



### *Michel Licht*

**MICHEL** Licht, who emigrated to the United States from Russia in 1913, at the age of twenty, held a unique position among the Yiddish poets in this country. He followed the American avant-garde literary movement of the Twenties with a passionate interest, attempting to incorporate some of its innovations into Yiddish writing. His numerous translations from other literatures into the Yiddish included poems of Thomas Stearns Eliot and Marianne Craig Moore, and James Branch Cabell's novel *Jurgen*. Michel Licht also wrote in English, and the poem printed here is his own translation of one of his best Yiddish sentimental lyrics written in the folk manner.

Following her husband's death in 1953, Mrs. Licht, an accomplished artist and sculptress in her own right, donated to Syracuse University a rich portion of Michel Licht's extensive library of books, music, original letters and manuscripts, and files of avant-garde periodicals and publications. See *The Courier*, No. 20. Recently Mrs. Licht supplemented her gift by presenting a number of the original engraved plates used in the production of some of her husband's publications.



## *On a Hasidic Theme*

By MICHEL LICHT

For my Aunt Pesye-Chana and my Uncle Shaye-Yidl

THE Rebbe Reb Dovidl dwelt in Talne,  
Now he abides in Rachmistrivke.  
Currently I reside in New York  
Although I hail from Moskalivke.  
It's quite a distance from New York to Talne  
'Twi'xt the Rebbe and me—a remoteness more immense:  
Whilst I revel in profane dancing and singing  
*He* rejoices in God with ritual chant and dance.  
And as the devout retinue at Talne  
Bewails his leaving for Rachmistrivke  
So too bemoan my departure for New York  
My desolate kin in Moskalivke.  
And the pining of kinsfolk, the lament of Hasidim,  
The longing of Talne and Moskalivke,  
Redeems my vain New York existence,  
Exults Reb Dovidl in Rachmistrivke.  
And though it were blasphemous to compare  
Our Fates' diversely chartered courses,  
The mere change of abodes has caused the commingling  
Of longing and hope at Life's very sources.  
And thus are in sweet sorrow joined  
The heartbeats 'tween New York and Moskalivke  
As the tender anguish of Talne is entwined with  
The jubilant spirit of Rachmistrivke.



Evelyn M. Licht's Illuminated Manuscript (India ink and watercolors) of her husband's poem "On a Hasidic Theme." From the Original in the Licht Collection at Syracuse University Library.



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Dear Mr. Monaghan:

Needless to say, I'll be delighted to see you. Unfortunately, your letter reaches me just as I am leaving for Baltimore, my home. I have been somewhat rocky of late and am going down there for some medical attention. But I shall be back in New York off and on all summer and I'll certainly be very glad to see you when you are here. Will you please give me notice of it a week or so in advance?

My acquaintance with Bierce was confined to the last few years of his life and so I have very little of interest to tell about him. But such as it is, it is at your disposal.

Sincerely yours,

A Letter from H. L. Mencken

To Dr. Frank Monaghan, 29 February 1928, who was then collecting material about the American author, Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914?). From the Bierce Papers recently presented by Dr. Monaghan to Syracuse University Library.