,
and wintry nights, indignant Nights found me
bent o'er an ancient book, a parchment torn.-
Alone-with dreams of my alarmed soul.

Before me on the table there still glowed
a dim wick--yellow oil within the lamp.
in entrails of the Book-Ark bored a mouse-
the hearth-coal whispered once again its last-
From fear of God my whole flesh bristled up
and my teeth clattered from the fear of death.

Then came a night of dread--cursed of nights
without, beyond the pane, the eye was blind-
the wrathful storm wind romped and wailed aloud-
shutters were smashed--and with their spears of iron
all demons of Destruction tore down walls.

I saw my fort and lo! it was torn down
the head god I saw in its forlorn place
went from behind the curtain stealthily
shaped like my grand dad, shade to my right hand.
A witness of my heart's bent--silent judge.

1910

But he hid from my eyes and stalked away-
 my candle flame alone still stalked about
 and wandered, moved: then jumped a jump of death -
 Then plumb! the window broke and all was dark-
 and I, a tender youth cast from his nest
 upon the highway of the night and dark.

And now--after the changing of the times
 my forehead now wrinkled; my soul furrowed
 lo! look my wheels of life has turned me back,
 set me again before you--treasured-Ark-
 brought ~~me~~ from Levov, Stalita, Amsterdam,
 Frankfort. Again ~~is~~ my hand turns o'er thy parchment leaves-

My eye gropes faint between the lines of script
 and seeks calmly among the letter-crowns--
 Try--capture there old traces of my soul
 and find a path in the place of first sufferings,
 In the place it was born--its house of life--
 but look! my joy of youth--my heart is still--
 no tear trembles upon my eye-lid now.

I look, behold elders but know them not-
 because their letters peer not any more
 deep into my soul--depths with open eyes--
 the mournful eyes of patriarchs of old-
 and there I hear no more their whisp'ring lips-
 a breathing in a traceless grave forgot-
 like cutstrings of jet black~~ness~~^{heads}, scattered wide -
 their rows are mine; their pages are mute, still,
 and each black letter orphaned to itself.

Is my eye dimmed and has my ear grown still
 or have ye, rotted all, ye long dead souls,
 and left no remnant on this earth of life?
 And I, in vain, like a thief in a break-
 sans candle, lamp, with hoe I grope about,

In holes of dust; in hiding places dark-
 Both night and day I searched about your graves
 and sought to find the living covered o'er
 beyond their root-depths and still lower down.
 And they from that time^{of} and afterwards
 before all stars of night, their fruit decayed-
 lo! seven times they whirled about in dance
 and their noise flew beyond the ocean's end.
 their echo did not even reach my ears.

And who can feel whether or not when I
 go forth again upon the road of Night
 bound to my people's tomb and sick at heart -
 with nothing, nothing on my personage
 except this hoe to which my heart now cleaves
 and this ancient dust on my finger-tips--
 if not still more poor, worthless than I am -

1910

-unto night's glory I stretch out my hands
and seek soft refuge in her wing's black cloak.

I'll call to Night until Death-tired: Come, Night
pray! gather, embrace me, glorious night.
Deceive me not, a fugitive from graves.
My soul wants rest in ever-lasting peace-

You, stars of God, true wardens of my soul,
my heart's keepers, why are you still, still, still?
In truth, have your gold eyelids and swift glance
nothing to tell me and my troubled heart?
Perhaps you have, but I've forgot your tongue
and shall I hear no more your secret words?
Give answer, stars divine, for I'm in pain.

וְהָיָה כִּי יִבְרָא אֱלֹהִים
וְיִבְרָא אֱלֹהִים

1911

In night dreams God beheld me not
nor did he tell of things to come
when my last day would clasp me round
and tell what shape my end would take.
If on my tent-couch I should die
with cronies all beside my head -
who'll come, stay calmly by my bed
to keep a sacred watch of love,
count my last gasps on God's live breast
as one counts treasures of delight,
or--hatred, scorned, despised by God, man-
town-shunned, a family outcast,
in a pen forgot, on straw sheaves,
I'll breathe my last, defiled, profaned,
no man, shall watch my soul, go forth -
no hand tremble o'er my dimmed eyes
or perhaps in my hunger, thirst
for life and all delights of breath -
with soul contempt, I'll spite God's wrath
and despise the gift of his hand;
as one casts off a shoe redeemed,
my soul I'll cast before his feet.
Perhaps from patience much I'll melt -
with gall and my heart's blood, my soul
shall be poured forth, cast out on earth;
or-like a pearl forever bright
my soul shall fall with my last tear,
Atrembling bright after ages
for eyes that ne'er have beheld me;
Or-like a moth about a flame
sleeping, skipping my soul goes -
or like a candle-flame itself
before its wax melts down, twitches.
in pangs of death; yet flames and smokes
for many days a plaything to
the eye-until suddenly it
falls in a pit of darkness and
is put out, out forevermore;
Or like the sun before it sets
bursts suddenly in all her fire
and hurle torch flames among the clouds
and heaps of flame on mountain tops
and hosts of gazing-thirsty eyes
gaze wondrously at its last light.
Perhaps who knows--God judged harshly
that I should die while still alive -
they'll bind my soul in paper shrouds
and bury me in a book-Ark.
At night a rat shall drag my bones
a mouse, hole-housed, shall eat me bare.
Then my feet shall stand by my grave -
my mouth orphaned shall say Kaddish

1931

Perhaps, tasteless, reasonless death
shall come! in a way I hoped not-
one angry, winter night behind
a wall, like a starved dog, I'll freeze-
Soft snows shall cloak hearth's golden loam-
and rub away man's shameful life-
Grinding my teeth with my death's curse
the mad winds shall drive me like chaff.

PICK N 'N' H

1911

Who is the man who will come after me?
 May he be nobler more upright than I-
 His life seven times more wondrous than mine,
 Whether he understands my woes or not,
 I'll trust, not fear that my heart's rage he'll not
 despise, nor mock the pain within my soul.
 Alone--with my life's book let him retreat
 and sink his head between its sacred leaves.

And all the flaming words he'll drink shall seep
 like flaming pitch into his very bones -
 to smite his heart with madness and to lift
 from its depths the cry of life naked on
 its coals. When vexed from dragging out his soul
 'twixt rows of script--paths of flame, snow--blood-marked -
 If he jump before all scorpion words
 biting with evil heart their very flesh -
 abiting, sinking teeth and poisoning
 until helpless yet wild, their prey is choked--

If drunk with Rage so that he desecrate
 his parents' and their woe, defame their gods-
 then let his lustful eye seek refuge in
 his tent where lo! my soul in silence stands -
 stripped bare of all its aches and evil pains
 of clumsy and bitter shame: 'twill say:
 Look! I'm before thee. Look! what kind of life
 I led--what courage, truth, pain lived in me-
 He'll look. A sparks of scorn shall kindle in
 his eye; but his rebuke shall die upon
 his lips and tears his shall come to redeem
 my life's reproach and to atone for all
 the shame I suffered while I lived on earth--

Who, what am I that a gold ray should go
before and soft-winged winds should brush my cheeks--
that the flax of field should lean on me
and the green of the way should kiss my feet?

God hesitates to give another gift--
Let them not find for me again again.
Let them go where they will and I, alone,
In my silence just as I was, shall be--

I'll ask no more nor try to seek a thing
except one stone--which shall my pillow be--
a rent-stone, corpse of stone, not over-turned,
whose heart had lost the spark of flame. This stone

I'll clasp, embrace; then close my eyes and freeze .
Let not dream visions, remembrance, nor hope
come to me, nor what was or is to be--
that all might freeze around and ageless peace.

Engulf me where no whispered breath can reach,
no leaf shake o'er my head--no grass greet me;-
and let a path bend down to my domain
where a sunbeam would pass yet see me not--

Where the bird's cry falls down dead at my feet--
where only a cloudlet would soar o'er me
a moment, understand, then leave in peace.

חזק 78:27

1910

Go flee! a man like me flees not -
My flock taught me to walk softly -
But my tongue taught me thus to speak
My word, axe-like, should fall - heavy.

If my strength's vein--the fault's not mine
Your sin it is--you bear the yoke.
My hammer found no anvil 'neath -
My axe cut into rotting oak.

No matter! I'll complete my task
My vessels I'll gird to my waist -
A worker without daily pay ^{Sans}
I'll trudge back as I came--~~without~~ haste.

To my home and its vales I'll go--
with sycamores I'll pledge my cup -
and you-, on all rotting, decayed,
the wind tomorrow will lift up.

COMMENTS

1904.

In 1904 the Czar felt his throne ^{toller} ~~to be~~. Instead of ameliorating the condition of the peasants, he whipped them with scorpions and used the Jews as scapegoats. After a decade of listlessness (1890-1900) the Russian Bear began to growl. The Czar taxed more heavily than ever and suppressed all revolutionary order with the ruthlessness of a Hitler. Many young Jews joined the Revolutionary party. To divert the attention of the masses from their poverty, Czarism promoted an external War against Japan; and an ^{an} ~~an~~ internal War against Russian Jewry long packed like sardines with ^{an} ~~a~~ Pole.

On August 11, 1904, the Czar attempted to stem the Tide of Revolt by the abrogation of corporal punishment to soldiers and peasants; educated Jewry were allowed to live in villages and acquire property; Jewish war veterans were granted universal domicile. Jewish blood flowed freely in the Russo-Japanese War for the love of the Czar. On Dec. 12, 1904, an imperial Ukase promised partial reform "a revision of laws restricting the Rights of Aliens."

Jewry was befuddled; some saw relief for Jewry only by a national Revolution; others saw Palestine; others, America.

On July 2, 1904, Herzl died. David Wolfson succeeded him as head of the Zionist Congress. On July 15, 1904, the Jew-hating Plehve, instigator of the Kishinev and Himel programs was bombed to death by a terrorist. From within, Jewry was divided; from without, the hostile Russian government ever threatened with programs.

Living in Odessa, Bialik saw all with a Despair born out of frustration. His efforts as a prophet, he felt, were vanity. He had sought to make ghetto love and life wholesome, upstanding; He had succeeded only in pouring salt on the wounds of a cringing Jewry too weak to fight; too hopeless to rebel. Perhaps it was wiser to reap a rich financial return as editor of a Hebrew periodical endeavoring to bring light to ghetto dungeons.

Bialik's poems, written in 1904, may be divided into two parts:- poems of cheerful melancholy and poems of Despair. His Songs of Winter, שירי חורף belong to

the first category; "723"

to the second.

שירי חורף

These five poems reveal a poet intoxicated with the Beauty of Nature now adorned in her winter finest. Here, is, no poet dreaming of the snow of Mount Herman; here is a poet rejoicing in the Beauty of the Galuth. Out of the valley of the shadow of the ghetto, the poet has emerged to greet and to sing the Praises of Light, as the blind Milton sang of his inner Light.

The first poem reveals the sun pouring thru the frost-decorated window of the poet and filling his profane heart with light.

"as if a winged angel pure
flew down and washed it clean of stain."

Poem II

The giddy morn bubbling o'er with wantonness, melts a hole in the frost-decorated window, sets the poet's "room a flame," fills him with Samsonian strength and drives him forth into the world "clothed in light."

Poem III

The poet walks the diamond-covered highway, his ghetto-freed heart rejoices with nature in the Beauty spread about:-

The satin snow spread out, unbored-
in the sky a strange hand of old
weaves yellow threads and binds the head
of day with ten rare crowns of gold.

One tree, encased in glitt'ring glass
all girded round with wintry birds
tingled aloud--with morning joy-
joyous--alive and full of words.

Poem IV

The poet begs the sharp frost to embrace him with its iciness. A ~~poem~~ ~~rejoicing~~ ~~ness~~ rejoicing over the beauty of Winter reaches a climax in the fifth, final poem.

Poem V

Reveals a poet, riding on the crest of revolt, intoxicated with the Winter-Beauty of Russia. ^{.. Hesckelar} The Matmid, successfully warding off the enticing breeze fondling his ear-locks; the revolting Talmud scholar, in this poem, succumbs, to the beauty of the moment.

Sleigh bells, healthy--red--Russian faces, fur coats, mad-prancing horses, a
satin road and boiling blood.

The poet hails a sleigh and bids the driver to whisk him away to the sanctity
of the forest. What are Books and God when Beauty calls and blood boils:-

Yes! A talmudic student, I.
my fore-head, snow; my face of lime
but, like the winter, I've heaped up
beneath my frost-coat, strength sublime.

The poet cries:- "What mean the Mitzvoth and subjugation of desires to the living
God. Nature is God! To the devil with the Messiah! I'll live for the moment."-

Alas! Let melancholy rest
how wearisome the glitt'ring cold-
Haste! snatch the bubbling cup of life
before the stranger drink it bold.

From the forest-trees, the poet, in conclusion, will gain new courage seven-fold.

This poem has not the natural joyousness of a Nature lover; the poet, in re-
volt against the ugliness of his own life, worships Nature like an ^{idol worshipper} idolater who has
still much love for Jahweh. The snow-covered forest of ebullient Russia, the poet
portrays; but the Hebrew poet, bereft of his own land, pouring out his love ecstat-
ically to foreign beauty, ^{tries} ~~tries~~, in vain, to "let melancholy rest."

1723 Butterfly

Amid the splendor of golden spears of light and trees butterflies and swaying
wheat--a lover and his beloved saunter along far from the maddening ghetto. A
butterfly caught like a burr on the swinging braid of his beloved, beckons the lover
to cling to his beloved as the butterfly, to the braid. The captured soul of the
lover yearns for rescue like the caught butterfly. The brilliant eyes and swaying
braids of the maiden appear to say :-

"Yes! I'll rescue thee." Then the lover in the final stanza replies:-

Quick, quick, my sister let us fare
"neath a leaf tent where I'll declare
my soul-my love, hung on a hair -
let us two die with a kiss there.

This poem has the breath of the West. The lover pleads; the marriage is not
prearranged. He courts her in the ^{sunshine-clothed} ~~dazzling~~ field, not in the ghetto recesses. The

lover suggests death with a kiss (^{as} ~~like~~ God ^{kissed} to Moses) not because his beloved might prove unfaithful; rather, because Russia and Jewry are bankrupt. There is no future; one kiss would be enough.

727 (The Divine Word)

A prophetic utterance filled with disgust for a people whose vision he tried to mold. This poem suggests the ~~severity~~ ^{severity} of Amos. Russian Jewry had forgotten Judaism; Jahweh's sacred shrine they had utilized for purposes profane. Eastern and western European Jewry had learnt the prayers and hopes of Israel, yet they had desecrated the Holy Altar and used its stones for their house-floors, garden walls and grave-stones. Why keep the spark divine upon the Altar for such people who, if they found the soul of God and His prophet, would fling it to dogs. Hence, the prophet-poet concludes, it is wiser to kick over the shrine, and from spider webs clinging to its bottom, make strings of a harp that shall sing a song of rebirth (~~Ap~~rophecy untrue, ear false.") "No," cries the poet, "I shall sing truth." To the winds I shall cast the gossamer. My hammer broken from over-~~processing~~ ^{pounding} on their hearts of stone, I'll forge into a spade to dig their graves. "O Word Divine speak out," the poet cries, if Russian Jewry, ~~is~~ spiritually bankrupt within, and oppressed from without, is to die, tell us that we may know--for:-

Behold! Abundant Night did hide, crush us
and li'e men blind, we've groped upon the Night.
The world divine fell between us and no
one knows what fell and no one tells or sees
whether for us, the sun has risen, set
or whether it forever more has sunk
and greet the vanity and fearful, too,
the utter emptiness that plagues us round.

The prophet-roast blasts out: Israel is no more. Should God listen to the cries of the dying. How can God punish ^{the} blasphemous or discipline fists of wrath when the offenders are doomed to death? Soon, "The wind

shall blow them off like chaff, destroyed, destroyed.

Once more the poet pleads to heaven to speak: speak the truth, even if the Divine Word says: "Death to Israel"

The poem ends thus:-

Should we fear Death? Death's angel rides now on

our shoulder and his bridle bites our lip,
 if need, with rescues cry and laughter's shout
 let 's ^{leave} ~~prance~~ with bravery unto our grave.

Where ^{7/16} reveals the poet longing for lost youth which will never, never return,

who, what you are I do not know
 thy name trembles on my lips though -
 like fiery coals, at night in bed
 Your image burns within my head.

7/14 7/16 - After my Death

The poet compares his soul to a harp, the plucked-strings of which reveal the
 secret woes of his being. One harp-string, the poet's fingers ever danced about
 but never plucked-the string of love. Ever, the string yearned to be plucked, ever:

She wanted, thirsted long, pined, yearned
 as a torn soul yearns for more gold
 She waited thus--each day she hoped
 with sighs concealed, she called to him
 He waited, tarried did not come.

Once the poet, unrequited, begins and ends his poem with the lines:-

After my death mourn thus for me
 A man was-lost! he is no more
 He died before his fated time-
 In middle life his song was stopped.
 Alas! Left to him, was a song
 behold this song forever lost
 forever lost, forever lost.
 The unplucked string is an excellent image of love frustrated.

3/20/22 7/18/22

Spring ever fills the downcast soul with hope. The poet tries to clip the
 dead brush from the orchard of his soul; for spring will bring forth new blossoms.
 the garden bed begins to bloom; the pine to give forth its scent. Life will go on!
 Spring pours new hope into the wintry chambers of his feelings.

From tree to tree the pruning shears leaped
 to clip brush not alive
 Soul joy! things withered the dust will lick up
 but human kind will thrive.

Have you breathed the scent of stems new and green
 mixed with the smell of pine-
 thus grows the sucking orchard nursed and live
 with hosts of boughs in line.

Letters

In a spirited letter written from Odessa to Sholom Aleichem dated April 1, 1904,

Bialik announced that on the Gentile New Year, he took over his duties as editor of Shiloah; in this note he begs S. A. to send him an article in Hebrew.

Bialik's letters reveal an excellent head for business and a marvelous sense of humor. April 1, 1904--another spirited letter to S.A. by editor Bialik on behalf of Shiloach from Odessa. April 1, 1904, written by Bialik from Cracow, this letter contains a classical bit of humour concerning Fisher's beard; the poet, as a business man, has Yankee-shrewdness.

turbulent 1905, the Poale-Zionists, advocating a return to Palestine without abandoning socialistic doctrine, grew in strength, although they encountered the stubborn opposition of the newly formed Zionist Socialists who advocated a territorial program.

From the start of the reign of Nicholas I until the Revolution of 1917, Czar Russia hated Jewry with increasing intensity. Hemmed in within the government-imposed Pale, Jewry clamored like Russia itself for recognition. The government made minor civic concessions. For example, at Kerch, Jews were allowed the privilege of voting, but they were not granted freedom of domicile, freedom of transit and freedom of attendance at universities. In general, the Czar tries to make Jews, city serfs, by crowding them into municipalities and robbing them of their economic role of village middle-man between the nobility and peasantry. Jewish aldermen resigned from the municipal Dumas because they were government-appointed, not Jewish-elected; they boldly resented this governmental insult to Jewish civic dignity.

On Sept. 1905, fearing imperial dissention in the face of the Russian-Japanese War, the Czar issued manifesto which promised to bestow "civil liberties upon the Russian people, inviolability of person, freedom of conscience, liberty of speech, a semblance of organization". The manifesto also proposed a Duma possessing legislative powers in which all classes would have suffrage. Yet the Czar cut down indiscriminately Jews and liberals, published thousands of anti-semitic papers and spent millions of rubles to further programs.

On Oct 18, 1921, following the pronouncement of the manifesto, programs swept Odessa where Bialik lived. In Dec. 1905, the uprising of the peasants and workers at Moscow took place. The year opened and closed with an uprising.

Jewry was at sea with itself. Zangwill started in these years the Jewish Territorial Organization. Baron Hirsch dreamed of transplanting as agriculturists and industrial-workers Jews to all parts of the world. In 1905-1906, 230,000 Jews left Russia.

Packed 2,000,000 strong between the Oder and the Black Sea, the Theis and the Baltic, Jewry, like Russia, demanded change. City-dwelling, Yiddish not Hebrew in speech, intensely ritual-minded, in spite of Socialist-Revolutionary inroads, Jewry yearned to be saved. The Jewish leaders were too Russianized to be folk-conscious, the people, too confused to do anything.

In this madness, Bialik dug into the Hebraic past, sang sad songs and made prophetic utterances. The times made the poet, prophetic; but a prophet guides, not leads.

Some of Jewry turned Revolutionary and anti-Jewish, some, revolutionary and pro-Palestine; some sought refuge in ritual and Talmud; many went to America; some to Palestine; all feared programs.

נסתח

To a storm-tossed poet what is more soul-refreshing than to claim a forest covert. Bialik was ever in love with Nature. Like a lone Romantic, he made his moods and the moods of Nature one. He championed the Common Man, as a prophet must; he dreamed of the exotic East as Byron did, and as a devout Zionist should. The forests of Russia were part of his soul; the mountains and trees of Palestine were only part of his imagination. Yet, the poet steered in Hebrew lore, as if he were still a desert-wandering Israelite in search of precious water, choose to exalt a humble pool. The forest trunks charmed his outer eye; the language of the leafy shade, his soul. Where can one find in Hebrew literature a Hebrew of Hebrew poets so firmly rooted in the soil of the Gqluth?

Nature's moods are portrayed with the power and artistry of a Wordsworth; the mysterious moonlight enveloping the forest; the day of storm pricking the forest stalwarts into action against the elements; the wondrous peace at Dawn; the shady covert of a forest tent that houses a pool; the magic language of the leafy shade. How wonderful that an obscure pool hidden among forest giants should secretly house within her depths the giant roots of her tree-defender, a sleeping princess of magic beauty and the real world of eternal mysteries. Maybe, the poet was thinking of the humble remnant of Israel as a pool ruffled little by forces from without

and guarding within the depths of its heart treasures for which the world seeks and cannot find. Allegorical interpretation, I know, is very dangerous; yet this Hebrew poet seems to catch the heart beat of the masses; his symbolism, based on actual experience, to emanate from them. Bialik is a people's poet; not exclusively, like Keats, for example, a poet's poet.

ידי י. ב.

A beautiful poem revealing the melancholy that comes when Indian summer has not yet departed and Winter has not yet come. Nature, like the heart, is orphaned. Hundreds of Jews were leaving Russia daily; the mood of Nature matched the mood of the heart of the poet.

The naked orchard now upholds
lone hikers, few, who lift
their moving eyes on the last flight
of storks departing swift.

אין נדון דאס

Like 'Ain Dik the poem portrays Love Denied. The imagery suggests the Metaphysical Donne. The soul of the young poet becomes a cloud; yet his soul melts not. A sun ray envelopes the cloud; yet the soul dries not. A tear falling from the poet's cheek envelopes the sunray; yet the soul is not strangled. Now a part of the cloud and sun, the soul enclosed within a tear rests on a wax-stained page of the Gemmarah where it quivers into life and makes dead Hebraic letters burst into Song. One song-love and youth-the poet knew not; even his wand'ring soul beat at the gates of love, love denied.

אין גאון דאס

This poem bristles with rebuke against Jews who abandon completely hearth and kin to slave exclusively for a foreign culture. Too many of Russian Jewry, both bourgeoisie and socialist, sought complete Russification; German Jewry of 1905, unmindful of impending Hitleric fury, derided Eastern Jewry and hated their Jewish selves. (How apropos is this poem to financially-powerful American Jewry wallow-

ing with Hebraic forgetfulness, in the luxurious lap of the land.)

Thus he rebukes:-

While still 'twixt flutton's teeth your blooddrips down
the food of your own souls you've fed their mouths.
for their joy you built Pithom, Kamesis-
your children were their bricks for pyramids.

Because Israel has "dealt falsely with its own heart
thus in mournful childlessness you'll fast remain-
from your household Renown will cease"

Straying sons of Israel who seek to return will find no prayers in their
hearts, no tears of comfort in their eyes, their hearts:

dried up will be
a grape bunch squeezed, left in the neck of a vat
which gives no juice to liven up the heart
or to restore a soul oppressed.

A Jew who has abandoned his people and yet cannot find peace in the gentile
world will see without, "eternal rain," within, "ashes, dust, so, too, Bialik saw
Czarist Russia and Jewry within her folds.

BK SN

This poem, built on legend, is the most powerful poem of Bialik: "729N SN" has a
quality as granite as the stone chests of the sleeping warriors; this poem has
the soft contours of a voluptuous woman. Maybe that is why I like the latter
better.

The poem opens with the God of Vengeance on his wondrous throne contemplating
the Destruction of the Temple. At his Command, the Temple is destroyed and the
bankrupt Shechinah ascends from the Ruins. An angel, remembering the glory that
was Israel's, swoops down and rescues a spark (the Remnant of Israel) from the
sacred altar of the Temple and carries the flame to a lonely barren island where
he guards it. Two hundred youths and two hundred maidens sightless captives from
Jerusalem are set on a lonely barren island where one group is separated from the
other. Life there is monotonous unto death. Once a bright-eyed youth opens his
eyes at the sound of a mysterious, measured beat and saw two:- a golden-locked
youth and an angry-browed man. No one could tell whether the man or the youth set

the pounding march of feet that drew all youths after him. (The angry-browed man, allegorically speaking, represents decaying religious Tradition, father of Hate and Shame; the youths, harbingers of a new Dawn. Both were mirrored in the heart of the lonely bright-eyed youth, ~~Bank~~.)

On the third day, the youths came to the River of Perdition from whose waters and roots they unknowingly drank. The angry-browed man said:- Have you forgotten the Song of Ennity and shame? The bright-eyed youth answered:- Has the Lion of Judah forgotten how to roar; he knew in his heart that his fellow Israelites about him had fallen on evil days of Despair, The man of Mystery replied:-

"The lion of Judah has become a dog of the wilderness." The youth blushed in shame. His fellow youths sat in mournful Despair. Then the Mystery man sang a Song of Perdition. The youth, apart from the others, then asked his brethren:- Brothers, do you still know the Song of Consolation and of Judgment Day? Only the yellow-haired youth answered with deceit:- "Hath the gazelle among the rocks forgot her cunning?" The falsehood held his tongue. The bright-eyed youth gazed at the yellow-haired boy forgivingly; for each wanted Jewry to roar like a lion and to yearn for Jahweh as a gazelle for her beloved; but inner despair seemed too great. The rest of the Youths joined the man of Mystery in a wild hymn of Hate.

Suddenly, two hundred maidens, wondrous yet blind, came leaping toward the cliff, facing the River of Ruin; they came as false Messiahs to woe-weary eyes; like Zionism or a Czar-ridding Revolution to desolate Jewry. The youths shouted Danger; the maidens heard not. They fell into the River; plunging into the hideous stream, the youths battled towering waves to save the floating bodies. Suddenly the cavernous Valley of the shadow of death appeared on the Waters; the mountain cut in twain, closed over all. Over the new calm river, the youths and maidens floated to death. The bright-eyed youth alone wept capricious tears.

In despair, the lonely youth sees a beauteous maid, symbol of earthly love

wedded to divinity, on the cliff-top. Loneliness brings man either to the woman in God or God in the woman, rarely ^{to} man. The ~~youth~~ ^{Poet} in love, becomes autobiographical in the sight of his beloved. Thus spoke he:- In my lonely tender youth I saw you as the light of the morning star. Because of Thee, I learned to love the God of heaven as well as the God of the hills; as a youth, orphaned, thy image secreted in my heart, taught me the mysterious of sorrow and the woes of love.

One day a Nazirite, symbolizing obedience to Torah, and to each ^{precept} ~~precept~~ of Divine Law, found and persuaded me to dedicate my youthful youths and my desires to heaven; yet, in spite of myself, your image flamed in my soul and I yearned to have you even as I prayed and nodded over sacred books. I feared the Nazirite lest he think my soul contaminated and chastise me. Then one day, I went to the brook to cleanse myself before rendering God my morning prayer. Alas! You were bathing there in nakedness that teased my wants out of my mind. Satan tempted me. Repentance held me from leaping upon thee as a leopard. To the benevolent Nazirite, I told all; he sent me to Jerusalem where I offered up the glory of my youth and locks in stonement.

But the heavens have deceived me; I am now alone. My youth has gone; nothing have I in its stead.

Then you appeared again. What matter, if the Temple is in Ruins? Because you've left the heavens for my sake, for you I'll even plunge into the River of Ruin-- suddenly her form on the cliff disappeared; but her image remained on the faces of the river. Should he plunge into the heart of the River--he, the prophet, set apart for the living God or should he risk all for an image he believes divine? Then--with typical dramatic abruptness--the poet brings out of the heaven a silvery cloud and a bright morning star whose whisper to mankind is:-

"Be pure, be pure!"

The star persuades the youth to dedicate the fire of his heart to the heavens. At last, the youth believes in his star and knows God set him to perform a task on this lonely, barren Island of Israel's Galuth. This maiden's form on the face of

the River follows him, the cloud, like an angel, goes before him, too; but the morning star guides his soul.

Guided by the morning star of Hebraic Rebirth, the youth ascends the mountains, smells the sweet smell of the fire of the Altar, recognizes the flame of Ariel he had seen on the Altar--the very flame of God. The cliffs appear to crush the River of Ruin as if a vise. To the mountain top, he carries the sacred torch for all Israel. There he stands in his majestic youth. Above, the silver cloud and morning star bless him in his dedication.

When the eyes of the youth caught the image of the maiden floating on the face of the River of Ruin. Her form beckoned with a call stronger than death. Grasping the torch to his heart, the Youth plunged. God turned off the lights of heaven.

Flowing in the Black Sea, the youth was washed up on a distant shore in exile. His heart held a threefold flame. The flame of God, of Satan, of Love. The voices of all three were in the cry of the youth. Wherever the man of mystery went, he disturbed the lives of even the most faithful; he shared their woes sevenfold but peace he brought to all, for he looked to earth and yearned for a post that could not be. The youth compassion-filled, poured comfort on the disquieted hearts of his fellow exiles. Of darkness,--the dawn of a new life--he dreamt. In silence, still as death, he kept in lonely sorrow. The angel who had saved the sacred flame lifted of old the cup of dumb wine and caught copious tears in the quiet dawn.

שְׁכִינָה מְשֻׁבָּה

This is the plea of dream-weary prophet, of an unrequited lover yearning for precious youth, of a desolate Romantic unable, as a true lover of ^{the} Hebrew ^{spirit}, should, to base dreams on the facts of life as it is. The Shechinah, he begs to shelter him from the wilderness without; from frustration, within.

Ever the leit motif of love denied:-

One secret more now I'll confess
Love once made my heart flame, flame, fl me.
Love still glows on the earth, I'm told--
What love? Is it still called by name-

Once the morning star shone with a light of Rebirth, now utter Despair takes

possession of his wrestling spirit: He yearns for shelter from the slings and
arrows of outrageous fortune. Woman, he has none; A God, he creates.

'K31 'N117

A brilliant effort of the poet to shake off gloom by envisaging a beautiful
bride enveloped in the joyous light of Spring, as bright as the Winter Light of

. He welcomes the joyous Bride of Spring like the Sabbath Queen and en-
velops her, too, in a veil of sanctity.

Birds! Flowers! Spring! When the poet's aging heart regains for a
brief moment, precious youth. In the sunshine away from ghetto darkness, he would
take his apple-scented bride. The garden of the song of songs bears luscious
fruit again. He pleads to her riding invisibly on the sparkling breeze:-

Come back to me, renew
the fruit of fragrant love-
Go, bless it in thy Spring
and I yea, I will cause
my blessed Spring to dwell
in Thee. You'll understand
A robe of light, I'll give-
A blue crown for thy head,

Into the fresh-smelling fields,

We will cleave
the field, the hill, the vale-
There I'll pluck souvenirs.
I'll surely pick up pearls
of dew-rare pearls of dew-
a necklace for thy neck.

Like Biblical lovers, they will descend into a well where

Like thee,
joy laden, bright and gay,
beneath God's dazzling sky
with mirth and freedom vast
my song will shine yea! ring!

The poem almost dances with joy. Lack creates a over-abundance of the opposite
in the poet's heart; joy and light abound in this love poem. Unlike Herrick who
addressed pretty verses to imaginary lovers, Bialik creates a heart-felt, not,
idyllic mood. Here the loved-one, ever-sought, wears the flowing silk of Spring.
Bialik evidently found not even the spark of love in marriage. (What the editor
in a letter written to the slipshod Brenner on Jan. 27, 1905, desired of the

contributor, Bialik himself practised.) He writes: "Be careful, exacting, cautious in your literary endeavors. Be exacting with thyself unto a hair's breath." Bialik, the fiery soul, encased his verses in most disciplined patterns). Bialik's poems during 1905 reveal a deepening Melancholy and Despair; only

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a love poem, sparkles.

1905

1905 found the Russian Bear snarling. On Jan. 9, 1905, a group of St. Petersburg working men marched to the Palace of the Czar to present a petition of economic and political reform; they were answered with a shower of bullets. This incident set the mood of the year. In March 1905 "A League for the Attainment of Jewish Rights for the Jewish People" was formed. The league sought "national self-determination with communal self-government, freedom of language and school education." Out of the League for Equal Rights emerged the following organizations:-

Firstly, the Zionist Group; secondly, the Jewish People's Group which repudiated the attempt to find the new Jewish Centers outside Palestine; favored self-determination within Russia and a minimum of Jewish National Rights; thirdly, the Volk-partei, which favored National cultural autonomy; opposed general culture; favored autonomous national school rights of both languages Hebrew and Yiddish; fourthly, the Jewish Democratic Group which had strong leanings toward political parties of Left Russian Radicals and Socialists; fifthly, the Bund class-conscious Group who refused to cooperate with the bourgeoisie. In 1905-1906 the Bundists, People Zion, Socialists, Semyists formed one unit; The Bund at first was purely Socialist with "Yiddish" employed as a condescending medium." In 1903 the Jewish Bundists, splitting with the Russian socialist party, advocated socialist principles in a Jewish autonomous state. Between 1900-1905 the People Zion movement took definite form. During--

1906

The League for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jewish people held three sessions at their second convention in St. Petersburg on Feb. 10-13, 1906.

April 27, 1906, the first Duma convened. Among the members were included twelve Jews. While the Duma was in session, the great Bieloostok massacre against the Jews took place. On May 8, a member of the Duma openly placed the responsibility of instigating the program of 1905 upon the Imperial Police Dept. On July 7, the Duma flayed the Imperial Government openly. On July 9, Duma flayed the Imperial Government openly. On July 9, the blood-thirsty Imperial Gov't closed the Duma.

(Stolypin, the anti-Semite, ^{had} become Prime Minister in 1905)

Duma members fought valiantly for Jewish Rights. The Jews were accorded franchise; but the Jewish Deputies favored complete abolition of Jewish legal enslavement. The Duma, at large, feared to act, for the Czar still owned Siberia. Counting Stolypin favored the granting of concessions to the conservative elements of Jewry; but Nicholas would not. The result was that Stolypin cut the membership of the second Duma considerably; the third Duma, still more. Only three-then two Jewish Deputies represented Jewry. From Russian Imperialism, Jews could expect programs, nothing less, nothing more.

In Nov. of 1906, the Russian Zionists at Helsingfors adopted a platform of a synthetic "Zionism". Russian Zionism advocated the Zionist affiliation with the movement for liberation among the territorial nationalities of Russia and advocated the necessity of uniting Russian Jewry upon the principle of the recognition of Jewish Nationality and its self government which possessed the right to found, conduct and support all institutions beneficial to its own ends as:- national health, education, mutual labor aid, emigration and religious matters.

Political Zionism and revolutionary activity went hand in hand; but revolutions destroy cultural continuity and makes the dreamer inevitably rooted in tradition unable to endure the creation of another; for a dreamer inevitably envisages a Utopia;

a revolution brings chaos and death more often than enlightenment. The poet must either dream of a golden Past or a golden Future; if he tries to make a Utopia out of the present, he invites self-destruction. Bialik felt and new tears and despair and revolt.

וְהָיָה כִּי יִבְרָא

This is the first of a number of unrequited love songs from "Songs of the People"
dowry-conscious Hebrew
 A maiden yearns for her lover who does not come. She begs a dove to tell her love that she awaits him. She speaks:-

Tell him too, that upon my bed
 at night, I am to hot tears wed.
 From underneath my flesh of white
 my pillow is burnt ev'ry night.
 If he believe, tell him the rest,
 all is prepared in my hope chest.

The bird promises to tell her lover who will surely

Come and say, here love am I
 Life's joy--the apple of my eye
 you are--means a dowry of gold
 I'll wed you, our love can't grow old.
 What means your wealth or poverty?
 Why all this linen, silk for me?

But,

The bird rose up thru heav'n's wide--
 the prophecy did not abide--

1K7P
 2055 This poem is a cry of despair coming from the soul of a dreamer who sees only doom for his people. Pent up like serfs within restricted city walls, Russian Jewry must inhabit a narrow desert, serpent-covered. To biblical figures of speech the poet must inevitably return when at White Heat.

Israel the poet-prophet cries:-

The world's bareness, God's silent curse--rips you about
 Removed from earthly fields, a mother's fragrant breast
 you have forgot.

There in a desert, sand will be your food, highways of waste, your homes; for God's hand has condemned the barrenness you now inhabit. The poet cries:

"Cry not to heaven
for there God's hand condemned-there his ill-eye, a slit
misguides fleet clouds and wings of wind from flutt'ring o'er.

Bereft of heaven's aid, Israel is doomed; Divine Faith, alone can save.
Clouds of rebirth coming either from Zionistic Palestine or Revolutionary Russia
will prove false. "From far," the poet cries,

a herd
of clouds rain-filled and swift, joyous to greet parched souls
awaiting them, with, rebirth from afar.

But these clouds of ~~Renaissance~~ ^{Renaissance}, the poet mocks:-

"pass, all go
just as they came:-their thund'rous laugh, they leave-not rain-
And you'll stand barren, sad 'mongst desert thorns and stones"

Bialik, the weary poet, heaps despair upon his prophetic self. For God as in
722 either condemns or mocks in silence. His people who have put more faith
in political Messiahs and Revolutionary Movements than in Divinely-inspired L-w.
Bialik, like Israel, is divided in spirit between old Egypt and New Canaan.

הן אין רגל 722 88

This poem is a magnificent tribute to the philosopher of the Hebrew ~~Renaissance~~ ^{Renaissance},
Ahad Ha'am to whom these verses are dedicated. For many years the philosopher led in
discussion until the world trembled before the Lord Divine a coterie of intellect-
uals ^{at} Odessa. What Bialik is to Modern Hebrew Poetry, Ahad Ha'am is to modern Zion-
ist philosophy.

In 1904 Bialik took over the editorship of Shiloah, a Hebrew literary periodical, which
the philosopher founded. Bialik was a member of the philosopher's circle.

The poet compares the philosopher of the Hebrew ~~Renaissance~~ ^{Renaissance} to a Beacon Light
shining from a fortified island of hope in the midst of a wondrous sea.
white-winged ships carried to and brought from the island joy and invigoration; for
on this island:-

"dwell the grace that shone on God's own lips."

A blessed lighthouse guided their going out and coming in.

Now the island of Israel has fallen on evil days.
"the sea is dead, the cliff bereft

of friends, the fort has toppled down-
 just weighty layers of ruined stone
 surround the shattered walls alone
 still hanging with its old flag left.

yet even in the midst of the desolation of the Island and the sea about, the
 beacon light still glows; the influence of Ahad Haam still pours light upon
 the hearts of despairing Jewry.

But:-

The boats no longer come to its domain
 The island died and all on it turned waste.

Yet the poet concludes, in spite of this:-

"There stood its beacon shedding light on Waste-
 and all mused here in silence: Who and Why?"

Bialik, the poet-prophet, pours ~~down~~^{doom} upon his faithful king; the serene
 Ahad Haam, still acts as a beacon-light though no ships come and waves of Des-
 olation lick the ruins of Israel's shores. Bialik loved the spirit of the best
 East European--Hebraic culture of which Ahad Haam was the shining example. The
 poet, like the philosopher, distrusted political machinations, especially Mes-
 sianic figures springing from assimilated Western Jewry. Then, too, Ahad Haam
 was a symbol of Odessa; to Bialik, Odessa (and its shining sea) was a veritable
 Jerusalem.

סוף ימי מלכות

Bialik is a stern Amos in this poem. The End of Days will find God pun-
 ishing Israel instead of wreaking vengeance on the enemies of Israel. Bialik,
 begins his vitriolic outburst thus:- my star will die in obscurity but the smoke
 of my wrath will continue long after, I must go, but eternal Israel shall live
 and suffer unto the End: the days

of Gilgol's rage and wrath of the Deep.

Israel's woe can help neither heaven nor earth; for she will suffer deserved
 punishment. Thus will be the fate of Israel's last generation:-

The light of sky will shake
 then suddenly grow dim in your distress -
 your blood--guiltless--the sun will turn to stain -
 Cain's mark will be upon the forehead of

the world;-the mark of woe on the shattered
seed of the Lord, Star, unto star will quake
Behold the fearful lie! the great travail!
the God of vengeance hurt at heart will rise
and roar and with his great sword, he'll go forward.

Israel; God's chosen, has "retarded the world's redemption," by acting un-
becomingly as God's chosen; hence, on Judgment Day, the God of Mercy will become
a God of Wrath.

A poet must follow the tradition of his literary predecessors. Bialik, at
White Heat, must write prophetically, just as the American poet-prophet of to-
morrow must follow Whitman or choose another language. Bialik in this poem, is
born reborn.

1907.

From 1907--1914 reaction became firmly entrenched in governing circles. The throne supported by Genuine Russians, murdered hundreds--Leo Tolstoi cried out:-

"I cannot keep silent," in protest against the outrages.

The Jewish Deputies protested against the curtailment of Jewish Freedom penned up within the prison walls of a Pole. In Odessa on August, 1907--Grigoriev, the city governor dismissed a protest against Jewish Persecution thusly:- "All these programs have taken place because Jews were most prominent in the Revolution" (1905). On Sept. 1907, the government declared the Zionist Organization illegal. A letter Sept. 3, 1907, ^{written} from Odessa to Berkowitz who had gone to America to escape programs, reveals the harried state of Bialik's soul:-

"Thus, thus, my friend, scattered and exiled, exiled and scattered, not a minute of rest, not an hour of peace. The thought born within the heart has not time to be changed to deed. First of all, you aren't able to bring it to completion. Before the programs there were many thoughts in my heart and in the hearts of my comrades of Odessa to establish a small book center, (Hebrew), a little sanctuary for the best of the books we have. We had already done something--when suddenly the programs, I fear the programs will cause our spiritual life to cease for many years.

Nevertheless, I don't despair any more in a little while, when relieved a little, we'll return to those ideas temporarily abandoned; surely you'll lend us a hand."

1907

~276

Bialik recognizes, in this poem, that he is a poet, not a prophet. He sought for divine guidance, yet, he laments:-

The sun rises and sets each day
my eyes have yet to view
a little note tossed down to me
from firmaments of blue.

He poet feels his cloud-world of Dreams for Israel, and his labor on their behalf, nothingness; for the world has died. He laments:-

Also, I see, your dime, I've sought
and lost my dollar's worth-
while Asmedai standing behind
sneers, laughing at my dearth.

All the years, Bialik laments, I've worked for Israel and neglected my own life. Israel has come to naught; I, too. Only when a prophet realizes that the people haven't lifted their hearts to the level of his dream, does he declare that he has wasted his precious spirit on their littleness of soul; so, with Bialik. Luckily he was able to find refuge in Galuth--Nature and in Hebraic lore.

NYN SK 108177

My remarks about this poem I preface by quoting excerpts from ^{two} of Bialik's letters--~~The first~~, written, on March 1, 1906, to Berkowitz; ~~the second, to Shalom~~
^{who was}
~~Aleichen; both of whom were~~ bound for America.

Bialik disliked American boorishness. He writes to Berkowitz:-

But ~~what~~ are you and the house of your father-in-law saying about going to America--such a thing is not for you. I fear you'll be utterly lost in that great descent. There is freedom there--but this freedom places on a man such as I, great dread. Sometimes when I look at American newspapers, horror seizes me. What

coarseness, confusion, what lack of taste, what uproar! uproar! Uproar, and I hate (despite the bitter denunciation of his people in verse, Bialik believed that Odessa) uproar productive of Hate. Even in 1906 ⁱⁿ spite of diminishing numbers, possessed the remnant of Israel. He continues:-

"Do all despair of Russia as forever ruined? Does your eye trust seeing anything anymore that will give us hope. I say to you:-The confusion will pass and the noise will cease and the man of our trust shall return to bolster the fortresses which they've conquered for themselves in the course of the last twenty years and the work of the Remembrance shall return to its place of honor. We are still worthy of beholding many hours of satisfaction in this world--in Russia. Finally, the remnant of our national soul keeps guard in the midst of the congregation of Israel in Russia. Many years will pass before you attain an income in America comparable to business in Russia." In this letter Bialik, the business-like editor of "Shiloah" offers the young Berkowitz this advice:-

But, if it is certain that your people are American-bound, then depart in peace--perhaps, this, too, is for the best. Listen, don't sell your soul for the idol worship of daily papers in America. It is better that you should be snatched away by Tebia or stripped bare. Don't write save under the influence of the Divine Spirit. Don't sever the tie existing between you and your book comrades in Russia. Study! Study! Study! You'll always yearn for the land of your birth--for your small city, for the days of your youth, for the years of fame, for the hyssop that grows on the walls of your house, for the sins of your youth and for Bialik. This yearning shall hold you in good stead, in time of woe and purify your soul from all dross and blemish--"

The whole mood of ישן נאך נאכין is expressed in the following excerpt of the same letter.

"but I feel extremely sad when I behold our small group increasingly diminished like fruit drawn at a feast. I want to see them increase as the light of Chanukah candles and the light of stars when they go forth."

The poet laments approaching loneliness; but finds great consolation in Nature.

You're going from me-go in peace
 let only favor light y ur path
 for peace of soul where'r you go-
 For me? Don't fret, I'm not alone-
 the sun will still go up and set-
 the unfagged stars divine still blink-
 Not I'm not bankrupt yet.
 'y well of comfort still gives drink."

Here, Bialik describes a summer night in a manner unforgettable:-

I know
 the nights of summer will still spread
 their purple curtain, gold embossed,
 like swarthy flesh of Cushites fair-
 the pleasant night, lamp-lighted, warm
 inlaid with black, dotted with stars—
 and pleasure-drunk, weary with thoughts
 of sin, the earth lies on Night's breast.

The poet feels however, that soon ~~Went~~ will sweep heaven and earth; stars will
 fall to earth and souls weary, will:-

beat out the earth, crawl belly-wise
 to pluck one golden shard, one crumb
 of his star cast to him by winds-
 to find a scrap of joy or love.

He felt a change had to come; he waited patiently like an orthodox Jew for the Messiah.

To his friend, sailing away to distant shores, he says:-when bereft of home,
 gaze up at stars:-

Behold! these stars and those are lost
 as oft as night to heaven's is
 Yet they're at ease with all their wrath
 and feel no pain when they're destroyed
 as if their gold had not been plucked.

~~From God, Bialik can see the rod of destruction; not hope nor neither trust, nor hope.~~
 ח'ק"י 278 ח'ק"י

This is one of the bitterest of poems on love I've read. Hausman is mild;
 Blake, gentle; Hardy moderate in cynicism; compared to this vitriolic outburst against
 the defilement of ^{the burning of love.} ~~the four poems~~, dealing with the theme of Love, all of which are
 included in his ^(next page) ~~included in his~~. Bialik wrote in 1908. Three speak of love denied
 and marriage patronized.

is the dream of a sad poet that his love will accept him finally as her groom.

gurity of love. The poem fills me with the same feeling of futility and frustration as Eliot's "Wasteland."

The humour is bitter; a humour born out of disgust, not out of the healthiness of living. Let me illustrate:--Writing to Sholom Aleichem 3/1/1906, Bialik frolics thus:-

"Alas! Where is the honesty of the Holy One Blessed Be-He? Alas! Where is His Truth? And what is it to him, for example, if one Jew, Sholom Aleichem, by name, sits by the shores of the ^{Draper} ~~Laiper~~ and writes pretty stories for Jews, and they, the Jews, rolling with laughter, find for themselves a merry hour of refreshment in this world after hard work and after labours and many cares--but you make it hard for the Master of the World."

Contrast this rollicking humour with the following verses:-

Real witches twine, spi. 'neath the moon
Glittering silver threads.
One cloak they weave for High Priests and
for keepers of swine heads.

Impatient man! Hope flees his eyes--
he lifts this chant of woe:-
Quick, show, O modest stars, above
and harlots, here, below.

Alas! flesh stinks, the drunkard wastes
wine love songs clutch him fast -
Mindfast, he rolls in his own flesh
and vomits his repeat.

Gone is the brilliant sun and the sparkling snow and the joy-abounding of

הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

and 'K31 'N117 ; a witch-governed moon have taken their possession of

the heart of the despairing poet.

1908.

1908

In 1908 the Chernowitz Conference declared War on Hebrew. Many factions in Russia demanded Yiddish, the folk language, not Hebrew as the official language of the autonomous state they envisaged. Bialik, the ~~postle~~ ^{apostle} of Hebrew, like the vast majority of his literary contemporaries, wrote both Yiddish and Hebrew. Pogroms were rampant. The young Turk revolt of 1908 increased the difficulty of obtaining a charter for Palestine from the Turkish gov't. Cultural Zionism became increasingly strong.

Four poems, dealing with the theme of Love, all of which are included in his *Shema Yisroel*; Bialik wrote in 1908. Three speak of Love denied and marriage postponed. *1908* is the dream of a sad poet that his love will accept him finally as her groom. Like.....

~~Predestination and impending doom were in the air.~~

Like the princess of the Sabbath, he awaits her. There he will ask:

from whence comes woe that rents apart
like a worm boring - a man's heart.

There, too, he will ask his beloved the question that hurts his heart:-

Alas, have I spoken truly
that your own heart has fled from me.

When his beloved replies by saying:-

"Another year about this time
we'll go to wed, my fool sublime"

The poet rejoices at the conclusion and sings:-

There-I'll say you are to me
sacred unto eternity
my foes shall tremble and behold
from envy they shall turn to mold

The maiden, I feel, playing with his heart, will keep him waiting more than a year.

הנה נדון

A poem of lonely Youth in search of Love denied. Just as a linden bending o'er a lake gazes at itself and thinks:-What will be my end when Winter comes, so gazes

a young maiden at a mirror wondering what her and will be, when the summer of her life passes and no groom will claim her.

עגן אהבה

Bialik snaps out of his melancholia to sing a love song—light, cheerful, gay.

I quote the first and last verses:—

To town has come a custom new
bright silken shoes with buckles rare—
about the neck of a sweet maid
hang the forms of two young men fair.

To town a custom new has come
last night, Hannah; tomorrow Pearl.
but ezkelit is my delight—
she is my only, only girl.

Like עגן אהבה, speaks again of Youthful Love in search of love denied. The maiden fears to hie lest she view the future-telling acacia who will tell her whether groom will be. The maiden, dreaming, fears he might be aged. If so;—

"If he is aged, lovely tree
then I'll not hear nor willing be,
I'll say to father:—kill me first
before I'll quench an old man's thirst.
I'll kneel and fall before his feet
But not an elder, I repeat."

1908 found the poet, minus his prophetic robe, finding relaxation, after study and the performance of editorial duties, in writing poems of love frustrated. How remarkable it is that Bialik anticipated Hebrew-speaking lovers when Hebrew in Russia was not a living tongue and when the Hebrew spirit lived without a land. In these folk-lyrics Bialik is truly a literary magician; he created Hebrew speaking lovers before they came into flesh and blood in Palestine. Out of these love-denied words, inspired lovers declared their hearts.

Bialik, with Methuselahic blood coursing thru his veins, must have tied his soul to books in his youth at a terrific spiritual cost. These youth-frustrations bobbing up in after years, played havoc with his soul.

1909.

Events:-

Zangwill's autonomous colony in Mesopotamia failed. Jacob Schiff, ever interested in the plight of Russian Jewry, tried to divert American immigration from the Atlantic Sea board to Galveston, Texas. Like Baron's Hirsch, Schiff dreamed of agricult realizing ~~emigrating~~ Jewry. In this year, also, Tel Aviv, was founded on a sand dune.

728N P'78JAN 0,1

Loneliness and despair govern the mood of this poem.

Unhappy Russian Jewry, torn between a belief in Socialism and an adherence to traditional Judaism, between loyalty to Russia and love for Palestine, struggles within itself. Daily, hundreds leave the Pale for American shores. Bialik in whose heart all the national conflicts reside, sees little hope for Jewry in Turkish-ruled Palestine and fears that America will rob the people of their Hebraic interests and of their Divine faith. The people leave; but the poet sits dumbly by with sack-cloth and ashes on his head. He cannot even pray in the abandoned shrine because God, he feels, has deserted His people.

Dumb, I'll sit before the wall of thy silent shrine
 but I won't pray a bit,
 for whom, for what? Their shrine still stands in its old place-
 but God is not in it.

The people have abandoned the sanctuary; but Bialik wishes to remain on guard by the walls of the ruined shrine even unto death. When he dies, this guardian of Israel's spiritual treasures doesn't want faithless Israel to weep false tears for him. In his grave, the poet concludes, his skeleton will mock at the shame of his people.

Don't touch my bones and don't defile my memory
 with false tears from your eye.
 If I rot in the grave, I'll surely rot, alas!
 I'll dream of your decay-
 war-fed, my skeleton shall mock and burst laughing
 at your shame night and day.

In an age of conflict, the prophet, by preserving fundamentals, creates the new vision. In isolation, he ^{finally} returns to tradition, while his people grope savagely for a new way.

וְהִיא כִּי יִאכְלֶנּוּ הַנִּינִים

Whether Bialik pours vitriol on or comforts his people, he inevitably returns to Biblical imagery and prophetic patterns of the Hebrew language as an English sonneteer inevitably turns to Shakespeare. This poem reveals the Despair of the people and the utter monotony and hopelessness of their lives. The miracles of life no longer astound their woe-weary souls for:-

unto the Jordan--he will go--behold!
 the stream has not fled back--he'll yawn again-
 on Orion and Pleiades he'll gaze
 But lo! they've moved not--then again he'll yawn-

Both man, beast together in dread shall dwell
 and burdensome upon their lives, the weight.

In addition to material poverty, Israel, Bialik laments, will soon taste of a "Hunger messianic, neither for bread nor dreams. Man will rise horror-stricken to seek the Messiah? The dry breasted mother, steeped in woe and poverty asks:-

"Will not Messiah come?" her infant asks; the mouse, peering from his hole, asks;

A maid that blows
 tea from behind hearth-stones, thrusts out her face
 "will not the Anointed come-or will
 his shofar's sound no longer greet the ear?"

Programs have ever fostered the Messianic spirit in Israel. Oppressed Russian Jewry in 1909 was deeply Messianic conscious. Bialik, here, voices their deepest feelings--

ק'ן נ' (ק' 83' ק' 8)

Here is Bialik, the folk-lore creator, in a whimsical mood. The Pagan Spirit of Beauty invades a Law-abiding town of Israel. Not even Talmud Scholars, disciplined in the Law, could stand before her bewitching sight visible only to the inner eye. Her unseen laughter all the youths of the town pursued. Discontent broke out:-

Fierce discontent began to grow
'twixt husband, wife both night and day.
Both fathers, mothers filled with care
could not sleep nightly on their bed
because their sons-in-law strayed wild
in ~~labyrinths~~ that were to darkness wed.

One day, this creature of mystery fled; no one knows where. Then:-

At eventide the groom returned
at the time proper to his house--
The bride forsaken--overjoyed--
forgave her one and only spouse.

In the houses of all the city after the departure of the creature mysterious:-

No quarrel raged within their homes -
Peace governed ev'ry nook and street--
Calm and tranquility held sway
within the town-- The wonder sweet!

Perhaps Bialik was dreaming that some day Pagan Beauty, too, could find a respected place behind the ghetto-encased walls of the Torah.

8'83 8'3

Bialik, the lover denied; the frustrated heart; the prophet without a people and the lover without a beloved. Again, love delays, delays, delays consummation. In this poem a maiden says:-"Goodbye" to her lover who has not the courage to speak his heart. She flies away on the wind; he will never see her face again:-

What woe! Before the time she set, from me she did depart -
A word lingered upon my mouth; but my lips would not part.
For weeks yea! Many moons I fashioned that word in my heart
She brought that word into my mouth; yet my lips would not part.

His chance to win her heart has now fled as:-

"the tingling bell on the wind's hand fades on the light of day."

1910

Programs in Russia continued. In the spring of 1910, 1200 Jewish families were expelled from Kiev. Stolypin, the Czarist Minister of the Interior, opposed the self-determination of Minorities. The underground revolutionary movement continued; the exodus of Jews from Russia to Palestine, and especially to America, was great. During 1910-1911, the prophet Bialik was dying ^{of his own accord,} the folk-singer Bialik, reached maturity.

.ה'תר"ק

Another poet of frustration; the poet, feels life without Rachel is impossible. Despite the fact that tongues have wagged false tales about her purity, her lover waits on y Rachel. He waits and waits; she delays:-

At eve, whene'er I go
where the corn-paths now roll
if Rachel be not round
I feel I have no soul.

Ears of corn and long stalks
send love unto my lamb -
they say if you'll delay
I'll die just where I am.

ה'תר"ק

This poem reflects the feelings of an anxious overtly-stricken father who tries in vain to marry off his three daughters. The daughters wait and wait and wait in vain. Suitors come and go and then come no more; the fruit and food the waiting maids prepared, suitors have not tasted.

The orange-fragrance fades -
the home-baked bread now stales -
worms cut the nuts like blades -
the samovars now fails.

One-Two- Three-Four--

.ה'תר"ק

The poet becomes almost morelistic in his insistence that man not delay in marrying. The lover had his choice between two maidens; unable to decide, he remained a bachelor; but he chastises himself saying:-

And I, alone to this day
an aged fool will be for aye
This teaching I give ev'ry youth
replete with wisdom and with truth.

One, one and two and three and four
God wants you wed--delay no more."

זקן ויו

The peacock, like the dove, flies to receive a note stating when the beloved and lover will wed.

Our wedding; if God wills, shall be
the Sabbath after Channukah.

Procrastination ever governs love.

כבוד ים

An idyllic picture of a home of six children and a mother where love and warmth abound. The poet, unhappy in ^{marriage} love and childless, enjoys what he sought and found not, in the home of a neighbor.

A thousand wives Solomon had
I, forsaken, had just one "pest"--
Think me not sinful if at night
I slowly go to her home bright
to fill my hand with joyous rest.

When the six doves behold my face
with shouts of joy they hug me, kiss--
on my back on my shoulder blade
on my hands, feet they make a raid
while their mother claps hands in bliss.

זקן אה'ה זקן

This humorous poem portrays the poverty and maladjustment of the average ghetto Jew caught in a revolutionary period when Russian imperialism was dying and Russian Socialism was an underground movement. The concluding verse after all the occupations of the ghetto had been offered to and refused by the Jew, reads thusly:-

A water-carrier you'll be
my buckets are clean smashed
Perhaps you'll say:-"Wet nurse"
I have no breasts: my hopes are dashed.

זקן אה'ה זקן

In this poem, written in 1910, the poet repeats the mood of the poem

זקן אה'ה written in 1904; The song of the poet was stopped in middle life. Love, denied to a Talmudic-minded youth scorning delights, came not to the poet in marriage. Brushing aside things hid, the poet took gently "sans blessing curse

of all life made him part." Yet love came not into his soul. He prayed in vain;
for:-

The chant prolonged as were his days
did not please the most High Divine -
what he sought not, he found, but what
he sought, he could not find.

Unto the end unsparingly
the man hoped mercy would be won
but in the middle of his chant
his word ceased--he was done.

Poetry should be the result of living, not the desire to escape from life,
Bialik's love--frustration produced a folk-lore before the chant ceased in middle
life. Also, a poet begins by imitating others and ends by imitating himself. Wise
Bialik was beginning in this year to prepare for silence *even while the Shechinah hovered
about his head*

בני ארון הספרים

This is the cry of anguish from the soul of a poet who seeks to reclaim the
spirit of the Torah of his youth and cannot.

The Torah scroll alone knew of the poet's youth:-

You were a garden in the summer's heat
as willows in the wintry nights, to me-
Scroll-wrapped, I learned to know my spirit's store-
my holy dreams were mortar to your lines.

Haskalah drove many Jews from the Torah walls into the larger life;-Bialik
laments,

"I was the very last of all the last"

Then one night the walls of the Yeshiva crashed:-

"The wrathful storm wind roared and wailed aloud-
shutters were smashed and with their spears of iron
all demons of Destruction tore down walls"

From the Yeshiva, too, went the Shechinah; the study lamp went out and:-

"I, a tender youth, cast from his nest
upon the highway of the ev'ning dark."

The wheel of life has turned the poet back unto the scene of childhood once
more--before the Treasured Ark. His eye seeks in vain to recapture the joy of youth
and old traces of his soul amid the letter crowns of sacred books. The whispering
lips of Patriarchs no longer speak thru the mute pages of the East. The poet,

groping in vain, questions:-

Is my eye dimmed and has my ear grown still
or have ye rotted all, ye long dead souls.
and left no remnant of this life of earth.

Have these patriarchs died forever never to return? Has the Past forever gone
with memories of early youth? Not convinced, the poet:-

" like a thief in a break
sans candle, lamp, with hoe I groped about-
in holes of dust, in hiding places dark
both day and night I searched about your graves
and sought to find the living covered o'er
beyond their root depths and still lower down."

The poet cannot conjure up the past again. The patriarchs:-
their echo did not even reach my ears.

Unable to recall the Talmudic glory of his departed youth, the poet seeks
refuge under the wings of night.

Will the night with its stars answer his tormented soul? He prays in con-
clusion:-

Come night,
pray! Gather, embrace me, glorious night-
Deceive me not, a fugitive from graves.
My soul wants rest in ever-lasting peace.

Yon-stars of gold, true wardens of my soul,-
my heart's keepers, why are you still, still, still?
In truth, have your gold eye-lids and swift glance
nothing to tell me and my troubled heart?

Perhaps you have, but I've forgot your tongue
and shall I hear no more your secret words?
Give answer, stars divine, for I'm in vain--!

The little Beauty of the Past beyond recall; the future, black; stars, silent;
the poet, in pain-

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Contrary to the spirit of the plea at the end of the last poem, Bialik, de-
nounces stars for their deceitfulness. The star of his youth had proven false.
In bitterness, the poet cries:-

Lo! star divine with eyelids gold
why have you enticed me
where is reward for a just heart
for my integrity?

Don't trust, O brother, in vain hopes--
believe not in a star
for they are deceitful and vain
thieves among thieves, they are.

Bitterness and Despair possess the poet as the years increase.

This poem is the swan song of a prophet who feels that he will live in his verses, not deeds. He bids his ^{successors} ~~predecessor~~ not to despair; nor to mock at him for his failings.

"whether he understands my woes or not
I'll trust, not tear, that my heart's rage he'll not
des-ise, nor mock the pain within my soul.
Alone--with my life-book let him retreat
and sink his head between its sacred leaves.

But the mournful poet concludes, when his scorpion words bite, let the lustful eye of the reader seek refuge in--

his tent where lo! my soul in silence stands
stripped bare of all its aches and evil pains
of calumny and bitter shame; 'twill say:-
Look! I'm before thee. Look! what kind of life
I led--what courage, truth, pain lived in me.
He'll look. A spark of scorn shall kindle in
his eye, but his rebuke shall die upon
his lips and tears hid shall come to redeem
my life's reproach and to atone for all
the shame I suffered while I lived on earth.

I, a reader of Bialik, living on Western Shores, where manly tears are anathema, have reacted toward the poet exactly as he prophesied.

ל' אה' נ' י' י'

In this poem the poet-prophet yearns for peace and solitude; far from the maddening crowd, relieved from all responsibility he yearns to go:

He is sick of trying to lead His people:-

Let them go where they will and I, alone,
In my silence just as I was, shall be--
I'll ask no more nor try to seek a thing
except one stone--which shall my pillow be
a rent stone, corpse of stone, not overturned,
whose heart had lost the spark of flame. This stone
I'll clasp, embrace; then close my eyes and freeze."

Neither does the world-and dream-weary poet, like Jacob, wish for dreams to sweeten his sleep, nor the beauty of Nature to soothe his spirit; he wants oblivion:-

"that all might freeze around and ageless peace engulf."

ל' אה' נ' י' י'

The bitterness of sought-for death embraces the poet. God had not told him how he would die. The poet, in his morbidity and disillusionment, creates multi-

might now become a compiler for all Israel in the land of Palestine. ~~Yehonatan~~ ^{Palestine-minded} Galuth
 Israel was dead; ~~growing~~ Israel might preserve the ancient in new forms. Hence,
 Bialik, dressed in the garb of Amos, concludes thus:-

No matter! I'll complete my task
 My vessels I'll gird to my waist -
 A worker without daily pay
 I'll trudge as I came without haste -
 To my home and its vales I'll go
 with sycamores I'll pledge my cup -
 and you-you all rotting, decayed -
 the wind tomorrow will lift up!

From 1911 until 1915, Bialik was lyrically silent; only occasionally did
 he burst into magnificent song ^{thereafter-} he compiled, gleaming from the riches of the
 past, books for young Palestinian and world Jewry. He stifled the prophet,
 smothered the disappointed lover and childless husband, and became a humble
 worker in the literary garden of a recreated People. "Heard melodies are
 sweet but those unheard are sweeter."

1911.

סוף סוף 1913

This poem reveals Bialik as a prophet frustrated; a lover denied; a husband childless. The poet compared his life to a vine without fruit or leaf which even the oncoming spring will not alter.

A vine fell on a hedge--then fell
Asleep--so sleep I now--
the fruit fell--what's my fruit, my stem?
What's mine? What's on my bough?

The poem concludes thus:-

Again spring blooms and I alone
shall hang on to my root--
A barren rod sans blossom, bud--
Without a leaf or fruit.-

Czarist Russia becomes more oppressive as the Revolutionary underground movement grows. Jews suffer most. In 1911, the body of a murdered boy was found near a brick-kiln owned by a Jew--Beilis--. Immediately the Black Hundreds, the Ku-Klux Klan, of Czarist Russia, raised the cry of ritual murder. Beilis was charged with the crime; the trial began at Kiev, Oct. 1913.

On Sept. 11, Premier Stolypin was assassinated, in a Kiev theatre in the presence of the Czar and dignitaries of State.

Between 1910-12, the Poles, eager for National Independence, attacked especially those Jews who were industrializing Lodz and Warsaw, as foreigners. Furthermore, the Jewish Literary Society consisting of 120 branches were disbanded by Czarist command.

Both politically and culturally, Jewry was crushed. The age was in confusion.

The self-identification of the poet prophet with his people is like the relation of Israel with the Shechinah. When the people suffer, the poet does.