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INTROSPECTIVISM

[Manifesto of 1919]

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With this collection,¹ we intend to launch a particular trend in Yiddish poetry which has recently emerged in the works of a group of Yiddish poets. We have chosen to call it the *Introspective Movement*, a name that indicates a whole range of individual character and nuance.

We know that introspective poems as such are nothing new. In all ages, poets have occasionally written introspectively; that is, they looked *into themselves*² and created poetry drawn from their own soul* and from the world as reflected in it. There are introspective poems in modern Yiddish poetry as well, even though the poets did not use this term.

The difference, however, between us and those other poets, both Yiddish and non-Yiddish, ancient and modern, is that we are dedicated to deepening, developing, and expanding the introspective method.

The world exists and we are part of it. But for us, the world exists only as it is mirrored in us, as it touches *us*. The world is a nonexistent category, a lie, if it is not related to us. It becomes an actuality only *in and through* us.

This general philosophical principle is the foundation of our trend. We will try to develop it in the language of poetry.

Poetry is not only feeling and perception but also, and perhaps primarily, the art of expressing feelings and perceptions adequately. It is not enough to say that all phenomena exist to the extent that they enter into an organic relation with us. The poet's major concern is to express this organic relation in an introspective and fully individual manner.

In an introspective manner means that the poet must really listen to his inner voice, observe his internal panorama—kaleidoscopic, contradictory, unclear or confused as it may be. From these sources, he must create poetry which is the result

* The Yiddish word *zel*, "soul," is equivalent to Freud's *Seele* and can be translated as *psyche*.

1. This Introspectivist manifesto, written in 1919, was published as the opening of *In Zikh: A Collection of Introspective Poems*. Max N. Maisel, New York, 1920.

2. In the original: "*In zikh*," which gave the name to the journal and the movement, Inzikhism.

of both the fusion of the poet's soul with the phenomenon he expresses and the individual image, or cluster of images, that he sees *within himself* at that moment.

What does take place in the poet's psyche under the impression or impact of any phenomenon?

In the language of our local poets, of the "Young Generation" (*Di Yunge*),³ this creates a *mood*. According to them, it is the poet's task to express or convey this mood. How? In a concentrated and well-rounded form. Concentration and well-roundedness are seen as the necessary conditions, or presuppositions, that allow the poet's mood to attain universal or, in more traditional terms, *eternal*, value.

But this method, though sufficient to create poetic vignettes or artful arabesques, is essentially neither sufficient nor true. From our point of view, this method is a *lie*.

Why?

Because the mood and the poem that emerge from this conception and this method must inevitably result in something cut-off, isolated, something which does not really correspond to life and truth.

At best, such poems are embellishments and ornaments. At worst, they ring false, because the impression or the impact of any phenomenon on the poet's soul does not result in an isolated, polished, well-rounded, and concentrated mood. What emerges is more complex, intertwined with a whole galaxy of other "moods," of other feelings and perceptions. In the final analysis, concentration and well-roundedness of poetry symbolize the lie, the awesome contradiction between literature and life, between all of art and life.

We Introspectivists want first of all to present life—the true, the sincere, and the precise—as it is mirrored in *ourselves*, as it merges with us.

The human psyche is an awesome labyrinth. Thousands of beings dwell there. The inhabitants are the various facets of the individual's present self on the one hand and fragments of his inherited self on the other. If we believe that every individual has already lived somewhere in one incarnation or another—and this belief is often vividly sensed by each of us—then the number of inhabitants in the labyrinth of the human psyche is even higher.

This is the real *life* of a human being. In our age of the big metropolis and enormous variety in all domains, this life becomes a thousandfold more complicated and entangled. We Introspectivists feel the need to convey and express it.

In what form and shape does this complexity of moods appear?

In the shape of association and suggestion. For us, these two elements are also the most important methods of poetic expression.

Of course, poets of all times have used suggestion and association. The pre-Raphaelite Rossetti and the later Swinburne often used these elements in their work. Yet we want to make association and suggestion the poet's major tools because it seems to us that they are best suited to express the complex feelings and perceptions of a contemporary person.

So much about the introspective method. As for *individual* manner, it is perhaps even more important.

3. An Impressionist, cosmopolitan trend that dominated Yiddish American poetry from 1907 to

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Because we perceive the world egocentrically and because we think that this is the most natural and therefore *the truest and most human* mode of perception, we think that the poem of every poet must first of all be *his own* poem. In other words, the poet must in every case give us what he himself sees and as he sees it.

Essentially, this should be self-evident as a prerequisite for any poetry. It should be but is not.

Indeed, most poems, not just Yiddish ones but the majority of non-Yiddish ones as well, lack the full individuality of the poet and hence of the poem, too. In most poems, the poet does not delve deeply enough to see what appears in his own psyche. Perhaps the fault lies with language, which generally works in our lives as a misleading and deceiving category. Be that as it may, we think that, in the great majority of all poetry, the poet is not sufficiently individual. He employs too many stock images and ready-made materials. When the poet, or any person, looks at a sunset, he may see the strangest things which, ostensibly, have perhaps no relation to the sunset. The image reflected in his psyche is rather a series of far-reaching associations moving away from what his eye sees, a chain of suggestions evoked by the sunset. *This*, the series of associations and the chain of suggestions, constitutes *truth*, is life, much as an illusion is often more real than the cluster of external appearances we call life. Most poets, however, will not even focus on what occurs inside themselves while they are watching a sunset but will paint it, search for colors, describe the details, etc. If, in addition, they are subjectively attuned, they will perhaps dip their brush into a drop of subjectivity, into a patch of color of their selves, make a comparison with their own lives, express some wisdom about life in general, and the poem is done.

For us, such a poem is not true, is a cliché. We insist that the poet should give us the authentic image that he sees in himself and give it in such a form as only he and no one else can see it.

If such a poem then becomes grist for the mill of Freudian theory, if it provides traces of something morbid or sick in the poet, we do not mind. Art is ultimately redemption, even if it is an illusory redemption or a redemption *through* illusion. And no redemption is possible in any other way but through oneself, through an internal personal concentration. Only a truly individual poem can be a means of self-redemption.

Both the introspectivity of a poem and its individuality must use suggestion and association in order to reach full expression. Now, the individuality of the poem has a lot to do with what is generally known as *form*.

In fact, form and content are the same. A poem that can be rewritten in another form is neither a poem nor poetry. They cannot be separated from one another. To speak of form and content separately is to succumb to the influence of a linguistic fallacy. And if we speak of form as a separate concept, it is merely for the sake of convenience, as is the case with many other linguistic fallacies.

The generally known aspect of form is *rhythm*. Every poem must have rhythm. Rhythm is the mystery of life; art which is no more than an expression of life obviously must also have rhythm. But what kind of rhythm must a poem have?

There is only one answer: it must have the only possible and the only imaginable rhythm. Each poem must have its *individual rhythm*. By this we mean that the rhythm of the poem must fit entirely this particular poem. One poem cannot have the same rhythm as any other poem. Every poem is, in fact, unique.

And if we see, in certain poets, how the most divergent poems are similar in their rhythm, this in itself is the best sign of their lack of productivity and creativity, and also of their lack of genuine sincerity.

We cannot understand how it is possible for a real poet to write one poem about the subway, another about the sand at the seashore in summer, and a third about his love for a girl—all in the same rhythm, in the same "beat." Two of the three poems are certainly false. But, more certainly, all three are false, because if a poet can write three poems in the same rhythm, this is proof in itself that he does not listen to the music in his own soul, that he does not see anything or hear anything with his own eyes and ears.

We demand individual rhythm because only thus can the truth that we seek and want to express be revealed.

This leads us to the question which has recently stirred the consciousness of poets in all languages and not least that of Yiddish poets, the question of *free verse*.

Free verse is not imperative for introspective poets. It is possible to have introspective poems in regular meter. Though regular meter may often appear as a hindrance, a straitjacket, free verse in itself is not enough. We Introspectivists believe that free verse is best suited to the individuality of the rhythm and of the poem as a whole; and for *that* rather than for any other reason, we prefer it to other verse forms.

Hence it is the greatest mistake, even ignorance, to claim (as many do) that it is easier to write free verse than to write in measured meters. If comparison here makes sense at all, the opposite is true. It is easier to write in regular and conventional meters because, after some experience, one acquires the knack and the poem "writes itself." But free verse, intended primarily for individual rhythm, demands an intense effort, a genuine sounding of the inner depths. Therefore free verse more easily betrays the non-poet, revealing the internal vacuum, if that is what is at stake.

When non-poets take on free verse, their situation is no easier than when they wrote iambs, trochees, or anapests. On the contrary, while in the latter case they can perhaps produce a certain musicality and thus create the impression that they are writing poetry, in the former case they are unproductive from the first or second moment, and their failure is exposed.

Only for the real poet is free verse a new, powerful means of expression, a new, wide world full of unexplored territories. For the non-poet, however, free verse is nothing but a mousetrap into which he falls in his first or second line. Let the non-poets beware of it!

We emphasize again that we are not against regular meters as such. Every true poet, Introspectivist or not, may sometimes feel that only in a regular rhythm, in a certain "canonical" meter, can he create a particular poem. It is more correct to say (for poets, it is a truism) that, inside every poet, including Introspectivists, *a certain poem will often write itself* in a regular meter. Then he does not fight it. Then he understands that it had to be like this, that in *this* case, this is the truth, this the individual rhythm.

If we prefer free verse, it is only for that reason. In general, we think that regular meter, the rhythm of frequently repeated beats, adapted itself perhaps to an earlier kind of life before the rise of the big city with its machines, its turmoil, and its accelerated, irregular tempo. That life was quiet and flowed tranquilly—in a regular rhythm, in fact—in beats repeated in short, frequent intervals.

Just as contemporary life created new clothing, new dwellings, new color combinations, and new sound combinations, so one needs to create a new art and new and different rhythms. We believe that free verse is best suited for the creation of such new rhythms. It is like fine, yielding plaster in which the inner image of the poet can find its most precise and fullest realization.

For the same reason, we are not against rhyme. Rhyme has its own charm and value. This is natural. The spirit of creative poets has used it for thousands of years as one of its poetic devices. This in itself is proof enough of its value. We say merely that rhyme is *not* a must. It often sounds forced or leads us on like a delusive, fleeting light. In such cases, rhyme is harmful and best avoided. Rhyme is good only when it is well-placed, when it is woven naturally into the verse. It is unnecessary to seek it, to make an effort to have rhyme at any cost, especially in our time when there is no need to learn poems by heart, when traveling poets do not have to recite their poems to amuse an ignorant or unpoetic audience.

Whenever a poet does feel the call of a wandering troubadour to recite his poems for a more primitive audience, as in the case of the American poet, Vachel Lindsay, the rhyme is well-placed and is good.

As with regular and irregular rhythm, many tend to assume mistakenly that writing without rhyme is easier than with rhyme. This is false. One can easily learn to make rhymes. And while one can sometimes cover with rhyme a trivial mood, which thus acquires the pretension to poetry, such a camouflage has no place in a rhymeless poem. There, one *must* be a genuine poet and a genuine creator. If not, the rhymeless poem will betray it much faster and easier than a rhymed one will.

The music of a poem—no doubt a desideratum—does not depend on rhyme. Rhyme is merely one element of its music, and the least important one at that. The music of a poem must also be purely individual and can be attained without rhymes, which necessarily produce a certain stereotype: after all, rhymes are limited in quantity and quality.

The *individual* sound combination is really necessary; indeed, because of our Introspectivism, we believe it to be unusually important. Not only do we not deny this element in poetry but we try to give it a new impetus, precisely through the individuality of the poem.

The musical and sound aspect of the Yiddish language has been generally neglected by most of our poets. Alliteration as a poetic device has remained almost untouched, although it is strongly represented in our language. As far as we can, we will try to remedy this neglect.

Individuality is everything and introspection is everything—this is what we seek, this is what we want to achieve.

When a certain phenomenon appears to a poet in the shape of colors; when an association carries him away to the shores of the Ganges or to Japan; when a suggestion whispers to him of something nebulous, something lurking in a fragment of his previous incarnation or of his hereditary self—all these are the roads and

the labyrinths of his psyche. He must tread them because they are *his*, and only through the authentic, inner, true, *introspective* "I" lies the path that leads to creation and redemption.

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Once this is accepted, it is self-evident that everything is an object for poetry, that for the poet there is no ugly or beautiful, no good or bad, no high or low. Everything is of equal value for the poet if it appears *inside* him, and everything is simply a stage to his internal redemption.

For us, then, the senseless and unproductive question of whether a poet "should" write on national or social topics or merely on personal ones does not arise. For us, everything is "personal." Wars and revolutions, Jewish pogroms and the workers' movement, Protestantism and Buddha, the Yiddish school and the Cross, the mayoral elections and a ban on our language—all these may concern us or not, just as a blond woman and our own unrest may or may not concern us. If it does concern us, we write poetry; if it does not, we keep quiet. In either case, we write about ourselves because all these exist only insofar as they are in us, insofar as they are perceived *introspectively*.

For the same reason, we do not recognize the difference between "poetry of the heart" and "poetry of the head," two meaningless phrases that belong to the same category of linguistic fallacies mentioned above. If the first phrase implies unconscious creativity and the second *conscious creativity*, then we say that neither we nor anybody else knows the boundary between conscious and unconscious. Certain aspects of the creative process are always conscious and cannot be otherwise. There is no tragedy in that. The modern poet is not, cannot, and should not be that naive stargazer who knows nothing but his little song, who understands nothing that goes on in the world, who has no attitude to life, its problems and events, who cannot even write a line about anything but his little mood, tapped out in iambs and trochees. The contemporary poet is a human being like other human beings and must be an intelligent, conscious person. As a poet, this is what is required of him: to see and feel, know and comprehend, and to see with his own eyes and be capable of expressing the seen, felt, and understood in his own internally true, introspectively sincere manner.

If conscious poetry means the expression of underlying thought in poetry, we see nothing wrong in that, either. A poet need not and must not be spiritually mute. A poet's *thought* is not a drawback but a great advantage. As a poet, as an artist, he must only be capable of expressing his thought in a proper form, of creating from it a work of art. And this depends on just one condition: that the thought should be his own, that it should be the true result of the fusion of his soul and life; and that he should express it in that form, in those very images, in the same true colors and tones as they take shape inside him, as they emerge and permeate him in the labyrinth of his soul. There is no boundary between "feeling" and "thought" in contemporary man or in the contemporary poet. Both are expressions of the same "I"; they are so closely intertwined that it is absurd to wish to separate them.

We make no distinction between intellectual poetry and poetry of feeling. We know of only one distinction: that between authenticity and falsehood, between

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true individuality and cliché. In the first case, poetry is born; in the second—"mood-laden" as it may be—merely licorice, vignettes, and false tones.

Our relationship to "Jewishness," too, becomes obvious from our general poetical credo.

We are "Jewish poets" simply because we are Jews and write in Yiddish.⁴ No matter what a Yiddish poet writes in Yiddish, it is ipso facto Jewish. One does not need any particular "Jewish themes." A Jew will write about an Indian fertility temple and Japanese Shinto shrines as a Jew. A Jewish poet will be Jewish when he writes poetry about "vive la France," about the Golden Calf, about gratitude to a Christian woman for a kind word, about roses that turn black, about a courier of an old prince, or about the calm that comes only with sleep. It is not the poet's task to seek and show his Jewishness. Whoever is interested in this endeavor is welcome to it, and whoever looks for Jewishness in Yiddish poets will find it.

In two things we are explicitly Jewish, through and through: in our relationship to the Yiddish language in general, and to Yiddish as a poetic instrument.

We believe in Yiddish. We love Yiddish. We do not hesitate to say that he who has a negative relation to the Yiddish language, or who merely looks down on it, cannot be a Yiddish poet. He who mocks Yiddish, who complains that Yiddish is a poor and shabby language, he who is merely indifferent to Yiddish, does not belong to the high category of Yiddish poets. To be a Yiddish poet is a high status, an achievement, and it is unimaginable that a person creating in Yiddish should spit in the well of his creation. Such a person is a petty human being and an even pettier poet.

As to Yiddish as a language instrument, we think that our language is now beautiful and rich enough for the most profound poetry. All the high achievements of poetry—the highest—are possible in Yiddish. Only a poor poet can complain of the poverty of the Yiddish language. The real poet knows the richness of our language and lacks nothing, can lack nothing.

Poetry is, to a very high degree, the art of language—a principle that is too often forgotten—and Yiddish poetry is the art of the Yiddish language, which is merely a part of the general European-American culture. Yiddish is now rich enough, independent enough to afford to enrich its vocabulary from the treasures of her sister languages. That is why we are not afraid to borrow words from the sister languages, words to cover newly developed concepts, broadened feelings and thoughts. Such words are also *our* words. We have the same right to them as does any other language, any other poetry, because—to repeat—Yiddish poetry is merely a branch, a particular stream in the whole contemporary poetry of the world.

We regard Yiddish as a fully mature, ripe, independent, particular, and unique language. We maintain that Yiddish separated long ago not only from her mother—German—but also from her father—Hebrew. Everything that ties Yiddish to Hebrew in an artificial and enforced way is superfluous, an offence to the language in which we create. Spelling certain words in Yiddish differently from other words because of their Hebrew etymology is false and anachronistic.⁵ All words in Yiddish

4. In Yiddish, the same word, *Yiddish*, means both "Yiddish" and "Jewish."

5. Yiddish, though using the Hebrew alphabet, employs a European-type, close-to-phonetic spelling for words of any origin except Hebrew; the latter preserve their Hebrew, vowelless spelling.

are equal, it is high time to clean out the white basting of Hebrew spelling from certain Yiddish words.

We are not enemies of Hebrew. For us Yiddish poets, there is absolutely no language question.⁶ For us, Hebrew is only a foreign language, while Yiddish is *our* language. We cannot forget, however, that Hebrew and Hebraism have kept on disturbing the natural development of the Yiddish word and of Yiddish poetry. We know that, if not for the Hebraism of the Haskalah movement,⁷ which later branched out into Zionist Hebraism on the one hand and assimilationist anti-Yiddishism on the other, Yiddish poetry would stand on a much higher level than it does today. We know that if Yiddish poetry had developed normally and naturally from the poet Shloyme Etinger⁸ to now, if the natural course had not been interrupted by Hebraism and the Hebraists, there could be no language problem for anyone; it would perhaps never have arisen. The rich Yiddish literature would have nipped it in the bud.

We think, therefore, that one must finally have the courage to sever any tie between our language and any other foreign language. A time comes when a son must break away altogether from his father and set up his own tent. The last vestige of Hebrew in Yiddish is the Hebrew spelling of certain words. This must be abolished. As poets rather than propagandists, we solve the problem first of all for ourselves. We shall spell all Yiddish words equally, with no respect for their pedigree.

These are our views, these are our poetic aspirations in the various realms that must concern a poet in general and a Yiddish poet in particular.

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Our emergence is not intended as a struggle against anybody or as an attempt to annihilate anyone. We simply want to develop ourselves and take our own road, which is, for us, the truest road.

We come at the right time, at a time when Yiddish poetry is mature and independent enough to bear separate trends and promote differentiation and diversity, instead of straying hesitantly in one herd.

By saying that we come at the right time we admit that everything that has come before us was also at its right time.

Mikhl Gordon, Shimon Frug, Morris Rosenfeld, Avrom Reyzin, A. Liessin, H. Royzenblat—they are all good in their own time, but only *in* their own time.⁹ All that was necessary for the development of Yiddish poetry, for its gradual progress

6. An allusion to "the War of Languages" raging at the beginning of the twentieth century, in which Hebrew and Yiddish competed for the title of "the" national language that would dominate Jewish education and culture.

7. The movement of Enlightenment in European Jewish culture, 1780–1880, promoting aesthetic ideals of German or Russian culture, despising Yiddish as a "jargon" and preferring German or Hebrew with Mendelssohn or, with the poet I. L. Gordon, Russian or Hebrew to the language of the masses.

8. One of the few Yiddish poets of the Haskalah, Etinger (1799–1855) was a learned writer who created fine poetry not published in his lifetime.

9. Mikhl Gordon (1823–1890) was a poet of the Haskalah in Lithuania; Shimon Frug (1860–1916), a famous poet in Russian and Yiddish, introduced meters in Yiddish poetry; Morris

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was contributed by them and thus made our appearance possible. To this extent, we do not fight against them, we do not try to shout them down. On the contrary, we express our gratitude for their role in our emergence.

Only one representative of the older Yiddish poets has crossed the boundary of his time and is, for us, not merely a precursor but a fellow poet. This is *Yehoash*.¹⁰ In our view, he is the most important figure in all of Yiddish poetry today. He is a poet who does not stop searching, who has the courage and the talent—we do not know which is more important or more beautiful and greater—to sense at the very zenith of his creativity that this is perhaps not the way and to depart from the well-known path of scanned iambs and trochees to write in new forms and in different modes. Perhaps he should have been the initiator of a new trend in Yiddish poetry and perhaps also, at least in part, of our trend. He did not do this for understandable reasons, and we would like to note that we regard him as one who is close to us.

The development of a new group of Yiddish poets would not have been possible without certain intermediate steps. Art, like life, does not leap but develops gradually. On those intermediate steps, we find the so-called *Yunge* (the Young Generation).

Aynhorn, Menakhem, Mani Leyb, Zisho Landoy, Rolnik, Slonim, Schwartz, Ayzland, M. L. Halpern, B. Lapin—they are all good and good in their time.¹¹ They have accomplishments, and not only do we not deny that but we understand and readily admit that only because of their work was a further development of Yiddish poetry possible, of which the Introspective trend is an expression.

All these poets led Yiddish poetry out onto a broader road. They brought Yiddish poetry, which was strongly akin to the verse of wedding jesters and rhymesters,¹² closer to art and genuine poetry. In the case of poets like Rolnik or Mani Leyb, one could say that they made Yiddish poetry deeper, though as to the latter, it would be more correct to say finer. Slonim has the accomplishment of showing a sensibility for rhythm and, in part, also for individual rhythm.

The major contribution of the Young Generation, however, is with respect to language. They introduced a certain Europeanism into the language, a greater artistic authenticity, and raised the level of a Yiddish poem. They canceled Peretz's "my song would have sounded differently if I sang for Goyim in Goyish."¹³

Rosenfeld (1862–1923), was a major "sweat-shop poet" in America; and Avrom Reyzin (Abraham Reisin; 1876–1933), A. Liessin (1872–1938), and H. Royzenblat (1879–1956) were major American Yiddish poets at the beginning of the twentieth century.

10. Yehoash (1872–1927), born in Russia, published most of his books in America. He is famous for his classical translation of the Bible into Yiddish.

11. David Aynhorn (Einhorn; 1886–1973), Menakhem (later: M. Boreysho; 1888–1949), Mani Leyb (Leib; 1883–1953), Zisho Landoy (Zishe Landau; 1889–1937), J. Rolnik (Rolnick; 1879–1955), J. Slonim (1885–1944), I. J. Schwartz (1885–1971), R. Ayzland (Iceland; 1884–1955), M.-L. Halpern (1886–1932), and B. Lapin (1889–1952) were American Yiddish poets of or close to the Young Generation. Most of them continued writing poetry simultaneously with the Introspectivists.

12. An allusion to the poetry of the *Bakhonim*, wedding jesters who extemporated rhymed verse in Yiddish ranging from coarse comedy to national and topical themes. An example is the popular poet Eliokum Zunser (1836–1913), who was active in Russia and America.

13. I. L. Peretz (1852–1915), one of the three Yiddish "Classics," expressed in these lines from the opening of the long poem, "Monish," the inferiority complex of his time about the poverty of the "Jargon," i.e., Yiddish.

There it remained, however. As for content, even the deepest of them stayed on the surface and the finest hit a wall. With all his sensibility for rhythm, Slonim stopped where he should have, and perhaps could have, started. As for language, there too they came to a dead end. The refreshing, enriching, and refined became ossified and degenerated into a fruitless wasteland.

As with the older writers, here too there is an exception—namely, H. Leyvik.¹⁴

Leyvik is only in part one of the Young Generation. From the first, he introduced so much that is individual—and even profound—that there can be no talk of his stopping, of his having already completed his poetic mission.

We regard him, too, as being close to us.

The Young Generation, as a whole, however—as a group—belong only to their own time. If one wants to characterize their contribution, which we consider finished, it is the contribution of an interim stage, of a bridge to a new poetry—a poetry more independent, courageous, profound, and authentic both in content and in form, to use an old formulation.

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We would like to add a few comments on the mode of writing, points which can be found in most modern trends, such as, for example, in the American Imagists. We will also remark on the way in which this collection, which we consider the first in a series, was compiled.

Since we see our trend as an expression of a movement toward life, toward life as it is reflected in us—which is real life—we are in favor of making the language of our poems as close as possible to the spoken language in its structure and flow. We therefore abolish any possibility of "inversion," the contortion of the natural sentence structure for the sake of rhythm and rhyme. One cannot and under no circumstances should say "bird thou never wert" or "but not your heart away"¹⁵ or even worse barbarisms. One must write, "you never were a bird," "don't give your heart away," whether there is a rhyme or not, whether it scans or not.

We are against using expressions for their ostensible beauty. There can be no beauty without profound relationship and without authentic meaning.

We strive to avoid banal similes, epithets, and other figurative expressions. Their very banality makes them a lie and we seek, first of all, introspective honesty and individuality.

We try to avoid superfluous adjectives altogether, which add nothing and are merely an unnecessary burden. "Far distance" or "blue distance" or "snowing snow" do not make the distance or the snow different. Instead, it is always better to have an authentic, individual image.

It is always better to use the right word for the corresponding concept, even if it is not "beautiful" according to popular aesthetics. A word in the right place is always beautiful. If anyone has to look it up in the dictionary, this is none of the poet's business.

14. See his poetry in this volume.

15. Here, English examples: the *Shallan* and *Emmanan* in the Yiddish above mentioned.

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