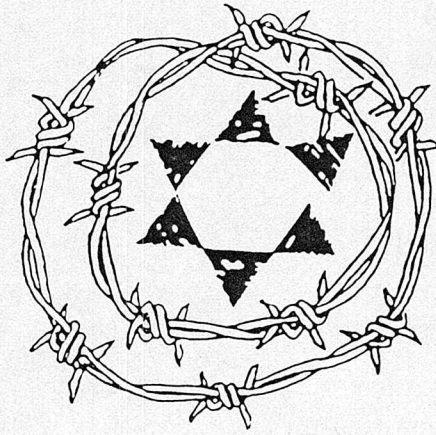


FAMILY PICTURES:

A PERSONAL MEMORIAL TO THE MURDERED JEWS OF EUROPE



- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Kavvanah/Introduction  | David G. Roskies  |
| 2. Reminiscence   | Helen Nakdimen    |
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Temple Ansche Chesed

April 17, 1985

## Family photos

conjured up a world of domesticity

a world where memories are private

" " " moments of tranquility can be carefully nurtured  
where the rites of passage - births, weddings, reunions - can be <sup>openly</sup> celebrated  
where everything occurs in due course

But to bring in family photos in the context of the Holocaust  
is to throw/all of these norms into question

Photographs were the 1st things they destroyed (in Auschwitz)  
anything that tied you to the world you left behind -  
talmudim, siddurim, books, diaries, letters -  
~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> immediately burned in a huge pile.

And if you managed to survive (on the Aryan side)  
the last thing you'd keep <sup>with</sup> you/were photos of your Jewish-looking  
parents / grandparents

So in many ways, to fashion a commemoration around  
the photos of those who perished  
is to create a vehicle that is inherently flawed:

① What of those who survived with no photos at all?

② Or those who, for reasons of piety, had never allowed themselves to be  
photographed?

③ or those who were able to retrieve only random photos, gleaned from relatives  
who managed to get out of Europe in time?

A photo in this context is not a neutral artifact  
its very existence is a story, an accident

Yet, for all their shortcomings, family photos are essential  
especially on account of the other, terrible photos, which they  
alone can counteract

"terrible"

By ~~this~~ I mean / the all-too-familiar ATROCITY PICTURES

- of wrpses heaped in a pile
- of Musselmen, the walking dead
- of naked ~~men~~ <sup>Jews</sup> covering their genitals
- of hollow-eyed <sup>deoperated</sup> slave laborers
- of ~~deoperated~~ women clutching their children on the way to the gas

Is this the way we would have wanted to be remembered?  
in our moment of uttermost degradation?

Are these the pictures we would want to be made into posters and museum exhibits?

Of course, ~~one~~ <sup>we</sup> mustn't forget the unspeakable cruelty, the ~~sheer~~ systematic thoroughness of this monstrous evil

But ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> mustn't reduce the dead still further into a horrible ~~unorganized~~ <sup>ed.</sup> dehumanization mass of bodies

Once upon a time they lived!

And so surely as we live, we must recall their lives as well as the manner of their death!

- 1) As they died monymously - we must remember them by name
- 2) " " " in the millions - " " " one-by-one
- 3) As their world died with them - we must link them up with ~~to~~ their past & with their future

It is not a task limited to survivors alone or even to their children  
though <sup>it happens that</sup> most of us participating this evening have personal ties to the faces on the screen

Memory can be a vicarious death, a burden assumed by anyone who has eyes / ears / mouth

Tonight, we do something modest, but something new  
we ~~show~~ our family pictures outside of the family  
we sit together to vivify the dead even as we try to domesticate the horror  
~~we bring together relatives who were never fated to meet~~  
we begin to build a monument of personal memories that no force on earth will ever be able to destroy

Dear David, Thank you for the inspiration.

My aunt Dvorah/Dora is the woman in the lower right hand corner: Dveiri as she was affectionately called by the family. This picture is all that I have of her - my aunt Dveiri whom everyone adored - as I might well have myself had the Nazis not taken her from us.

My father Chotzkel - in the upper left-hand corner - told me that as a bachelor he would often go stay at his sister Dveiri's house in Bialostock, so he could hang out in the big city. "She was everyone's favorite," he said. "She was so beautiful."

Dvorah left her hometown in Poland, Amdur, to live in the big city, Bialostock, with <sup>her</sup> husband, Moshe Nakdimen - who was also her cousin. They were struggling to make a go of their bakery. They had two young children - a boy and a girl.

Similarly, I left my hometown of Seattle to come to New York where I met my husband. We have a child and struggle to make a life together. I identify with Dvorah; I am living those same beginnings - marriage, work, young children. She and her family died in the midst of them.

Her brothers all said she was very, very beautiful. I believe they meant more than external beauty. They were talking of the beauty of her soul as well as her body. Her brother, my uncle Meir, said that she was the child most like their father, Yechiel Nakdimen. That she was "beautiful," "kind," "loving," "the favorite" was as nothing next to this remark.

My grandfather, Yechiel, was adored by all of his children. My father spoke often and reverently of him. "He was a god to us." my uncle Meir told me. "We worshipped our father." To say this about Dveiri was his highest compliment:

In her was repositied the family gold. Thus, the end for her and of her and the other family members was the explosion of the vault - the violent plundering of an ancient family treasure. The fragments of that explosion were flung far and wide - not just physically to America - Seattle, Washington, London, Kentucky, Pennington Gap, Virginia, Miami Beach, Florida, Puerto Rico - but emotionally and spiritually as well.

In the upper right-hand corner is her sister, my aunt Rachel, now living in Atlanta, Georgia. In the lower left-hand corner is her youngest brother, my uncle Berle who died in his forties in Puerto Rico. Dvorah is <sup>in</sup> lower right with one of her children.

I first met and spoke with my aunt Rachel in Miami when I was 18 years old. Except for a letter when my father died three years ago requesting old pictures, I have not heard from her since. I first spoke with my uncle Abe at the same time to tell



him that my father had died and to ask him to tell Rachel and Meir. Two and a half years later I went to meet Abe and Meir for the first time. I walked into my uncle Meir's house and he asked THE question: "So, where is your father?" Abe had not even called to tell him.

In this particular family photo, only Dveiri, the precious heart and her child were killed in Europe. The rest survived physically, but what was most dear to them - their family unity and tradition - was utterly and completely wiped out.

Yes. My dad, uncles and other aunt were lucky. They got out before Hitler locked the gates. They went on to marry, have children, live their lives...

But my family are the only Nakdimens who are still Jewish. My uncles married non-Jews and their children are Christian. We are the only ones who even have some small inkling of what it is that we lost.

Dvorah's death signifies not just the tragic loss of a dear aunt - but the loss of unity with family and tradition that should rightfully belong to me and my siblings to give to our children. Even as my husband and I experiment with various styles and customs of transmitting Judaism to our son, Rafael, I feel the lack keenly of a warm and trusted family tradition that is handed down from generation to generation.

It is up to all of us - remnants though we be - to rebuild and reunite to give our children the best that we can put together for them...First, in the particular Jewish sense and next, in the global sense - of shouting NO! to the forces of annihilation in this world - be they nuclear or Nazi or whatever;

and, with all our strength, love and commitment - YES! TO LIFE!  
FOR MY AUNT DVORAH, MY COUSINS, MY GRANDMOTHER CHANA, MY GRANDMOTHER CHAYA....to my great grandfather, to my dad:

! פ"א ד

*Helen Nakdimen*

ד"ר נעם יוד

NYC - 4/17/85

Leonard Gordon

"Family Pictures"

Yom HaShoah 5745

April 17, 1985

In the foreground of the photograph sits Reb Baruch Ber Lebovitz. He had been my father's teacher in the Kamenitz Yeshivah in eastern Europe. As world war II began, and the Nazi's invaded Poland and later Lithuania, Reb Baruch and his fellow rabbeim cared, more than they cared for the preservation of their own individual lives, that their way of life and their teaching survive. And because of communal devotion, the Jews did manage to save many talmidim and rabbeim -- teachers and students -- but tragically, without the Eastern European background against which the Yeshivah world thrived, without the place, institutions, values and glories that united much of Eastern European Jewry, Reb Baruch's deepest prayer for the Jewish future could not be realized. Reb Baruch's death during the Yeshivah's flight from Nazi occupation has become emblematic for me of a Jewish national tragedy -- hurban bet hamidrash -- the destruction of the Yeshivah world -- that occurred concurrently with the destruction of six million individual Jewish lives.

When I look at Reb Baruch's face, his beard and his tallis, and when I hear my father (who is pictured at far right) honor him, I am moved, yes, by the tragedy of an individual's death, but more profoundly I am stunned that a world had been murdered.

L. Gordon

As a Queen's teenager just graduated from public high school, my father left in 1933 to join his two older brothers at the Mir Yeshivah. For the next seven years -- until 1940, he studied at the Mir, Kamenitz, and the musar, or ethics oriented yeshivah at Kelm. In 1940, as an American citizen, my father was able to return, to the United States. Many of his fellow talmidim could not, or chose not to. Reb Baruch was one of those who had no choice.

My father tells the story of how the leftist bundest youth came to the Yeshivah towns, and, in an eerie foreshadowing of events to come, taunted the yeshivah bachurs, pulling on their beards and hitting them. A mother came to Reb Baruch Ber and said pleadingly -- "Rebbe-curse them, put them in herem". Reb Baruch responded to her "Nein, I will bless a fellow Jew, I can not curse a fellow Jew."

While Reb Baruch and the anonymous mother disagreed on one fundamental issue, they agreed on another -- the efficacy of prayer, the power of words. In the world of Eastern Europe, the world of the Yeshivah, God's presence was strongly felt and a rabbi's curse, or blessing, was a powerful tool, not to be invoked lightly. This sense of the power of a Jew's prayer, however, was to have other, less fortuitous consequences for the kehillah.

The students of Kelm told the following story: As World War One began rumors flew of the atrocities being committed by the advancing German army. But the Yeshivah did not evacuate, instead it preserved business as usual -- prayer, study, classes in the musar classics. Finally, the fateful day arrived and a platoon of

L. Gordon

German soldiers entered the Yeshivah to loot and destroy it. According to the legend, when the soldiers saw the talmidim at prayer, they were overwhelmed by the purity of their devotions and they left the Yeshivah alone. 1940, a new war, a new German army, yes, but the leadership at Kelm believed in the power of their prayers and chose the tried and true method for coping with invasion -- they prayed and studied. Every now and then my father runs into a fellow student from the Mir or Kamenitz, rarely if ever does he meet someone he knew from Kelm.

Like R. Judah b. Bava who secretly ordained students in defiance of the Roman ban after the Bar Kochba revolt, in 1939, Reb Finkel of the Mir gathered together my father and a few other American students who were near the end of their rabbinical training and hastily wrote out their documents of semichah, or ordination, ordering them, sometimes against their will, to leave at once, return to the United States, and preserve the traditions of the Yeshivah as best they could.



## REMINISCENCE

Pesia Itke Elson, my maternal grandmother, has remained for me a disembodied presence. She is a woman I was never to know except through the vague unreality of this photograph. I use the word "unreality" deliberately because throughout my childhood and till this present day I have been told that the image before you is a betrayal of the woman she was. For me, at least, in this instance, photography is the least of the mimetic arts. I was given to understand time and again that this image of fright was not a faithful rendering of reality. True, it told the story of her last days when she was already counted among the dead; but it could never portray the strong, vigorous, generous-hearted woman she was during the days of her life. Here the fear of annihilation is evident in her eyes, for she knew that disease and ultimately death had claimed her for their own.

My mother never displayed this picture but kept it framed and hidden in the darkest corner of a closet, wrapped in an old towel. She accorded it the burial that she never could give her mother. For when Pesia Elson died in Soviet Central Asia in the ancient Moslem town of Bukhara, renowned for its learning and mosques, my own mother was on the brink of death and survived only by those chance miracles that allows us to congregate here today.

World War II touched her life from its very first day. On September 1, 1939 she and her family were expelled from their town

of Ruzhan on the Narev River that flows for scores of miles north of Warsaw. From there they fled to Goworowe, an even smaller Jewish community, which made generous room for refugees streaming in from adjacent shtetlech. In Goworowe, as was to become all too typical in those years, the Nazis packed the synagogue to bursting with Jews and set it ablaze in a howling conflagration. My grandmother was spared this fate by the providential arrival of relatives from a nearby town who led them out of Goworowe to Ostrov where they sojourned for a few weeks. The Luftwaffe had bombed this village into submission, leaving its inhabitants and a growing mass of refugees only the streets for a haven. Ostrov was a ghost town, with shadows flitting among the debris. From there Pesia Elson gathered her family and fled to Zambrowe, a city burned nearly to the ground; its Jews prey to banditry and despair. On the road from Zambrowe to an unknown destination, my grandmother and her family were confronted by Wehrmacht soldiers who would have dispatched them quickly enough were it not for the sudden and entirely unexpected appearance of Russian troops who took them under their jurisdiction.

As the story has been recounted to me, Pesia Elson was given the choice by the Red Army of either remaining in Soviet Poland or returning home to her native village. Despite the horrors she had experienced, she chose the world she knew over one she did not know. But fate was to have it otherwise. The Soviets, thereupon, exiled her, her husband and children to Archangelsk, Siberia where the bitter cold and hunger

decimated the ranks of the Jews. For over a year and a half she faced death at every turn but succeeded in eluding it for a while. Careworn and depleted, she roused her spirits in the face of everything that sought to deny it. Life hung by a thread and Pesia's children had to resort to stratagems to survive, which did not exclude the art of theft.

In the middle of 1942, she was transported from the cold wastes of Siberia to the torrid deserts of Central Asia. In Bukhara, Uzbekistan, washed on the north by the Aral Sea and bordered on the south by Afghanistan, a new chapter of misery began, this the final one. It was a meagre life, on the grim edge of poverty and death. Though today it appears a refuge compared to Auschwitz, it was no more than a nest hung over an abyss. In this town of Bukhara, famed for its mausoleums, bazaars, flat-roofed houses, she succumbed to the ravages of dysentery. She was taken to a makeshift hospital and a day later died uncomforted by the language she had known, Yiddish, but by the strange tongue of Tadzhik, a form of Persian spoken in the oblast of Bukhara. She lies buried in an unknown, unmarked grave.

It is hard to fix the image of the dead on paper. They always escape us through the meshes of language. Even pictures, with their stronger purchase on reality, have only a fragile permanence. And in the end, life itself defeats memory and imagination, however much we might wish it otherwise. A French writer once wrote in her memoirs, "I had experienced the cruel pain of being unable to grasp in any way

the death of others; all absences are contradicted by the immutable plenitude of the world." Although we cannot think our way into the anguish of the dying, hopefully this picture is one small way of combating the abstractions of the Holocaust that have made of the mind a rather empty and echoing place.

April 22, 1985

Michael Skakun  
4919 13 - Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York 11219

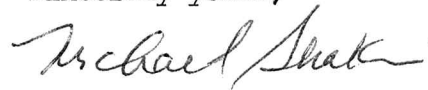
Professor David G. Roskies  
375 Riverside Drive  
New York, New York

Dear Professor Roskies:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of sharing my reminiscence at the Yom Hashoah memorial. I think the format you chose particularly apt for evoking the image of the dead and the accent on Yiddish in perfect fidelity with the spirit and language of the time. It seemed so distant from the staged and, occasionally, brassy commemoration performances one meets with so often these days.

As you requested, I have enclosed the reminiscence I read at the memorial. Would it be possible for me to obtain the slide you made of the photograph?

Sincerely yours,



Michael Skakun



Reminiscence - Kalmnovitch

I could still have met him in my mother's literary salon, say in 1960. He would have been 75 and I — 12. Old enough to remember him. Or on my first visit to Israel in 1967 when I literally crisscrossed the country in search of the living legends of Vilna — he would have been a sprightly 82. Old enough to be impressed by my youthful enthusiasm & my total devotion to the cause of Yiddish.

Zelig Kalmnovitch was not my relative, but he was closer to me than most of my living relatives. I read his ghetto diary when I was 17 and it stayed with me ever since. Later I discovered his name in all the other writings on the ghetto. Sutzkever called him "The Prophet" and dedicated a long poem to him in 1973. Dvorzhetzky gave a glowing account of his work in the Union of Writers and Artists in the ghetto. Rokhl Pupko told of his involvement in the Paper Brigade, how he helped them decide which were books/mss would live and which — would die.

those who study the Holy,

Among ~~the cognoscenti~~, he was known for several things:

- ① For having become observant in the ghetto
- ② " " kept a diary in Hebrew, rather than in Yiddish
- ③ For his total opposition to the cause of armed resistance
- For his report on the Karaites
- ④ For the words of solace/faith he delivered ~~before~~ <sup>at</sup> every available opportunity
- ⑤ For the saintly manner of his death

- founder of YIVO  
- noted philologist, historian, public figure

What I should like to recall, however, are 4 of his famous sayings that sound like they could (almost) have been said by R. Yohanan ben Zakkai or by R. Akiva:

1st, on an exalted, theological plane, he would say:

לֵב אִישׁ לֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַבְּרִית  
לֵב אִישׁ לֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַבְּרִית

Loosely trans this means: "A person must not fall into sorrow, for sorrow ~~is~~ <sup>for</sup> negates the essence of creation, sorrow ~~is~~ negates the fundamental articles of faith." And that, he would go on to explain, was precisely what the Germans

wanted, for Jews to deny/desecrate that which is most holy.

2nd expression he was fond of using, both in writing / conversation:

"we are the grandchildren of אַבְרָהָם אֵלֵינוּ" אֵלֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ  
"we are the grandchildren of Abraham"

by which he meant that a people whose lineage went all the way back to the founder of the Covenant had nothing to fear from the tremors of history. ~~for their history was eternal by definition.~~ Such a people ~~would never be destroyed.~~ transcended history.

3rd When the ghetto was liquidated, in Sept '43, Kalmznovitch was ~~emerged~~ <sup>sent</sup>

those who were shipped off to Estonia, <sup>eventually</sup> to the forced labor camp at Narva.

Here the inmates tried to protect him & had him transferred to

latrine duty, a disgusting but at least not physically debilitating job.

The inmates had dysentery, typhus. The latrines were covered with excrement and blood. It was K's job to clean up after them with a big broom. And

of this work he once said:  $\text{אני מקים את הדין הזה}$

"I kiss the shit of these holy Jews."

④ And finally, most concretely, he drew solace from the fact that back in the summer of '38 he had sent his only son Sholem off to Palestine -

against the protests of all his Bundist friends. And K had even visited

with his son in the summer of '39, a few months before the outbreak

of the war. And so in the end, and here traditions vary as to when

exactly he said these words, he shouted at the Germans

$\text{אני לא מפחד מכם! יש לי בן בארץ ישראל}$

"I'm not afraid of you! I have a son in the land of Israel."

K's son Sholem, lives today on Kibbutz Merhaviz. We've become good

friends. He carries on his father's scholarly work in Hebrew / Yiddish.

[Before we conclude w/  $\text{אני לא מפחד מכם}$ , a brief reading from Ezek 37]:

Slide of Treblinka memorial

Slide of boy w/ arms raised

## Close Your Little Eyes

Now close your little eyes,  
Soon little birds will fly  
In circles everywhere,  
They'll flutter by your bed.  
Your head upon your hand,  
The house in ash and sand!  
We leave, my darling child,  
In search of life. . .

God's from the world withdrawn,  
The black night fills each dawn,  
She waits for us  
With horror and with dread,  
We both are standing here  
With terror always near,  
Not knowing where, oh, where  
Our road has led.

Stripped naked, we were thrown,  
Chased from our loving home,  
In darkest night  
Into the open field.  
In wind and hail and storm,  
By fearsome currents borne,  
Borne forth into the depths  
Of the earth.

Makh tsu di eygelekh,  
Ot kumen feygelekh  
Un krayzn do arum .  
Tsukopns fun dayn vig.  
Dos pekl in der hant,  
Dos hoyz in ash un brand;  
Mir lozn zikh, mayn kind,  
Zukhn glik.

Di velt hot got farmakht,  
Un umetum iz nakht,  
Zi vart af undz  
Mit shoyder un mit shrek.  
Mir shteyen beyde do,  
In shverer, shverer sho  
Un veysn nit vuhin  
S'firt der veg.

Men hot undz naket, bloyz  
Faryogt fun undzer hoyz.  
In fintsternish  
Getribn undz in feld,  
Un shturem, hogl, vint  
Hot undz bagleyt, mayn kind.  
Bagleyt undz inem opgrunt  
Fun der velt.

מאך צו די אייגעלעך.  
אָט קומען פייגעלעך  
און קרייזן דאָ אַרום,  
צוקאָפּנס פון דיין וויג.  
דאָס פעקל אין דער האַנט,  
דאָס הויז אין אַש און בראַנד:  
מיר לאָזן זיך, מיין קינד,  
זוכן גליק.

די וועלט האָט גאַט פאַרמאַכט,  
און אומעטום איז נאַכט,  
זי וואַרט אויף אונדז  
מיט שוידער און מיט שרעק,  
מיר שטייען ביידע דאָ  
אין שווערער, שווערער שעה  
און ווייסן ניט ווהין  
ס'פירט דער וועג.

מען האָט אונדז נאַקעט כלויז  
פאַריאַגט פון אונדזער הויז,  
אין פינצטערניש  
געטריבן אונדז אין פעלד,  
און שטורעם, האַגל, ווינט  
האַט אונדז כאַגלייט, מיין קינד,  
כאַגלייט אונדז אינעם אָפּגרונט  
פון דער וועלט.

Song of the Lodz ghetto was written by Isaiah Shpigl (1906–), short story writer, poet, essayist, teacher, who survived the Lodz ghetto and Auschwitz. Since 1950 he has been living in Israel where he resumed his writing career. The melody is by David Beyglman (1887–1944), a well-known composer for the Yiddish theatre before the war. He died in the gas chambers of Treblinka. *Written in 1941 upon the death of Shpigl's only daughter Eva.*

## Drowsing Birds

Birds sit drowsing on the branches,  
Sleep, my precious child.  
By your cradle in your little nest  
Sings a stranger by your side:  
Lu-Lu, Lu-Lu, Lu.

Here your cradle had its dwelling  
Laced with happiness in store,  
And your mother, Oh, your mother,  
Will return no more.  
Lu-Lu, Lu-Lu, Lu.

I have seen your father running  
Under hails of stone,  
Flying over fields there echoed  
His desolated moan.  
Lu-Lu, Lu-Lu, Lu.

Dremlen feygl af di tsvaygn,  
Shlof, mayn tayer kind.  
Bay dayn vigl, af dayn nare  
Zitst a fremde un zingt:  
Lyu-lyu, lyu-lyu, lyu.

S'iz dayn vigl vu geshtanen  
Oysgeflokhtn fun glik,  
Un dayn mame, oy dayn mame,  
Kumt shoyrn keyn mol nit tsurik.  
Lyu-lyu, lyu-lyu, lyu.

Kh'hob gezen dayn tatn loyfn  
Unter hogl fun shteyn,  
Iber felder iz gefloygn  
Zayn faryosemter geveyn.  
Lyu-lyu, lyu-lyu, lyu.

דרעמלען פייגל אויף די צווייגן,  
שלאָף, מיין טייער קינד.  
בײַ דיין וויגל אויף דיין נאַרע  
זיצט אַ פּרעמדע און זינגט:  
ליו-ליו, ליו-ליו, ליו.

ס'איז דיין וויגל וווּ געשטאַנען,  
אויסגעפלאַכטן פון גליק,  
און דיין מאַמע, אוי דיין מאַמע,  
קומט שוין קיין מאָל ניט צוריק.  
ליו-ליו, ליו-ליו, ליו.

כ'האָב געזען דיין טאַטן לויפן  
אונטער האַגל פון שטיין,  
איבער פעלדער איז געפלוין  
זיין פאַריחומטער געוויין.  
ליו-ליו, ליו-ליו, ליו.

Song written in the Vilno ghetto by Leah Rudnicki, born in Kalvarija, Lithuania in 1916. Rudnicki was a member of the editorial staff of the newspaper *Vilner emes*. As a partisan she was caught by the Gestapo and deported to Majdanek in September 1943. The words were set to an earlier Yiddish song *S'iz keyn broyt in shtub nishto* (words by Izi Charik, music by Leyb Yampolski).

Unter dayne vayse shtern  
 Shtrek tsu mir dayn vayse hant.  
 Mayne verter zaynen treern  
 Viln ruen in dayn hant.  
 Ze, es tunklt zeyer finkl  
 In mayn kelerdikn blik.  
 Un ikh hob gornit keyn vinkl  
 Zey tsu shenken dir tsurik.

Un ikh vil dokh, got getrayer,  
 Dir fartroyen mayn farmeg.  
 Vayl es mont in mir a fayer  
 Un in fayer-mayne teg.  
 Nor in kelern un lekher  
 Veynt di merderishe ru.  
 Loyf ikh hekher, iber dekher  
 Un ikh zukh: vu bistu, vu?

Nemen yogn mikh meshure  
 Trep un hoyfn mit gevoy,  
 Heng ikh-a geplatste strune  
 Un ikh zing tsu dir azoy:  
 Unter dayne vayse shtern  
 Shtrek tsu mir dayn vayse hant.  
 Mayne verter zaynen treern  
 Viln ruen in dayn hant.

Vilna shetto  
 22 May 1943

אונטער דײַנע װײַסע שטערן  
 שטרעק צו מיר דיין װײַסע האַנט.  
 מײַנע װערטער זײַנען טרערן  
 װילן רוען אין דיין האַנט.  
 זע, עס טונקלט זײער פינקל  
 אין מיין קעלערדיקן בליק.  
 און איך האָב גאָרניט קײן װינקל  
 זײ צו שענקען דיר צוריק.

און איך װיל דאָך, גאָט געטרײער,  
 דיר פֿאַרטרויען מיין פֿאַרמעג.  
 װײל עס מאַנט אין מיר אַ פֿײַער,  
 און אין פֿײַער — מײַנע טעג.  
 נאָר אין קעלערן און לעכער  
 װײנט די מערדערישע רו.  
 לויף איך העכער, איכער דעכער  
 און איך זוך: װוּ ביסטו, װוּ?

נעמען יאָגן מיך משונה  
 טרעפֿ און הויפֿן מיט געװאָי.  
 הענג איך — אַ געפֿלאַצטע סטרונע  
 און איך זינג צו דיר אזױ:  
 אונטער דײַנע װײַסע שטערן  
 שטרעק צו מיר דיין װײַסע האַנט.  
 מײַנע װערטער זײַנען טרערן  
 װילן רוען אין דיין האַנט.

Stretch out your white arms to me beneath your pure  
 white stars. My words are tears that wish to fall into your  
 hand. See, their brilliance fades in the caverns of my eyes,  
 and I have no other altar to place them here before you.

To you, my faithful God, I offer all I have, for a demanding  
 fire in my heart consumes my days in flame. Yet in back  
 streets and in bunkers, the treacherous stillness weeps. I  
 flee higher, over rooftops, searching. Where are you, where?

Suddenly I sense pursuit: the howling steps, the court-  
 yards. I hang—a broken string—and sing this song to you:  
 stretch out your white arms to me beneath your pure  
 white stars. My words are tears that wish to fall into  
 your hand.

### Ani-Mamin (I Believe)

Ani-mamin, Ani-mamin, I believe, I believe,  
 I believe with reassuring faith,  
 He will come, he will come,  
 I believe Messiah, he will come.  
 I believe, although he may delay,  
 I believe he'll come, Ani-mamin.

Ani mamin, ani mamin,  
 Ani mamin—  
 Beemuno shleyimo  
 Bevias hamoshiakh.  
 Bevias hamoshiakh ani mamin  
 Veaf al pi sheyismameya  
 Im kol-ze ani mamin.

אַני מאַמין. אַני מאַמין.  
 אַני מאַמין —  
 באַמונע שלמה  
 בכיאת המשיח.  
 בכיאת המשיח אַני מאַמין.  
 ואף על פי שיתמהמה,  
 עם כליזה אַני מאַמין.