

February 21, 1983

Yesterday was Tehila's <sup>5<sup>th</sup></sup> birthday, and her request was a gingerbread cake-- the witch's house from Hansel and Gretel. All the fear is confectioned into chocolate cream mortar and biscuit windows. "There are no witches," Tehila admitted the other day, preparing to leave babyhood behind--"but there are thieves..."

There are no witches. But there are people who hate and they have hand grenades.

Emil has a daughter who will be five next year. No gingerbread houses for her, no father to assure her that fairytales are fiction and that she will awake some day from her nightmare. He'll never light another candle for the coming year. It is dark in the grave. And that darkness has seeped into our lives. I spend my days and nights searching for the phrase or deed which will illuminate our passage along this treacherous and unfamiliar ground. Standing in the wet soil near Emil's grave at the funeral, I waited for the words of *אין אנו כבוד* to bring the usual consolation, to begin to bind the wounds like phylacteries on a broken arm. But when the diggers had done with their spade-work and the hireling from Hevra Kadisha began, in the tired monotonic wail of one who had already intoned the words a dozen times that day, I felt betrayed again. It was so inappropriate. There are no rituals or rhetoric adequate to this occasion, no formulaic responses to ease one into acceptance.

The mud from Emil's grave is still on my shoes. I fear that I am sinking, that we are all sinking into a quagmire so deep that there will be no resurfacing.

We are so used to having our bags checked whenever we enter public places that most people did not ponder the perverse significance of such security measures at the

memorial held on the seventh day after Emil's death. Who is the enemy now? I find myself staring into faces in the street, as if to locate the mutant gene that has passed through the people and killed our innocence, for all the generations to come. In Emil's face, now <sup>now</sup> blazoned on the front pages of the world's newspapers, was the visage of a possible future for humanistic Zionism. Horribly mutilated, it lies in the cold, wet ground. The tragic symbolism of his death haunts us relentlessly. He was Yaron's most promising student, and his last seminar paper, submitted just two weeks ago, lies still on Yaron's desk. His <sup>2/1/73</sup> --the ironies, like some red mark of fate, underscoring every paragraph-- an academic analysis of the choice between words and swords in democratic culture. The ink was scarcely dry before his blood was spilled on the steps of the Prime Minister's office.

Sidra Ezrahi

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