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Poetry is one of the most difficult of all literary styles, but those factors which make it challenging and infuriating are precisely those factors which make it compelling and enriching. This paradox is an outgrowth of form. Often non-linear poetry is written as a rapid, at times jumbled excursion into the mind; as such it is built upon fragmentary structure and emotional connectives. Without the constraints of formal prose, the inner life of the author can be translated into the very style of the poem itself; poetry, therefore, is very much a literature of passion, as opposed to a literature of direct analysis. While the poem may as a result be difficult to intellectualize, the content of the poem is almost instinctively emotional.

what's that?

18th-century
poetry was
highly intellectualiz

The poems of this section are ^{of?} by necessity intensely personal, yet the authors make a deliberate choice to incorporate into their work a world vision. One means by which they do so is through the use of common or arch^etypical settings which are expanded into symbolic landscapes. For instance, the authors center their work on, in and around the natural element of the earth; by manipulating the role of the earth beyond its traditional reading, however, they encompass a multi-layered understanding of violence and its consequences. The poets employ the same philosophy to further expand the 'Jewish significance' (for lack of a better phrase) of the literature. A setting that reverberates with entire history of Jewish ideals now conjures up images of a desecrated present and an apocalyptic future.

In Markish's "The Mound," images of world destruction (i.e. the ravagement of the physical world) are juxtaposed with a startling

metaphysical indictment of the powerlessness and end of Judaism. The form of poetry is thus utilized to include the public and the private, the community and the individual. In the wake of a bloody and violent pogrom, both man and God have failed to regain their inner sanctity; neither can any longer belong to the realm of the holy. Man is now baser than animals ("Away. I stink. Frogs crawl on me."); God now beyond cruel to ineffectual. The foundations of Judaism have been destroyed, only to be replaced with vile, mocking imitations. "I've built you a new ark/In the middle of the marketplace," the poet proclaims. "A black mound, like a blotch./Seat yourself upon its buxom roof/Like an old raven on a dungheap."

The literature of Judaism is similarly destroyed, as "An idiot pig, somewhere in a culvert/Wets the holy Ten Commandments/As on a piece of smeared and foaming rag." It is striking that Markish fastens no direct blame in his apocalyptic vision.* The end comes from within and without, but always in tandem with the greater destruction of "the ripped world." Despite the horror of the poet's language, this extended vision almost serves to embrace the independent tragedies within it. The shift in emphasis between the large focus on the world and the smaller focus on the individual serves to place them in a sharper light.

Lamdan's "Masada-A Fugitive" also presents the consequences of pogrom violence in distinct terms ("And over everything: chaos, chaos, chaos-no people, no land, no God, and no man.") that are nevertheless bound together by a symbolic unity. In this case the symbolic landscape goes beyond the general earth to the very specific Masada. The choice of Masada as a setting has clear implications; in the past, out of "failure" (death) came honor and glory (martyrdom). In the apocalyptic response to catastrophe brought on by external forces, such martyrdom is a means by which the Jews might triumph over their enemies and defeat them by depriving them of murder. With the promise of this triumph as undercurrent of the poem, Lamdan deftly unites past, present and future.

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* Blame is hinted at by the presence of the church in canto I: by the market - as - house in canto IX; here, too, though, in the context of a larger indictment.