

Shirim 1911-1925, Hotsaat haverim Amriqa/hostaat Mitspeh, Tel Aviv; 1932

P. 1 PAAMEI HALOMOT: couple sitting by the Hudson at night; silence of two hearts uniting under the vast canopy of stars; but I don't like the stars for interrupt my reverie; I prefer the lapping waves; scent of your hair; secrets, mystery; my one request: put your white hand in mind and it will seem as if I hold the pulse of the cosmos.

12-13 UVEMOTI... Lilting song addressed to female listener (yekirati): When I don't die don't shed a tear for the paytan who quested for the dream of his youth and found it at his feet; the secret of life is that there is a veil between us and the world; we are surrounded by mystery; song of encouragement to listener not to despair; from the next world I will say what I couldn't express here. 1912

BAT HATEHELET, 1913: Fantasy of following a girl and being swept up into another, mythical celestial universe, captive of this girl

BAMAS' A, n.d.: Interesting and worth return to. Journey out of the city, iron of the rails; in praise of the countryside and the mountains; speaker comes as an outsider, not born there; raised in the dispirited gloom of city; comes to be renewed; theme of nature and the country as true nurturer; rejection of teeming immigrant metropolis'

RAHEL, n.d.: death of a woman, crying without end

ON TELKHI. . . 1904: dialogue poem; speaker implores woman not to leave at dawn; she must go on to higher things; exacts promise to return; Bialik sister/lover complex; cruel female figure?

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IM KLOT HALAYLAH, Catskills 1904; fading of night into day, praise for yakirah who is like both night and day; she remains an enigma and connected to things on high (like God)

EL BEREKHAH IM SHEKI'AH, Catskills, n.d.: speaker with daughter [Is yaldati daughter or lover?] on a lake in a row boat at sunset; brilliant and loving depictions of upper fire, to which the child is attracted, and the lower, reflected fire in the pond, to which the poet is attracted; APOTHEOSIS OF ROMANTICISM

AHAREI PEREIDAH: After break-up, address to friend; aspires to think of her without bitterness; struggle for altruistic sentiment

[Very few biblical allusions a-la Bialik; little complexity on purpose, concern for the phrase, the local turning of a lyric phrase; aspiration toward simplicity]

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of expressions and concision; the polar opposite of UZG's expressionist rage and absurdity and distortions of nature and his Jewishness]

LEYL HOREF, Iyyar 1917: strong nature poem of forest/countryside at night; whiteness magical; human figure a dark stain; snow make him regress to childhood naughtiness; song of the benot sheleg like Bialik's tsafirrim; nothing daemonic here; nature's benevolence

MARGANIYOT, LIFNEI SA'AR, NEGINAT ARTSI: spring nature poems, before the storm, the first blossoms. Artsi as reference to Palestine? Reveals in its rarity the lack of focus on EY

[Nature in America vs Europe and EY. In the shtetl, which is not a living memory for these writers, nature was too embroiled with the lives of the Jews and gentiles; in Palestine, nature is a problem: malaria, heat, thirst, sand, rocks. Here in America there is an Edenic condition that has no Jewish history and can therefore serve as a source of renewal and spirituality that is not contaminated or rendered ironic or used up.]

HAYAIL . . . 1918: Introduces a number of poems that are more dissonant re human happiness. Here about the stones in stream; nice closing couplet; SAFEK on depression; stars that lead astray; destructive nature of doubt; RIG'AEI DIMDUM: even standard-issue nature poem expresses a fading sense of the mystery of nature or the power to connect to hit; HAYYIM 1919: Thoughts about the death that all men must face; the fruitlessness of rebellion; AYAFIT. . . Ode to Pluto, god of the underworld, reminiscent of Bialik addressed the nighttime stars: mood of world weariness, fatigue unto death, futility, enemies

HELLAS (POEMA) n.d. Three long poems in the epic style: long lines, high subject, and ode-like addresses to divine beings; historiosophical project. Joins Tchernichovsky in expression of nausea/ennuie with Jewish civ and its invisible God. Fascination with the idea of antique Hellenic world of gods and nymphs and sprites in the world evoked in mythology; freshness, natures, sparkle, presence, sensuality, mystery. All this is vanquished first by the rise of biblical religion and its insistence on the sexless recondite god and then by the guilt-obsessed Christianity. The speaker stands before the love and splendor of Hellas overcome with weariness. SECOND POEM: Confession of envy for the polytheistic world of the Greeks; his is a deep wound of spirit. Memory of Shabbat morning in Ukraine when he told his mother that his deepest desire was to see the beautiful God! Mother's shock. Speaker's refrain: How can I sacrifice my life for a god I cannot love and see? Irony: Because god is not manifest, man's spirit is denuded (artila'it). To exist but not to live. . . POEM THREE: Truth as the supposed god of modern man.

metaphysical what p.b (37) God alive an address in (57)
soft crisis of faith, complaint, God fails in midlife

Arts poetica 10p
דגל נדב ד'ס 10

understand
separation
with understanding
nature in mystery
other (female) as mystery
landscape poems
... דגל נדב ד'ס
earliest

landscape
100 p.p. 27 13

landscape
Catholics
anti-urban
philos. statues still
fear of death
metaphysical
... דגל נדב ד'ס

to Plato
addresses to god in nature
uncertainty
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[Efros as historian of medieval Jewish philosophy by training and profession. Concept of being and time, change and perfection find their way into his poetry, though not as such. At the same time, the dialectic with the Judaic is by no means predictable. The rebellion is covert but palpable.]

PAHAD EREV (Asbury Park, 1920): Nature poems change in tone to become darker; nature is no longer mysterious and uplifting and instructive; night finds him wandering, his heart in silent trembling

163 INBAL KATAN: Interesting little dittie that seems to be all music and alliteration and coyness, but it really rather dark; DESERVES ATTENTION

ADAM: On the death/murder of Israel Freidlander

187 LU EHEYEH MIKHHOLKHA: 1924: If I was your paint brush, O Lord. . .
.Positive address to God as ultimate artist; nice poem; ending: God dipping his feet in red paint; his footsteps beautify the world. [rare word SHASHAR= red]

ODKHA: Another God poem; poem of thanks for life, etc. Simple, direct. Upbeat, no depressive; also remarkable for the absence, again, of Judaically entwined images; nonallusive.

BEGEVO'A AHAVAH + HEM NIFGESHU SHENIT: about separation, death of love, parting

BEIN NOFIM REHOKIM: Cycle of poems about sea voyage to EY via Egypt; one reads the cycle through a Hebrew Leumi lens, ie, with the expectation that this is a Hebraist making his way to the center of Hebrew aspiration at a time when the Yishuv was becoming a strong center of Heb literary culture and where Hebrew is spoken. Yet one is surprised to discover the "Zion" quotient in the cycle is slim to non-existent, yielding instead to reflections about travel and sea voyages and observations of the local color in the ports along the way. This cycle is chosen by Harshav.

YISRAEL EFRAT: MESHORER VEHOGEH, ed. Yitzhak Orpaz et al.
Machon Katz lesifrut ivrit, TAU, 1981

Main source of critical evaluations. Communal memorial volume, edited by TA-based committee (N. Govrin, Asa Kasher, Tavi Malachi, B.Y. Michli) and paid for by a raft of funds and special committee in US and Israel. Sense that E's career and its appreciation was helped by his longevity, his leadership positions in academic life, his non-controversial character, and the very fact of his aliyah later in life. His poetry changed and joined an audience, and he established ties with cultural figures who were forced to look back at his American years and the American material in order to take his measure.

MASHEHU AL ATSMI: 13-14: town of Austra; father not a rabbi but one of the most learned Jews in area; took in advanced students for board and instruction; called upon to mediate disputes among merchants; drew mizrahim and talit bags; story of how son went through the heder system in a short time so that the father had to educate him at home. Only boy among girls.

SOFRIM MERA' AYANIM ET ATSMAM, 15-18: **Edwin Arlington Robinson as object of great admiration, esp. around journal Poetry.** In answer to how he was attracted to narrative poems. Wigwags was written after E left Baltimore because his parents had both died during the same month. But the Maryland surrounding stayed with him. He wrote the poem over the course of one summer on the beach at a fishing/artists town, and then tore it up and wrote it again on the same dunes the next summer.

PRIZES: Statements from the juries of the Brenner, Bialik and Fichman prizes.

MENAHIM RIBALOW: Y.E.: SHIRIM, 37: Focus on Shirim 1911-1928. "If you wish to return, and not only for a moment, to those good days when poets dreamt happy dreams and, joy-filled and pleasant, poems were carried aloft like birds on the fields, then seek out Efros's poetry." Emphasis on the simple, light, and musical qualities of his verse. Even uses the English word "cute." His métier is the short lyric, and he goes astray when he tries to do something else, as in HELLAS, which is more Scheneour than himself (40). List, top p. 41, of his picks; pleasure in small flashes and pearls here and there. Limpid, transparent. His aspiration is to beauty and tranquility. 42

AVRAHAM EPSTEIN: IE : Analogy between Yaakov Kahan in his time and E in his: the bright youth who sang because he was beauty intoxicated and the joy of creation; nightingale of the world, world as magical sanctuary for him in which nymphs and pans play; sang about youthful dreams and the pang of love—the universal themes of world poetry. Did see the shadows of the twilight of the gods, yet he was able to glimpse the beauty in all things; knew doubt but doubt sang within him with the joy of certainty. "A poet-child who plays at the edge of the abyss and grabs hold of the rays of light escaping the

darkness, while he averts his gaze from the abyss itself" 43. Yet there is also the pull of sadness, esp. parting. ON TELKHI. On creation and God, ODKHA. Sees balladistic elements that are later developed. 46 Harsh words on the travel cycled at the end of the volume. Perhaps the colors and hues of the homeland are too stark of a poet used to more of a pastel palette; in any case, "his poetic contribution to 'the land of the fathers' is thin and troubling.

Indian epic. Critical assessment of the melodramatic nature of the plot and plot situations 48, which often lack reason and plausibility. Ex.: why Tom is assaulted by the townspeople, and his quietness. Especially the attributing of worldly wise thinking to aboriginal minds. Why the tribe should have taken Tom in and nursed him to health. Also, the fickle emotional loyalties of Tom, and the self-aware nobility of spirit of Lalari 50. Strength of the poem: dramatic exposition that excels in the simplicity of folk epic. The pathos and nobility of L's last days of pregnancy and her suffering and her great choice not to have to kill the white man. Very good descriptive: braves' war dance, nature descriptions.

ZAHAV 51-55: His dramatic abilities are more developed here; tighter integration of story and theme; epic aspiration to encompass and entire era; flaws are technical

DANIEL PERSKY: LEYOVEL EF 59: 1905-6 East Broadway and the Hebrew Gang: Persky, H'A Freidland and Efros.; Yovel youth group in Harlem, 1912-16, E at head. Diff from the rest in his seriousness about study: semihah from REITS, Columbia and then JTS; unlike them, he wrote academic works in English; 1916 move to Baltimore and founded BHTC until 1928; lectured at Hopkins; journal MEHAG LEHAG, first ma'asaf since SENUNIT and before MASSAD; from 1922 lecturer in heb lit and philos in U of Buffalo; 1934 head of Semitics Dept.; returned to NY to Heb at Hunter; also taught at Dropsie; 1954 called to head college in Tel Aviv [Ribalow: semichah at 18 studying in afternoons; attended NYU; simultaneous PhD and rabbinic studies at Columbia and JTS]

HILLEL BAVLI in MASSAD, ed. Bavli, #1, 1933, 151-163. Rev. of E's first collection. Emphasis on pure love of beauty, drawing from nature. Tragic tones are foreign to him; he is not engaged in a stormy rel. with God. Notice of ballad elements, and creative figurative language. Confirmation of the happy, childlike poet take of E.

EPHRAIM LISSITZKY, rev. of VIGVAMIM SHOTKIM in MASSA #2, 1936, 334-343. Two kind of epic: realistic and mythic. In later it is only the inner truth of myth and legend that needs to be true; outer situations do not have to be described logically. But E is writing a realistic epic, and judge on those grounds there is a lot that is deficient in V, pace Epstein. Plot absurdities. Also, linguistic registers off: overly abstract thoughts in mouths of primitive,

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and language of talmudic disputation too; also, songs of the Indians are translated literally rather than being domesticated into Hebrew. Nonetheless, confirmation of the poems value. The tragic emotions are movingly portrayed; gift for epic concision; gift for aphoristic expression; landscape descriptions.

[E's two epics were the vehicles through which E succeeded in breaking out of the sensitive lyric enclosure he had placed himself in; true, the epic form prompted him to think about large human matters and to meditate on and portray great tragic suffering and renunciation, matters that verge on melodrama in non-epic forms. Yet it is not only a matter of the dictates of genre but also a metaphysical breakthrough to an empathic understanding of another range of human experience.]