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# Cover Art

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE MILKEN ARCHIVE FOUNDER



Dispersed over the centuries to all corners of the earth, the Jewish people absorbed elements of its host cultures while, miraculously, maintaining its own. As many Jews reconnected in America, escaping persecution and seeking to take part in a visionary democratic society, their experiences found voice in their music. The sacred and secular body of work that has developed over the three centuries since Jews first arrived on these shores provides a powerful means of expressing the multilayered saga of American Jewry.

While much of this music had become a vital force in American and world culture, even more music of specifically Jewish content had been created, perhaps performed, and then lost to current and future generations. Believing that there was a unique opportunity to rediscover, preserve and transmit the collective memory contained within this music, I founded the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music in 1990.

The passionate collaboration of many distinguished artists, ensembles and recording producers over the past fourteen years has created a vast repository of musical resources to educate, entertain and inspire people of all faiths and cultures. The Milken Archive of American Jewish Music is a living project; one that we hope will cultivate and nourish musicians and enthusiasts of this richly varied musical repertoire.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lowell Milken".

Lowell Milken

## A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



The quality, quantity, and amazing diversity of sacred as well as secular music written for or inspired by Jewish life in America is one of the least acknowledged achievements of modern Western culture. The time is ripe for a wider awareness and appreciation of these various repertoires—which may be designated appropriately as an aggregate “American Jewish music.” The Milken Archive is a musical voyage of discovery encompassing more than 600 original pieces by some 200 composers—symphonies, operas, cantorial masterpieces, complete synagogue services, concertos, Yiddish theater, and folk and popular music. The music in the Archive—all born of the American Jewish experience or fashioned for uniquely American institutions—has been created by native American or immigrant composers. The repertoire is chosen by a panel of leading musical and Judaic authorities who have selected works based on or inspired by traditional Jewish melodies or modes, liturgical and life-cycle functions and celebrations, sacred texts, and Jewish history and secular literature—with intrinsic artistic value always of paramount consideration for each genre. These CDs will be supplemented later by rare historic reference recordings.

The Milken Archive is music of **AMERICA**—a part of American culture in all its diversity; it is **JEWISH**, as an expression of Jewish tradition and culture enhanced and enriched by the American environment; and perhaps above all, it is **MUSIC**—music that transcends its boundaries of origin and invites sharing, music that has the power to speak to all of us.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Neil W. Levin".

Neil W. Levin

*Neil W. Levin is an internationally recognized scholar and authority on Jewish music history, a professor of Jewish music at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, music director of Schola Hebraeica, and author of various articles, books, and monographs on Jewish music.*

## ⚡ About the Composer



**LAZAR WEINER** (1897–1982) is most widely remembered today as the supreme exemplar and advocate of the Yiddish art song genre. Through his opera of more than two hundred songs, he elevated that medium to unprecedented artistic sophistication.

Even for many ardent devotees of Yiddish language and culture, the very designation “Yiddish song” now most likely connotes confinement to one or another of the popular realms—whether genuine folksong or songs in a folk style, theatrical numbers, songs from operettas, vaudeville or similar stage routines, or other entertainment-oriented and even commercial vehicles.

Yet few in the general music world may be aware that the Western canon of art song—as exemplified by the German *lieder* of Schubert, Schumann, or Brahms; French songs of Debussy or Duparc; Russian songs of Rachmaninoff or Mussorgsky; English songs of Britten or Vaughn Williams; American songs of Barber or Rorem; or songs in other languages by classical composers such as Dvořák, Grieg, or Sibelius—has a legitimate, secular Jewish generic counterpart in both Yiddish and modern Hebrew art songs of the 20th century.

Cultivated Yiddish (as well as modern Hebrew) art song, however, based on serious literary sources and modeled partly on the artistic principles of the 19th- and 20th-century solo song for voice and piano, is a relatively recent development in the course of both Western and Jewish-oriented music. While the solo art song in Western music was initially a creature of the early Romantic era, beginning for the most part in the first quarter of the 19th century and continued thereafter in some fashion in nearly every musical period, the Jewish art song was born only in the first decade of the 20th century. Its genesis was a function of the new Jewish national art music school in Russia that grew out of—and was embodied by—the *Gesellschaft für Jüdische Volksmusik* (Society for Jewish Folk Music) in St. Petersburg, founded in 1908. Consistent with the goals, aspirations, and influence of the *Gesellschaft* and its branches in other cities in the Czarist Empire, affiliated composers such as Moses Milner (1886–1953), Joseph Achron (1886–1943), Alexander Krein (1883–1951), Joel Engel (1868–1927), Mikhail Gniessin (1883–1957), and Solomon Rosowsky (1878–1962) not only fashioned quasi-art song expressions out of authentic folk material, but also turned for the first time to modern Yiddish and Hebrew poets as sources for entirely original art songs.

In America, too, a number of Yiddish-speaking immigrant and immigrant-era composers—such as Solomon Golub, Henech Kon, and Paul Lamkoff—wrote original Yiddish songs, sometimes with classical or at least quasi-classical intentions. For the most part,

however, these were simple, albeit tasteful and often charming, settings—with harmonically and technically conventional piano accompaniments (or, in the case of some composers such as Michl Gelbart, none) rather than the ideally homologous and artistically complementary piano parts that, in principle, participate equally in the interpretation of the text and qualify art song as a form of chamber music. And these songs were generally aimed at broader segments of the Yiddish-speaking public than those who could digest more highly developed musical vocabulary or more intellectually geared poetry. Ultimately, it was Lazar Weiner under whose pen the American Yiddish art song attained its most profound expression and reached its fullest and richest bloom.

Yet his devotion to Yiddish choral art preceded his focus on the solo song as his primary endeavor, and it is only because of the waning of Yiddish choruses throughout the United States and Canada that Weiner's significant body of Yiddish cantatas and other choral works may be less known today. During his lifetime, such choral music was also a major side of his musical persona and reputation. In addition, he wrote a significant amount of serious liturgical music, mostly for the American Reform synagogue format, as well as incidental theater music, an opera, orchestral works, and miscellaneous vocal and instrumental pieces—including some for piano that reflect his own brilliant virtuoso pianistic gifts. At the same time, he was recognized throughout his career as an important choral conductor.



The composer as a young synagogue chorister and soloist

Weiner was born in Cherkassy, in the Ukraine, where his musical talent was discovered at a very young age. After his

parents rejected the extraordinary invitation (for a Jewish child) to join a local church choir, he was admitted to the choir of the prestigious Brodsky Synagogue in Kiev when he was only nine years old. That was the city's relatively culturally progressive—yet not nonorthodox—*chor shul*. *Khor shul* translates literally as “choral synagogue,” although that formal nomenclature—indicating, among other things, a musically trained cantor and choir, sophisticated repertoire, and an effort to reconcile liturgical tradition and basic orthodoxy with an eastern European brand of modernity and with aspects of westernization—can be misleading today, since the other principal synagogues in a particular city also always had regular choirs as a centuries-old sine qua non of cantorial art and performance.

The Brodsky choirmaster was the well-known Abram Dzimitrovsky, many of whose choirboys went on to become important cantors and synagogue musicians. Like many eastern European *chor shuls*, the Brodsky Synagogue had a secular school attached to it, where the young Weiner received a modern Russian elementary education—in addition to exposure to classical liturgical and cantorial repertoire in the choir. By the age of eleven he began singing in the Kiev Opera chorus as well, and then he studied piano with Dzimitrovsky for two years. In 1910 he received a partial scholarship at the State Conservatory in Kiev, where he studied piano and theory. Meanwhile, he supported himself (also covering the balance of his conservatory expenses) as a pianist for silent films. Much of his general music education was furthered by the rich concert and operatic offerings in Kiev, where he had opportunities to hear many of the great artists of the era, and he became familiar on his own with the canon of Western as well as Russian music.

In 1914, in the aftermath of the anti-Semitism that followed the infamous Mendel Beilis blood-libel incident and the 1911 trial (even though Beilis was eventually acquitted of the fabricated charges of ritual child murder), the family emigrated to the United States. By that time Weiner's musical goals had come

to center around his classical pianistic gifts, unrelated yet to any Jewish interests. His intellectual pursuits were also general rather than Judaic, and he evinced less and less interest in Jewish religious practices. The future avid Yiddishist was, during this impressionable period in his life, still oblivious to high Yiddish culture, even its secular content.

As a seventeen-year-old immigrant, Weiner found his first employment as a piano player in a New York silent cinema house, but he was soon engaged as a pianist for the studio of a well-known voice teacher, Lazar Samoiloff. He acquired a reputation as an expert artistic accompanist and, having gained substantial knowledge through his work with Samoiloff about the full range of vocal literature as well as about vocal teaching techniques, he eventually had his own lucrative coaching studio. He also found work as a pianist and librarian for an amateur community orchestra in Brooklyn, the Mendelssohn Symphony Orchestra, where he learned conducting skills and later became its conductor. During that period he also began experimenting with composition, although his primary ambitions still centered around the piano. His first piece was his *Elegy* for violin and piano.

The symphony position turned out to be fortuitous for Weiner's ultimate artistic and Jewish paths. One of the violinists in the orchestra, Nahum Baruch Minkoff (1893–1958), was one of the coterie of Yiddish poets who espoused a modernist introspective literary approach based on personal experience and who were known as the *In zikh* poets—a school, or movement, whose core founders also included Jacob Glatstein (1896–1971) and Aaron Glanz-Leyeles (1889–1966). (Later, some of Weiner's most admired songs would be settings of poetry by all three, as well as by other *In zikh* followers.) Weiner became friendly with Minkoff, who introduced him to his own literary circle and to the world of modern Yiddish literature and poetry in general—to which the young Weiner was instantly and powerfully attracted. The seeds were thus irrevocably sown for Weiner's subsequent devotion to Yiddish language and culture and, eventually, to

both the Yiddish choral medium and the Yiddish art song. At the same time, that newfound fascination with an aspect of Jewish culture of which he had not been aware reversed his gravitation toward alienation from even secular Jewish identity—an identity that thereafter intensified throughout his life.

Weiner's immersion in the American Yiddish literary milieu was not confined to the *In zikh* poets. Minkoff brought him to literary-intellectual salon evenings of poetry readings and discussions, where he met some of the significant poets of the older European generation, as well as younger adherents of other, divergent orientations and movements—especially *Di yunge*, an earlier school (founded in America in 1907) of young immigrant writers who had sought to remove Yiddish literature from association with social, political, or moral agendas and ideologies and to free it from restriction to specifically Jewish subject matter. Their focus was more on form than content, with the desiderata of Yiddish literature as pure art for its own value—without the necessity of “greater” purpose or function—and as a potentially universal expression, enhanced and refined by an infusion of elements found in the work of major European and American figures in the world of belles lettres. *Di yunge* included such poets as Moshe Leib Halpern (1886–1932), Mani Leib (1883–1953), and Moshe Nadir (1885–1943)—and, in its later phases, Aaron Nissenson (1898–1964), Naftoli Gross (1896–1956), and Zishe Weinper (1892–1957). Among the older generation who were sympathetic to *Di yunge* were such poets as Yehoash (1872–1927), H. Rosenblatt (1878–1956), and Joseph Rolnick (1879–1955). Works of these poets, too, as well as poems by many others not specifically associated with either movement, would, at various periods in Weiner's creative life, find expression in his songs.

Those salon evenings also provided Weiner's initiation into the realm of Yiddish folksong—an entire tradition that had eluded him in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Kiev. Frequently the host's wife would perform and lead folksongs and similar folk-type songs. Weiner later acknowledged candidly that he heard nearly

all of those folksongs for the first time in his life at those salons. The flavor and sensibilities of those songs would frequently find their way into his original compositions.

An event that ignited Weiner's Jewish musical interests at the end of the second decade of the century was the North American tour of the Zionist-oriented and inspired Zimro Ensemble, which played at Carnegie Hall and elsewhere in New York, en route from Russia to Palestine. There it had planned to settle and establish a "temple of Jewish arts" (a mission effectively aborted when its director and other members chose to remain permanently in New York).

Zimro's repertoire was largely devoted to sophisticated and classically constructed music based on Jewish folk or liturgical themes and modes. It had been founded in Petrograd (St. Petersburg, prior to the change of the city's name when Russia went to war with Germany) by the Russian-Jewish clarinetist Simeon Bellison, who was engaged by the New York Philharmonic following the ensemble's New York performances and was the Philharmonic's principal clarinetist for twenty-eight years. After a series of concerts sponsored by Zionist organizations in Jewish communities in Siberia and throughout the Far East, Zimro introduced American and Canadian audiences to recent instrumental works by some of the composers associated with the aforementioned Gesellschaft, as well as to Prokofiev's Overture on Hebrew Themes, op. 34, which it commissioned and premiered during its American tour in 1919. All of this was a sudden revelation to Weiner. Unlike many Jewish musicians in the cities where the Gesellschaft had branches, he had been unaware of its mission during his youthful Kiev years. Prior to the Zimro tour, American audiences, even in New York, were ignorant of the Gesellschaft and its contributions. Until then, Weiner's own context and associations of "Jewish music" had been confined to either the synagogue or the theater.

Weiner was instantly fascinated with the new genre and school advocated by the Zimro Ensemble. The

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very notion that serious, cultivated secular Jewish musical expression could be built melodically and harmonically on elements of genuine Jewish folk melos and tradition—secular or liturgical—and could have universal aesthetic appeal, turned out to coincide with his own artistic instincts. A few of the Gesellschaft composers later immigrated to the United States—notably Lazare Saminsky, Jacob Weinberg, Joseph Achron, and Solomon Rosowsky—and Weiner developed collegial relationships with them.

So impressed was he upon his discovery of the Gesellschaft path that he sent three of his most recently composed Yiddish songs to Joel Engel (who had left Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution and was living in Berlin prior to his immigration to Palestine) for his comments. Engel's reply criticized what he perceived as the lack of any "Jewish content" or character in the songs. He suggested that Weiner—even without knowledge of the vast body of secular eastern European Jewish musical folklore from the Czarist Empire—could easily and quite naturally have turned for aesthetic inspiration and imprint to his own early synagogue music memories and still have produced secular Yiddish art songs. Engel had done the same thing in a number of his own songs. Those comments, in fact, articulated an important part of the Gesellschaft composers' *modus operandi* in their attempts to fashion a Jewish national artistic expression. Weiner thereafter heeded that advice in indirect and subtle ways as he fleshed out his own approach over the years. Still, those three specimens—*In feld*; *Shtile tener*; and *Volt mayn tate raykh geven*, all on texts by *In zikh* poets—remain to this day among Weiner's best-known songs.

At various times Weiner studied with Robert Russell Bennett, Frederick Jacobi (the first professor of composition at The Juilliard School and himself the composer of a number of Judaically related works), and the theoretician Joseph Schillinger, who had proposed a new compositional procedure based on a quasi-mathematical system of harmonic and scalar permutations. Weiner's work with Schillinger, which

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amounted to a search for technical discipline, helped him go beyond more conventional conceptions by offering experimentation with rational manipulation of the various musical parameters (rhythm, texture, intervals, etc.).

In the 1920s Weiner began his affiliations with Yiddish secular choruses and choral music. In 1923 he was appointed conductor of New York's nascent *Freiheits Gezang Verein* (later known also as the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus). This was an unabashedly left-wing workers' chorus that was subsequently often associated and identified with communist sympathies, even if those sentiments might have been more social, cultural, and emotional (i.e., echoing the "spirit" of the party) rather than practically political for many of its members. The chorus was modeled on a similar one founded earlier in Chicago by Jacob Schaefer, who later directed the New York chorus when Weiner severed his ties with it. Eventually the New York *Freiheits Gezang Verein* became one of nearly thirty such choruses in as many cities in the northeastern and midwestern states, all loosely federated under the national umbrella of the Jewish Workers Musical Alliance. The occasion for Weiner's debut with that chorus (and as a choral conductor altogether) was a festival at the Hippodrome in New York, organized by Leo Low (1878–1960), which represented a short-lived attempt to combine many of the New York area's secular Jewish choruses—of various and sometimes even sharply divergent political leanings—into a United Hebrew Choral Society with more than a thousand choristers.

Like many young Jewish intellectuals in the 1920s, especially among Yiddish cultural circles, Weiner was drawn to some of the avowed social ideals of the Communist Party and its professed utopian spirit. But, also like many of the other Yiddishists in his circle (sometimes dubbed "armchair" or "parlor" communists by detractors who noted their absence of concrete political activity), he was never an actual party member. Naïve as it may seem in retrospect, that type of sympathy often grew out of genuine humanitarian concern for the working class and its frustrations, and

it was sometimes confused as well with generic support for the principle of organized labor. Such American Jewish sympathies with communist rhetoric also emanated in part from a heady euphoria over what were believed to be the positive and even humanistic accomplishments occurring in the still new Soviet Union, especially as proclaimed by party-generated propaganda. Of course, at the time, the Communist Party had not yet been branded or outlawed in the United States as a subversive or disloyal organ of an enemy foreign state, or as an advocate of the violent overthrow of the American government; nor was membership illegal. Apparently Weiner did have some sort of flirtation with Yiddishist pro-communist circles that might have extended briefly to the political (or quasi-political dabbling) arena, but its nature and extent are difficult to determine. He later became staunchly opposed to those views and severed whatever connections he had, and thereafter he always avoided discussion of the episode. Nonetheless, as with many of his colleagues, his enthusiastic contributions to the cultural and artistic manifestations of the left are indisputable.

Weiner's experience with the *Freiheits* chorus cannot have been artistically rewarding. The repertoire of that small group (about thirty-five singers then, compared with a membership of more than one hundred in its peak years) consisted mainly of workers' and labor movement songs in simple if not trite choral arrangements, other Yiddish folksongs, and occasional Yiddish translations of some standard Western classical choral literature—although the chorus's ability with regard to the last category was limited. The days of its large-scale Yiddish cantatas and pageants, frequently written expressly for it, were yet to come.

After 1925, Weiner's serious composing was on hiatus for about four years, with the exception of one cello piece, while he focused his efforts more narrowly on Jewish choral activity. That included not only conducting but also arranging for his choirs and notating tunes for songsters. Over the next several years he directed several choral ensembles, sometimes

simultaneously. For two summers he was the music director at one of the Yiddish cultural summer camps of the Sholom Aleichem Yiddish school and camp network, Camp Boiberik (founded by another of the poets whose words Weiner later set to music in his art songs, L. Magister [Leibush Lehrer]). In preparation for his work at Camp Boiberik, he began collecting Yiddish folksongs and other traditional tunes—material he was later to employ on a more artistic level in his choral and voice-and-piano arrangements.



The composer in his barn studio in the Catskills, summer 1937

Among the choruses Weiner directed between 1925 and about 1935 were the chorus of the Yidishe Kultur Gezelshaft (Jewish Culture Society), the chorus of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), the Central Synagogue choir (where he was also appointed music director), and the Arbeter Ring Khor

(Workmen's Circle Chorus), which developed into his most important, artistically fulfilling, and enduring choral position, lasting until 1966.

In 1927 Weiner made a trip to the Soviet Union, ostensibly to seek repertoire for the Freiheits chorus, and probably out of natural curiosity as well. The reality he witnessed there differed markedly from the idealized perceptions circulating among the American left. Shortly after he returned to New York, he resigned from the Freiheits Gezang Verein and severed all ties to the Jewish Workers Musical Alliance. The reason for that disassociation is not entirely clear. His widow, Naomi, attributed it more to his refusal to submit to "the party's" attempted interference with his artistic freedom, and his resistance to politically based restrictions. Apparently, for example, there had been an effort to forbid him from serving even as an accompanist for Leo Low's Jewish National Workers' Alliance Chorus (to be distinguished from the Jewish Workers Musical Alliance), obviously in some sense a "rival," but also avowedly noncommunist. What was meant by "the party" in that context is also not certain—whether, formally, the local cell or "branch" of the actual international party, or merely the more naïve sympathizer circles. However, Weiner's son, composer Yehudi Wyner, remembers clearly his father's later descriptions of dismay at the secrecy, duplicity, hypocrisy, and fear Weiner had encountered in the Soviet Union, how he felt afraid to converse with anyone except in the park, and how he turned vocally against the Soviet regime. "After that trip," Wyner has remarked, "my father became an outright anticommunist—ferociously. *That's why he said goodbye to the Freiheits Gezang Verein, and that's how he broke with them.*" Weiner's humanistically related leftist and socialist leanings remained with him, but those could easily be accommodated by other, fully American and patriotic choruses and their parent organizations—most especially the Arbeter Ring, or Workmen's Circle. Its New York chorus became Weiner's principal performance vehicle for thirty-five years.





Weiner with his son Yehudi Wyner and his daughter-in-law Susan Davenny-Wyner

Organized in 1892 (originally as the Workingmen's Circle) at a meeting in New York of like-minded eastern European immigrant Jews who were inspired by the potential reforms connected to socialist ideals and by the growth of American labor movements—but also by socialistic and humanistic themes in Jewish history and literature—the Arbeter Ring reached a national membership of 80,000 during its peak years in the 1930s. With branches in many North American cities as well as Los Angeles, it provided a forum for Jews who were either disaffected from or simply disinterested in the religious parameters of Jewish life, but were nonetheless keen to preserve and transmit Jewish heritage through Yiddish—the language of Jewish labor during the immigrant era. Its network of schools and summer camps, together with its rich variety of adult programs, offered secular Jewish education and activities within the framework of Yiddish culture.

In effect, the Workmen's Circle also served as a secular alternative to the synagogue and to the European-

style *k'hilla* (organized community) by providing for the personal, family, and even spiritual needs of its members (mutual aid, welfare, funeral and burial, visitation and organized companionship) and by fashioning new versions of traditionally grounded holiday celebrations and ceremonies shorn of their religious reference. Its socialist and labor orientation, its commitment to progressive causes, and its advocacy for social justice and a more equitable society were pursued well within the context of American liberal democracy. In fact, the Workmen's Circle was critical of the Soviet Union as early as the 1920s. Not without its fair share of dissension among its ranks in its formative years, internal struggles for control between procommunist and non- or anticommunist elements ended when, by 1930, the former withdrew altogether to form the International Workers Order.

The Arbeter Ring Khor—Workmen's Circle Chorus—was founded sometime between 1910 and 1914 (accounts vary according to the perception of "founding") and was first directed by M. Pirozhnikov. Under Meyer Posner's direction, from 1916 until 1929, it graduated from simple workers' songs in Yiddish as well as Russian to attempts at classical repertoire—such as Posner's Yiddish translation of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* [*Elias*]. To some extent, the formation of the New York *Freiheits Gezang Verein* in the 1920s, on the original Chicago model, constituted a breakaway from the Arbeter Ring Khor that was generated by an ideological split among the choristers. Meanwhile, the priorities of the Workmen's Circle Chorus, and its sister choruses across the country, increasingly became more cultural than political.

Weiner's official appointment as conductor of the Workmen's Circle Chorus commenced in 1931 and was based on two conditions: that he have a full year of rehearsals without concerts in order to rebuild the group according to his musical standards; and that he be able to unify its Yiddish pronunciation and diction according to "high" or literary Yiddish—eliminating other, regional or colloquial, dialects. Under his direction the chorus was elevated into a first-class

performing ensemble, growing from about forty to nearly one hundred members by the time of its first Town Hall appearance under his baton. He retained a good deal of its folk and workers' repertoire, recasting many of those songs in artistic but appropriately simple arrangements. But with increasing frequency he also programmed works from the classical canon of choral literature by composers such as Beethoven, Mozart, Rossini, Haydn, and Handel—always in Yiddish translations, for which he pressed into service some of the finest Yiddish poets and dramatists. And of course, his concerts also included many important original works of Jewish content. The chorus came to be considered a part of New York's general cultural life, and critics from the general press referred to it as one of the city's best amateur choral ensembles. During the 1930s Weiner also was the consultant to all of the many Workmen's Circle branch choruses—from New Jersey to Chicago to Los Angeles.

Most of Weiner's choral music was written expressly for the Workmen's Circle Chorus. Among his important choral cantatas (two of which have been recorded for the Milken Archive) are *Amol in a tzayt—Legend of Toil*; *The Last Judgement—Bontshe shvayg*; *Hirsh lekert*; *In kamf far frayhayt* (subtitled a "choral ballet"); *Tzu dir, amerike*; *Mentsh in der velt*; and *Amos*. At the same time, however, he began devoting increasing energies specifically to art songs for voice and piano, continually refining his techniques and expanding his pool of literary sources.

From 1952 until his death, Weiner served on the faculty of the School of Sacred Music, the cantorial school at the New York branch of the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion. Ironically, the undisputed master of Yiddish art song taught that subject only relatively late in his tenure there. In the early years of that school (which was conceived originally as a nondenominational program but soon became more specifically an organ of the Reform movement after the Conservative-oriented Jewish Theological Seminary opened its own Cantors Institute), Yiddish song would have been considered

anachronistic and irrelevant to the education and repertoire of modern American cantors. But by the 1970s, with the emergence of ethnic revival trends that crossed denominational boundaries, Weiner's classes and seminars on Yiddish song were among the most popular in the curriculum. He also taught Jewish art song at the Cantors Institute and, beginning in 1974, at the 92nd Street YMHA.

After Weiner left the Workmen's Circle Chorus, in 1966, having determined that its artistic level was no longer sustainable, he curtailed his work with Yiddish choruses and—although art song was by then his priority—became involved with musical activities of the Reform movement beyond his own post as music director of Central Synagogue in New York. Increasingly, he received liturgical music commissions from synagogues and cantorial organizations (he had written his first full service in 1946 for one of the annual services of new music at the Conservative movement's Park Avenue Synagogue in New York), and he lectured and taught at summer camp programs and institutes.

In secular music, Weiner often rebuked others for simplistic quotations of undeveloped Jewish folk or traditional tunes, and in his own art songs he never included an existing folk melody—even when the poem might have suggested one. "If I need a traditional melody," he was fond of telling students, "I create my own." In his liturgical music, however, he sometimes leaned on traditional material when he felt it appropriate, but only as a cue. And he respected the tradition of certain obligatory melodies of the Ashkenazi rite. But he developed that melodic material with the polyphonic and advanced harmonic techniques that he avoided in his Yiddish choral pieces, because his liturgical music was always intended for fully professional choirs.

Despite his artistic concern with synagogue music, Weiner remained disinterested in most of the formal religious and ceremonial practices of Judaism, at least outwardly. "Anticlerical and nonobservant," is how

his son Yehudi describes his father's general attitude toward doxologies and obligatory rituals, "but at the same time profoundly religious" vis-à-vis spiritual concerns and relationships between God and man. The depth of that spirituality is reflected in many of his Yiddish art songs—especially those that touch upon Judaic sensibilities and even specific ceremonies—and also in his synagogue music, which is among the most sophisticated in the 20th-century American repertoire. But his liturgical music can also be viewed as having derived from what his son has described as a more abstract, purely musical motivation: "The opportunity simply to write good music."

After his retirement from Central Synagogue, in 1974, Weiner abandoned liturgical music. He had become repulsed by the introduction of pop and other entertainment music in American synagogues since the late 1960s—initially echoing, if unintentionally, some of the lowbrow informal musical parameters that had become fashionable in certain populist churches outside the mainstream denominations and in related broadcast formats, but also imitating Jewish summer camp ambiances. "I want a *m'hitza* (a division—usually referring to the separation between men and women in orthodox synagogues) between the secular and the profane, between the mundane and the spiritual," proclaimed this Jew who insisted to the world that he was nonreligious, "and I do not want to bring the musical comedy into the synagogue. Each has its place, but ..." For the next eight years he dedicated himself almost exclusively to art songs.

In his devotion to Yiddish, Weiner did not necessarily choose sides with the Yiddishists against the Hebraists of the *Haskala* (the Jewish Enlightenment movement in eastern Europe). Nor did he believe that the modern revival of Hebrew language and literature was any less an authentic Jewish expression than Yiddish culture. It was, more simply, that he had not pursued the secular Hebrew studies—and had not been part of that Hebraic environment—that might have facilitated an equal identification with modern Hebrew poetry. Instead, he had happened by chance upon a Yiddish cultural circle

in New York, which instigated his lifelong love affair with that language and its serious modern literature.

Apart from their literary content (which in only some cases involves overt Judaic references), Weiner's songs are manifestly Jewish first and foremost because of the Yiddish language itself, and because of the way he instinctively understood and interpreted its subtle nuances, inflections, accentuations, internal rhythms, cadences, and turns of phrase. For Weiner, who recognized the profound impact of language in general on musical identity, Yiddish was in and of itself an authentic Jewish expression. Like many of the poets he most admired, he did not treat Yiddish as an ideological or sociopolitical vehicle, as did so many Yiddishists of his generation, but rather as a literary and musical art that took on the passionate character of a mission. Yet he was always conscious of the irony that his devotion to Yiddish—in fact to things Jewish—was an American phenomenon, not a personal carryover from Europe. In an interview only a year before his death, he recalled Engel's response to his first songs: "That letter marked the beginning of my Jewishness," he mused. "All my life [prior to 1919] it was Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Schubert... **Here in America I discovered the Yiddish song!**"

—Neil W. Levin



**LAZAR WEINER IN RETROSPECT:  
A Son Reflects on His Father and His Songs**

by Yehudi Wyner

From his first experiments with songwriting, Lazar Weiner always chose Yiddish poems of fine literary value. Whether they were introspective, philosophical, or folk-related, they were invariably tasteful. And because of their clear diction and straightforward expressive affect, they were excellently suited to musical setting. He avoided metaphysical or highly involved intellectual speculations. In these predilections, Weiner was faithful to the long traditions of such classical song composers as Schubert, Brahms, Wolf, Fauré, Debussy, and Mahler. In choosing to set Yiddish poetry to music, it was Weiner's lofty aim to create a genuine, characteristic, and varied art music on the order of the great classical repertoire. Not for him was the merely commercial or the "hit parade" level of popular culture—or the corrupt accommodation to uncultured tastes.

In his efforts to forge a pure and authentic melodic style in his songs, he sought a return to primary Jewish sources: synagogue chant, Hassidic songs and dances, and biblical cantillation motifs. And he tried to identify among those sources the elements that had been least infiltrated by influences from Church music, opera, or commercial theater.

Pursuing the ideal of a pure melodic practice was only one aspect of Weiner's efforts. Inventing an instrumental setting that could provide an interesting musical texture appropriate to the mood and spirit of the poetry, while not obscuring the character of the melodic line, was an equally vital concern. The piano parts are not accompanimental. Rather, they form an inseparable unity with the poetry and with the vocal lines. The pianistic component is highly varied in style as well as texture, and it plays a major role in punctuating and reflecting the changes in the poetry of each song. Occasionally Weiner would even adopt a simple "um-pah" dance figure in the piano part to

support a folklike melody. But even in those cases, the subtle voicing and harmonic details reveal an inventive sophistication.

Weiner was well aware of the stylistic and procedural revolutions in 20th-century music. His appetite for the new and the experimental was insatiable. Well into his eighties, he could be found at concerts of contemporary music, no matter how radical or progressive, and he kept an open mind to all possibilities. Perhaps it was the strength of his inviolate conviction about the authenticity of his personal mission, his passionate devotion to the values of Yiddish culture, that enabled him to absorb as many outside influences without fear of compromising his core values.

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Lazar Weiner's songs can be categorized in a number of different ways. It is possible to consider them chronologically and to assign them to distinct periods: early, middle, and late. Or one can speak of very early songs as "songs of innocence," later ones as reflections of pre-Holocaust fears and premonitions, postwar songs as expressions of concern over the impending decay and disappearance of Yiddish culture, and late songs as efforts to grapple with metaphysical issues, tragic reflections, and introspective deliberations.

Another way of organizing the repertoire might be to group songs by literary and musical type: love songs; simple songs with folklike melodies; songs with Hassidic character; dance songs; songs of introspection or elusive reverie; songs of desperate protest against injustice, against the destruction of a culture, or against the stigmatized positions of Jews in society; and songs dealing with theological issues such as the role of God in the affairs of man and the role of man in relation to God. Although nearly none of the songs is explicitly religious in any conventional sense, one finds a constantly recurring related theme: the connection between the secular and the sacred realms, and the inescapable interpenetration of the two worlds. Although Weiner was to all intents and

purposes concerned personally with secular Jewish culture rather than with religious observance, his obsessive aspiration leaned toward the spiritual and the sacred. While generally avoiding the established rites of religious worship, he used the sacred images of Judaism to signal his devotion to profound traditional Jewish values.

It is worth noting that Weiner almost invariably followed certain techniques throughout his many decades as a song composer. Because his respect for the poetry was absolute, he allowed himself no departure from the text: no elisions, no prolongations, no cuts or repetitions. He followed changes in the mood or action within a poem with meticulous care. Rarely would he permit himself a decorative melisma or a brilliant high note for dramatic effect alone. Piano introductions were kept brief, and interludes and postludes were avoided. His focus was on economy and on natural flow of diction.

There was a phantom model for all of this: Weiner's admiration for the music of Modest Mussorgsky—with whose music he came into contact during his formative years in Kiev—was boundless. For Mussorgsky, song emerged directly from language with a minimum of artificial intervention. Melodic contours and rhythmic flow grew out of the inflections, stresses, and durations of natural speech. The task, of course, was to find ways of organizing such unstable, irregular phenomena into coherent patterns—but patterns that nonetheless eschewed artificiality and the stylistic conventions of European opera and lieder. (Debussy, following Mussorgsky's lead, created a vocal music based on a similar principle.) Weiner absorbed Mussorgsky's approach, adapting it to the particular qualities and attributes of the Yiddish language and allowing it to evolve, utilizing far-reaching changes in harmonic and textural thinking.

The earliest songs recorded here—*SHTILE TENER* (1918), *VOLT MAYN TATE RAYKH GEVEN* (1918), *DOS GOLD FUN DAYNE OYGN* (1922), *TSELA-TSELDI* (1922), and *VIGLID* (Markish; 1925)—are perhaps more

conventional and less adventurous than the later ones, but they are expertly composed. *Volt mayn tate raykh geven* and *Tsela-tselDI* are full of high spirits, with virtuoso piano parts and striking contrasts. *Dos gold fun dayne oygn*, impressionistic in overall style, nevertheless exhibits certain melodic characteristics that tie it to eastern European Jewish folksong. It is one of the many love songs Weiner dedicated to his beloved wife, Sarah Naomi. [Its poet, Samuel Jacob Imber, the brother of the author of the words to *Hatikva*, Israel's national anthem, edited one of the earliest English-language anthologies of modern Yiddish poetry in 1927. —NWL]

[*Editor's note:* Lines 10–12 in Weiner's setting of *Tsela-tselDI* differ sharply from the original publication of Glatstein's poem, in which they read instead: *di bristn dayne labern, un dayn guf shmekt mit altkayt shoyn, mit dem reyakh fun fardumpn flaysh* (Your breasts heave, and from your body emanates the odor of old age, with the stench of decaying flesh). We have not yet found any later or alternative publication of the poem containing Glatstein's own substitution comprising the words found in Weiner's song. Still, it is unlikely that Weiner would have undertaken on his own, without the poet's participation, to rewrite those lines. It is possible that the alteration is contained in an unpublished manuscript version of the poem that might have been available to Weiner, although none has been located; the discrepancy remains a mystery. In any case, the poem has been interpreted as invoking the image of an aging, deteriorating woman as a metaphor for a beleaguered Yiddish language and culture. It has been suggested that Glatstein, through his invented feminine personification, *Tsela-tselDI*, is challenging Yiddish to forestall aging and death by renewing itself with a measure of denial, even if necessarily temporary—as if asking her to “shed her old flesh and have another fling.” —NWL]

*Shtile tener* and the Markish *Vigliid* are rather simple in their support of folklike yet original melodies, but they evoke an idyllic tenderness tinged with melancholia. The eight-measure postlude to *Shtile tener* is unique among Weiner's songs. Here, for all its simplicity, it is deeply affecting.

[*Editor's note:* The little goat under a baby's cradle, as found in this *Vigliid*—which, in some cases simultaneously goes off to “trade in” the symbolic confection of raisins and almonds, presumably for the child's benefit—is a ubiquitous motif in European Yiddish folklore, and specifically in lullabies. More than sixty variants of Yiddish lullabies with this theme have been identified, as well as a good number in Hebrew. On the surface, the goat image has been perceived either as a companion or as a symbol of protection for the baby. Among various other more probing constructions, the goat has been interpreted as representing the father, who, on one level, is necessarily away earning a livelihood, but, on another, metaphoric plane, seeks to ensure not only a sweet future for his child but also a better world in the form of national or spiritual redemption, or both—all of which, in that scenario, may be symbolized by the acquisition of raisins and almonds. The goat itself may have been derived from earlier Jewish sources (predating Yiddish folklore), in which the kid symbolizes the Jewish people and its determination for, as well as faith in, redemption and survival. In the Aramaic-Hebrew seder song *Had gadya* (A Single Kid), for example, the story of the goat has been viewed as an allegory for Divine retribution for the persecutions of the Jewish people—although some literary critics insist that it is simply children's verse based on a popular French ballad. Its refrain about the goat has also been interpreted as a metaphor for God's having taken the people Israel as “His own” through the Decalogue of the Sinaitic covenant. The song was appended to the Passover Haggada, or fixed narrative, by the late 16th century.

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Along with a part of the tune archetype for many of the Yiddish folksong variants—among which the best known ones are probably *Unter yankeles vigele* (Under Little Jacob's Cradle), *Unter soreles vigele*, and *Unter dem kinds vigele*—this motif found expression in the theatrical song *Rozhenkes mit mandlen* (Raisins and Almonds), which Abraham Goldfaden (1840–1908) apparently stitched together from multiple folk sources for his famous 1904 operetta *Shulamis*. That song became one of the most widely known Yiddish songs in America as well. In most variants of the actual folksong, however, the mother remains at home to sing the lullaby to the child. She goes on to express the prototypical hope that he grow up to be Judaically learned—even a scholar of renown—and pious, reflecting the emphasis of traditional Jewish values of that environment. In this later original poem, Peretz Markish has provided a fresh twist to the image and to the situation, which invites further interpretive exploration. Here, the mother sings to an empty cradle. —NWL]

The songs of the 1930s and 1940s reflect a deepening awareness of social and political crises as they affected the Jews of Europe and the Soviet Union. *ERGETS VAYT* (1936), with its strophic structure, refers to the Siberian exile of political prisoners during the pre-Soviet era Czarist regime. There is apparently an intentional paradox in the musical interpretation here, for on the surface the song seems simple, with a rather angular melody and a conventional flowing piano part. But it is as if that simplicity understates—perhaps masks—the intrinsic pathos of the poem and, by so doing, intensifies the tragic nature of the exile.

[*Editor's note:* There are also layers of meaning in this poem that explore aspects of inner loneliness, suffering, and yearning inherent in the human condition. H. Leivick wrote the poem in 1914–15 in Philadelphia, where he was working as an apprentice cutter in a garment shop while writing poetry on his own time. He

is said to have considered *Ergets vayt* his first authentic poem, which he therefore placed in the opening pages of his first published collection (1918). His biography describes his subsequent recollection of the circumstances surrounding the poem's genesis—on a cold, wintry night in his tiny attic room, where, after a long day's work in the shop, he lay in bed by the light of a small gas lamp. Looking through the window at a snowstorm, he felt "lonely, foreign, and forlorn in this big new world." He is quoted as reflecting:

All of a sudden, something lights up inside you. You realize that you really are in America. You lie inside in an attic, but outside a blizzard howls, and before your eyes you see the Siberian landscape from which you just escaped: the distant white hills of immense Siberia, the snow-covered roads and rivers and forests and mountains, the full, absolute, and dazzling whiteness—the "dazzling of the world," one might say. And you feel part of this whiteness ... I felt a yearning for something emerging within me—a fresh start, going to that whiteness as to an untrodden forbidden land.

Upon further reflection, Leivick noted in this poem a shift in emphasis from the forbidden land, with its unreachable covered treasures, to suffering humanity:

To be the justified and chosen partner of suffering mankind, who can never reach the forbidden treasures: perhaps herein lies the secret of true human yearning, the fate of man both in his search for a link to that which we call Creator-God, as well as in his connection to the entire world of human life and death. Thus it is insufficient to say that there are forbidden and covered treasures. An additional observation is necessary: "Somewhere far away a prisoner lies alone."  
—NWL]

**YIDISH** (1946) is significant as an explicit testament of Weiner's own devotion to the Yiddish language and to the culture that gave it life.

[*Editor's note*: The poem contains references to four well-known Hassidic masters or *rebbe*s—rabbinical-type spiritual leaders: the Ba'al Shem Tov (1700–1760), the founder of modern Hassidism, or the mystical-spiritual Hassidic movement; the Mezhirecher Maggid, or the Maggid of Mezhirech (d. 1772), his disciple and successor; the Bratslaver Rebbe—Reb Nahman of Bratslav (1772–1811), a great-grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov and the founder of his own splinter sect; and the Berditchever Rebbe—Reb Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev (ca. 1740–1810), a disciple of the Mezhirecher Maggid and an important, original, and influential *rebbe* in his own right, best remembered for his disputations with God on behalf of the Jewish people. —NWL]

**YOSL KLEZMER** (1939) derives its melodic archetype and style from folk tunes and dances of traditional eastern European wedding-band musicians (*klezmerim*), although the actual melody is Weiner's own. The robust energy of this song, with its elaborate piano part and its expressive contrasting middle section, transforms the folk-derived character into a more complex artistic statement. [The poem contains an intermediate stanza that Weiner chose not to include in his setting. —NWL]

**UNTER DAYNE VAYSE SHTERN** (1950) seems like a regression to an earlier manner of songwriting in Weiner's oeuvre, but the harmonic maneuvers and elaborate piano writing suggest a continuing development of his style. This is a strongly tonal composition that proceeds in E minor for most of its duration, yet concludes in F minor without any sense of strain.

[*Editor's note*: Avraham Sutskever is believed to have written this poem in the Vilna Ghetto, where it was originally set to a haunting melody

by Abraham Brudno and sung there by Zlate Katcherginsky in a theatrical production of the play *Di yogn in fas* (The Hunt in the Barrel—a parody of Diogenes in a barrel). After the liquidation of the ghetto, Sutskever joined the partisan fighters and survived the Holocaust. Brudno was deported to a German concentration camp in Estonia, where he was murdered in 1943 or 1944. His version, however, is entirely unrelated to Weiner’s song. —NWL]

Another song that moves harmonically in a similar way, by a semitone upward from E flat to E, is **SHITILE LIKHT** (1956). This song was intended originally as an aria for Weiner’s opera, *The Golem*. The ascent seems perfectly natural and unobtrusive. *Shtile likht* is an especially fine achievement, with its flexible prosody and its melodic contour unmistakably derived from biblical cantillation (the Lithuanian Ashkenazi *haftara*—prophetic readings—chant in particular). It is at once a love song and a prayer—with reference to the lighting of the Sabbath candles—which imagines the virtue of the ideal husband, the beauty of the children, and the sanctity of Torah study.

**IKH HOB FAR DIR A SOD** (1945) is another love song to the composer’s wife, Sarah Naomi. The piano part alternates between passages of enriched diatonic harmony and sections that utilize the whole-tone scale—similar to the technique of Debussy.

**DER YID MITN FIDL** (1956), a setting of a narrative poem, is an elaboration of the basic song type represented by Weiner’s earlier *Yosl klezmer*. Here, however, the material is more intricately developed, as the poem offers an imagined dialogue between a practical, down-to-earth wife and her *luftmentsch* husband, who, instead of pursuing any practical means of financial support, plays his fiddle and lives his ineffable, spiritual fantasy.

**DER SHOLEM-ZOKHER** (1973), adapted from a 1937 choral piece to the same text, is another narrative scena that is full of Hassidic song and dance figures

and idioms. The dramatic contrasts and the sense of continuity suggest an operatic impulse.

[*Editor’s note:* The full title of Itzik Manger’s poem is “*Avrom ovinu pravet a sholem-zokher*” (Abraham Our Patriarch Hosts a *sholem-zokher*). It is part of Manger’s larger cycle of poetry, *Khumesh lider* (Songs of the Pentateuch; 1935), in which biblical accounts are recast within 19th-century settings of typical eastern European villages and *shtetlekh* (market towns), and in which patriarchal and other biblical personalities are portrayed as contemporary Jews—with the sensibilities, concerns, superstitions, and failings of Jewish inhabitants of those towns. A *sholem-zokher* (lit., welcoming a son) is a home ceremony and celebration for friends and relatives that is held on the first Friday night following the birth of a son. In some traditions the event is also called *y’shu’at ha’ben* (redemption of a son) or *sh’vu’at ha’ben* or a *ben zokher*. In Sephardi ritual, this ceremony includes additional prayers and readings in honor of the prophet Elijah—the symbolic patron of the child at his circumcision. This poem recounts the birth of Isaac in the context of a 19th-century Hassidic-oriented *sholem-zokher* hosted by his father, Abraham, while Sarah, having just given birth, is still in the lying-in chamber. The three angels of the biblical story—here recast as three “Turks,” or disciples (*hassidim*) of the so-called Turkish Rebbbe—visit and remind Abraham of Sarah’s laughter in disbelief at their announcement a year earlier that she would bear a child in her old age. The poem contains references to certain customs, folkways, and superstitions then common among many nonurbanized religious Jews living in a world that was still barely affected by modernity—even after the dawn of the 20th century. The *shir hamaylesn* were amulets, or charms, that customarily were hung on the doors of a newborn’s home in order to protect the child from the evil demon



Lilith, as well as from other perceived evil spirits. Those amulets contained words from Psalm 121 (one of the fifteen Psalms that begin with the words *shir hama'a lot*) and various kabbalistic quotations. Other amulets, *k'mi'ot*, could be worn during pregnancy to ward off miscarriage. Still others were placed above the head and under the pillow of a woman in labor. Chickpeas (*bob*) are customarily served in connection with birth celebrations in many Jewish traditions—perhaps because their round shape is perceived as symbolizing the recurring life cycle. The *shtrayml* is a distinct fur hat worn by certain Hassidim. The “ten Jews” singing and dancing probably refers to the custom in some circles then of a vigil kept by a *minyán* (prayer quorum of ten) until the day of circumcision. —NWL]

The group of settings of poems by Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972), one of the most influential and original theologian-philosophers of the 20th century, stand among the most profound achievements of Lazar Weiner’s creative life. In these three songs—**GOT GEYT MIR NOKH UMETUM, KHOYVES**, and **GOT UN MENTSH** (1973)—the poetry examines the relationship between God and man and explores man’s anguished efforts to live a life worthy of the compassionate force that created him. The songs are uncompromisingly sober, and in *Got un mentsh* a contrapuntal web of independent lines, tonal but highly dissonant, is woven around an eloquent parlando line. The intensity of expression is embodied perfectly in the technical language.

Two other songs from this same general period—**GRAMEN GESHRIBN IN ZAMD** (1965) and **FUN VAYTE TEG** (1977)—are also about man’s relationship with God in terms of man’s dual capacity for good and evil, for kindness and brutality, and how this duality can exist in the presence of a beneficent deity. *Gramen geshribn in zamd*, with its expressive, flowing piano part and its hesitant, fragmented modal line, follows an A-B-A formal structural scheme. The B section is a dramatically contrasting recitative-arioso that cries out the basic argument of the poem.

*Fun vayte teg* is designed as two parallel strophes with a developmental continuation. The song is unusual in that it ends in passionate, almost desperate affirmation with the words “That ancient joy, that God is here.”

Another song that concludes with a desperate attempt at such affirmation—desperate because it comes in response to imminent death and destruction—is **YIDN ZINGEN ANI MAMIN** (1973). The hymnlike chant is believed to have been sung as an anthem of hope and unswerving belief by many Jews in the German-built ghettos, concentration camps, and death camps during the Second World War.

[*Editor’s note:* The words quoted in this song are based on the twelfth of Moses Maimonides’ (1135–1204) “Thirteen Articles of Faith,” which are recited daily by most observant Jews in the morning service and are also paraphrased in the hymn *yigdal*. These words have been set to different tunes and chants at various times. The melody upon which Weiner’s song is based is believed to have been fashioned for these words in the Warsaw Ghetto by the Hassidic singer-composer Azriel David Fastag. According to that scenario, it would have been spread from there to the camps to which Jews were deported from the ghetto, as well as to the outside world by the small number of Jews who escaped or otherwise survived. Notwithstanding admitted gaps in our knowledge of the actual provenance and currency of this song during the Holocaust, even concerning the degree to which its familiarity might have been exaggerated in postwar symbolism, it has become nonetheless indelibly associated with the Holocaust and with our perception that it was sung in that context. It has therefore become a staple rendition at Holocaust-related memorial events, for which it has also acquired a number of choral arrangements. The *Ani Mamin* of Max Helfman (1901–1963) is particularly notable. —NWL]

The preexisting melodic material of this *Ani mamin* version is woven into the fabric of Weiner’s despairing

art song. The text cries out, "The Messiah *will* come, even though he may tarry; he *must* come, he *is coming*, he is already here ...!" The conclusion, surrounded by crashing chords, suggests hope against hope rather than realistic hope of rescue.

**BAYM BENTSHN LIKHT** (1974) and **IKH HOB DIKH SHOYN LANG** (1976) are both songs of exquisite economy and quiet elegance. *Baym bentshn likht* is tenderly dedicated to the memory of Weiner's two mothers, Gisse-Malke and Khassia. The murmured chant suffused with Yiddish melos is enveloped by a texture of slow-moving chords that dissolve into a quiet stream of melody at the end of each strophe. The suspended chords create an aura of stillness, remoteness, and mystery, astutely and graphically evoking the image of the lighting of the Sabbath candles with the corresponding benediction. The touching melancholy of the song, a mixture of hope, regret, and reminiscence—suggested by the hot tears of the weeping candles—is conveyed with inconspicuous, assured mastery.

*Ikh hob dikh shoyrn lang* is a strange, sad love song laden with resignation. As with *Baym bentshn likht*, the poem is set in a recitative-like parlando. The range is narrow, and the vocal line is a pianistic garland composed of chains of ascending and descending perfect fourths, harmonized and enriched by chromatically inflected chords. It is a short song, simple in format, yet infinitely touching.

**DI MAYSE MIT DER VELT** (1930) is a dramatic narrative in which the sardonic humor of the poem is colorfully conveyed. Three musical ideas organize this parable in song: a short, rhythmic figure, recitative-arioso passages, and a mordant sequential refrain. The mode is prevailingly whole tone. The vocal part is more concerned with storytelling than with the invention of shapely melody.

**IKH BIN DER VAYNRIB** (1965) is a strange, thorny, ambiguous, and passionate love song, through-composed, each short stanza of the poem reflected in the different music to which each one is set—without  
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separation—yet as four connected parts of the poem. Some of the song, especially the wild beginning, is unusually dissonant, perhaps expressive of the restless atmosphere of the disturbing sentiment.

**TWO HUMORESQUES** (1965) comprises the songs **BALD VET ZAYN A REGN** and **A PAPIR VIL BAGEYN ZELBSTMORD**. These delightful miniatures are, despite their umbrella title, more than mere amusements. Both are concentrated and elegant compositions with fine examples of tone painting—raindrops in the first, and the pathetic falling figure followed by the sounds of an approaching train in the second—tone painting that is used to integrate the songs rather than to provide trivial sound effects. Traditional Jewish melodic elements are woven into the musical texture with great subtlety, such that they are probably not recognizable to most listeners.

**OVNT-LID** (1968) is an exquisite song of incomparable calm and tenderness, tinged with childlike existential melancholy. The interplay between voice and piano is beautifully conceived, with each element proceeding independently—yet in perfect harmony with the other. Two brief recitative passages are supported by expressively inflected chords; the vocal line has an unusually rich melodic value. In essence, the song is a lullaby, and the alliterative syllables enhance the feeling of purity and gentle consolation. *Ovnt-lid*, while it is a faithful setting of the Yiddish poetry, does not rely on any perceived Jewish melos, although a few fragments in the piano part might suggest a reference to cantorial chant. *Ovnt-lid* was written for and dedicated to soprano Susan Davenny-Wyner, who joined the family in 1967.

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## Song Transliterations and Translations

Note: The translations and transliterations for these poems, unless otherwise noted, are by Eliyahu Mishulovin. Preliminary preparations by Adam J. Levitin.

### 1. YOSL KLEZMER

(Yosl the Musician)

Poet: Naftoli Gross (1896–1956)

*az yosl klezmer shpilt af a simkhe,  
tantst khevre vi a khvalye in yam,  
me huliet, me trinkt un me zingt:  
hey taydiri, taydiri, dam.*

*er tantst mit zayn fidl in redl  
dem marshelik helft er tsum gram;  
az yosl klezmer shpilt afn fidl  
tantst khevre vi a khvalye in yam,*

*iber hundred un tsvantsik, az s'vet kumen  
oykh yosls sho tsu geyn,  
vet er farn kise hakoved  
zikh shteln aley n kleyn.*

*nor az khevre vet im dort derzen  
hey taydiri, taydiri, dam.  
ot iz er yosl der klezmer!  
un tantsn vi a khvalye in yam.*

\* \* \* \* \*

When Yosl the klezmer plays at a celebration,  
The crowd dances like waves in the sea.  
They revel, they drink, and they sing:  
Hey, *tay-di-ri, tay-di-ri, dam*.

He dances with his fiddle in the circle;  
He accompanies the jester with his rhymes:  
When Yosl the klezmer plays his fiddle—  
The folks dance like waves in the sea.

After a hundred and twenty years, when  
Yosl's hour will also come,  
Before God's throne  
He will stand humble and alone.

But when the folks will catch sight of him there:  
Hey, *tay-di-ri, tay-di-ri, dam*.  
There he is "Yosl the klezmer!"  
And they'll dance like the waves in the sea.

### 2. YIDISH

Poet: Yakov-Yitskhak Segal (1896–1954)

*yidish mayn goldene brunem,  
fun dir hot der balsemtov getrunken,  
der mezsheritser magid hakodesh,  
der bratslaver, barditshever  
un azoy fil prost, poshete, orime yidn,  
in vogl durkh vegn un lender,  
in eybikn velt unter vegns  
vu s'tsindt zikh di vor un legende.  
yidish mayn likhtiker brunem!*

\* \* \* \* \*

Yiddish, my golden well,  
From you did the Ba'al Shem Tov drink,  
The holy Mezhirecher Maggid,  
The Bratslaver and Berditchever *rebbes*,  
And so have many plain, simple, poor Jews  
In their wandering through different lands and territories.  
Forever in a world of journeying  
Where truth and legends are fused.  
Yiddish, my bright source!

### 3. ERGETS VAYT

(Somewhere Far)

Poet: H. Leivick [Leivick Halpern] (1886–1962)

*ergets vayt, ergets vayt  
ligt dos land dos farbotene,  
zilbrik bloen di berg  
nokh fun keynem batrotene;  
ergets tif, ergets tif  
in der erd ayngeknotene,  
vartn oytsres af undz,  
vartn oytsres farshotene.*

*ergets vayt, ergets vayt  
ligt aley n gefangener,  
af zayn kop shtarbt di shayn  
fun der zun der fargangener;  
ergets voglt ver um  
tif in shney a farshotener,  
un gefint nit keyn veg  
tsu dem land dem farbotenem.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Somewhere far, somewhere far,  
Lies the forbidden land;  
Silvery blue are the mountains  
Still never trodden.  
Somewhere deep, somewhere deep,  
Buried in the earth,

Treasures are awaiting us.  
Hidden treasures await us.

Somewhere far, somewhere far,  
A prisoner lies alone,  
Upon his head the light  
Of the setting sun is dying.  
Somewhere somebody wanders around  
Hidden deep in snow,  
And cannot find the way  
To the forbidden land.

#### 4. IKH HOB FAR DIR A SOD

(I Have a Secret for You)

Poet: Nahum Baruch Minkoff (1893–1958)

*ikh hob far dir a sod a zisn  
a vort, an eyn un eyntsik vort.*

*in virvar trogstu zikh farrisn  
un ikh vayt fartrogn fun dayn ort.*

*ikh her nit oyf khaloymes tsu dir shpinen,  
geheyme labirintn durkh mayn troym;*

*bay tog vert alts tserunen,  
vu zol ikh dikh gefinen?*

*ot bist du do  
un shoy'n farshvundn in dem tifn thom.*

*ikh hob far dir a sod a zisn  
a vort, an eyn un eyntsik vort.*

*loykhst uf, es haltn dayne oygn zikh in shlisn.  
un ikh, ikh zukh nokh alts um dayn geheylit ort.*

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I have a sweet secret for you,  
A word, a one and only word.

In the chaos you carry yourself haughtily  
And I am carried off far from your place.

I do not cease to spin dreams for you,  
Secret labyrinths through my dream;

When the day arrives, it all vanishes.  
Where shall I find you?

Now you're here,  
And suddenly you've vanished into the deep abyss.

I have a sweet secret for you,  
A word, a one and only word.

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You light up, your eyes are closing.  
And I, I still seek  
Your hallowed place.

#### 5. A NIGN

Poet: L. Magister [Leibush Lehrer] (1887–1965)

*iz a kabtsn amol gevezn,  
flegt er nor mit got zikh krign.  
vunder iber vunder hot mit im getrofn,  
ven er hot gezungen ot aza min nign:  
tshiri-bim, bam, bam! ...*

*hot fun nign zikh vayn gegosn,  
hot er zup nokh zup geshlungen,  
vunder iber vunder hot mit im getrofn,  
ven er hot gezungen, ot aza min nign:  
tshiri-bim, bam, bam! ...*

*zingt der yid un s'gist mesikes,  
iz er azsh fun freyd geshprungen.  
vunder iber vunder hot mit im getrofn,  
ven er hot gezungen, ot aza min nign:  
tshiri-bim, bam, bam! ...*

\* \* \* \* \*

There was once a pauper,  
Who only with God would quarrel.  
Wonder upon wonder befell him,  
Whenever he sang this sort of nign [melody]:  
*Tshiri-bim bam bam ...*

Wine flowed from the nign,  
And he swallowed sip after sip.  
Wonder upon wonder befell him,  
Whenever he sang this sort of nign:  
*Tshiri-bim bam bam ...*

The Jew sings, and blissfulness flows  
Until he leaps from joy.  
Wonder upon wonder befell him,  
Whenever he sang this sort of nign:  
*Tshiri-bim bam bam ...*

#### 6. SHTILE LIKHT

(Quiet Candles)

Poet: Mani Leib [Mani Leib Brahinski] (1883–1953)

*shtile likht un shtile oygn  
lipn frume, shtile.  
far di shtile likht geboygn  
sheptshet zi a tfile,  
shtile tfiledike verter,*

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*koym di likht nor hern:  
—got, iz er nit mayn basherter,  
vest mir im bashern.  
ikh vel far im kinder hobn  
koshere un fayne,  
mayne kinder veln hobn  
oygn shvarts, vi zayne.  
er vet zitsn, lernen toyre  
shemen vet zayn nomen.  
vest bashern, guter boyre?  
vest bashern!—omeyn.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Quiet candles and quiet eyes  
Lips pious, hushed.  
Bent before the quiet candles  
She whispers a prayer.  
Quiet words of prayer,  
The flames can scarcely hear them:  
God, if he is not destined for me—  
You will destine him for me!  
I will bear him children,  
Pure, honest, and fine.  
My children will have  
Black eyes, like his.  
He will sit and learn Torah,  
He will be renowned.  
Will you destine thus, good Creator?—  
You will destine it!—Amen ...

**7. GOT GEYT MIR NOKH UMETUM**  
(God Follows Me Everywhere)

Poet: Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972)  
*Translation: Rabbi Morton M. Leifman*

*got geyt mir nokh umetum  
shpint a nets fun blikn mir arum,  
blendt mayn blindn rukn vi a zun.*

*got geyt mir nokh vi a vald umetum.  
un shtendik shtoynen mayne lipn hartsik shtum,  
vi a kind, vos blondzshet in an altn heyliktum.*

*got geyt in mir nokh vi a shoyder umetum.  
es glust zikh mir ru, es mont in mir: kum!  
kuk vi zeungen valgern af gasn zikh arum.*

*ikh gey in rayoynes mayne um vi a sod  
in a langn koridor durkh di velt—  
un derze a mol hoykh iber mir, dos ponimloze  
ponim fun got.*

\* \* \* \* \*

God follows me everywhere—  
Spins a net of glances around me,  
Warms my sightless back like the sun.

God follows me like a forest everywhere.  
My lips, filled with wonder, are fully numb, dumb  
Like a child who blunders upon an ancient holy place.

God follows me like a shiver everywhere.  
The desire in me is for rest; the demand within me is:  
Rise up,  
See how prophetic visions lie neglected in the streets!

I wander with my reveries as with a secret  
In a long corridor through the world—  
And sometimes I see, high above me, the faceless  
face of God.

[God follows me in tramways, in cafés.  
And it is only with the backs of one's eyes that  
one can see  
How secrets ripen, how visions come to be.]

**8. KHOYVES**  
(Debts)

Poet: Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972)  
*Translation: Rabbi Morton M. Leifman*

*sho'en monen, sho'en shrayen:  
—ven vestu di troymen, di khoyves batsoln?*

*s'lozt yede sho mir iber a tsavoe.  
es shrayen di teg glaykh zey voltn zayn yorn.*

*s'hobn verter mikh farfirt, mit veytkayt mikh farshikert.  
bin nor heldish in vartn, nor mekhtik in hislahaves.*

*far keyn shum otem hob ikh velt nokh nit baloynt.  
o, vi vag ikh afsnay tsukunft, tsayt nokh tsu borgn?*

*khaloymes zenen khoyves, lider zenen shvues.  
ven vel ikh di troymen, di khoyves batsoln?*

\* \* \* \* \*

Hours demand payment, hours cry out:  
When will you pay the debts for your dreams?

Every hour leaves me a last will and testament.  
Days cry out as if they were years.

Words have seduced me, intoxicated me with their range.  
I am heroic only in waiting, mighty only in ardor.

I have not rewarded the world for even one breath.  
Oh, how dare I borrow time from a new future?

Dreams are debts, songs are oaths.  
When will I pay for the dreams, for the debts?

**9. GOT UN MENTSH**  
(God and Man)

Poet: Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972)

Translation: Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

*nisht far zikh vilstu korbones,  
nor far antoyshte in dayn libe.  
kh'hob nisht af koved dayn rakhmones,  
nor af farlozene fun ale.*

*s'farshemt dikh shendung nisht azoy,  
vi mentshns trern, veygeshrey;  
s'tut nisht lesterung azoy dir vey,  
vi a mentshlekhe fartsveyflung.*

*ver es lestert mentshn, velt—  
iz dikh, almekhtiker, mevaze;  
ver in mentshn zikh farlibt—  
iz dikh, heyliker, mehane.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Not for Your own sake do You want sacrificial gifts  
Only for those disappointed in Your love.  
I don't value Your mercy for honor's sake;  
Only for those abandoned by all.

Rape shames You less  
Than people's tears, than screams of woe.  
Blasphemy pains You less  
Than people's despair.

He who blasphemes people, the world—  
Shames You, Almighty;  
He who loves people—  
Brings joy to You, Holy One

**10. TSELA-TSELDI**

Poet: Jacob Glatstein (1896–1971)

*tsele-tseldi.  
tsele-tseldi—gring-fisike.  
tsum tsimb fun tsimbl,  
verstu vi a sarne gring,  
vi a hezl flink.*

*tsele-tseldi,  
dayn kashtan-kop  
iz gro atsind,  
di bloe oygn zenen nit,  
langzam velkn dayne reges*

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*es shvaygt in dir a tifer troyer,  
mit der shtilkayt fun a shpetn harbst;  
ober tsele-tseldi,  
tsum tsimb fun tsimbl,  
verstu vi a sarne gring,  
u-ip, tsele-tseldi!*

*tsele-tseldi,  
farmayd di ziftn dayne ale nakht,  
zol dos rufn fun der toyter hant dikh nit shrekn.  
zog,  
velkher barg erd ken den dikh fardekn,  
az tsum tsimb fun tsimbl  
verstu vi a sarne gring,  
gring-fisike.  
uip—tsele-tseldi!*

\* \* \* \* \*

Tsele-Tseldi.  
Tsele-Tseldi, the fleet-footed.  
At the sound of the cymbal  
You become as swift as a deer,  
Nimble as a hare.

Tsele-Tseldi,  
Your chestnut head  
Is gray now,  
Your blue eyes no longer see.  
Your moments are slowly withering away.  
A deep sadness lies silently within you,  
With the stillness of a late autumn.  
But Tsele-Tseldi,  
At the sound of the cymbal  
You become as swift as a deer,  
U-ip! Tsele-Tseldi!

Tsele-Tseldi,  
Avoid your nightly sighs.  
Don't be frightened by the call of death's hand.  
Say,  
Whatever mound of earth covers you  
At the sound of the cymbal  
You become as swift as a deer,  
Fleet-footed.  
U-ip!—Tsele-Tseldi!

**11. DER SHOLEM-ZOKHER**

Poet: Itzik Manger (1901–1969)

*di shir-hamaylesn laykhtn  
arop fun ale vent,  
tsen yidn in soyblene shtraymlekh  
pliesken mit di hent.*

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*"ay bim-bam, bim-bam, tate,  
ay day-dam, day-dam, day..."*  
zey zingen dem heylikn nign  
fun dem rebn fun terkay.

zey esn gezotenen arbes  
un tunken in bir di berd,  
"reb avrom, pile-ploim,  
a nes, a nes iz bashert."

avrom ovinu shmeykhlt  
arayn in der groyer bord.  
er hert vi yitzkhokl pishtshet  
hinter dem laylkhil dort.

er farmakht a rege di oygn  
un zet: di dray terkn geyen,  
zey haltn zikh on di fedem  
fun dem kinds geveyn.

ot treyslen zey op di shtoybn  
fun di kleyder un di shikh,  
un ot kushn zey di mezuze  
un zoghn op af gikh:

"mazl tov reb avrom,  
ir gedenkt mistome di nakht,  
ven ayer ployneste, sore,  
hot fun undz gelakht."

un nokh eyder avrom zogt zey:  
"vilkomen, libe gest!  
zetst aykh tsum tish anider  
un trinkt un zingt un est"—

farheybn di terkn di poles  
un zenen oys di tsayt—  
avrom efnt di oygn:  
"vu zenen di fremde layt?"

"got iz mit aykh, reb avrom!  
ay day-dam, day-dam, day,  
zingt beser mit undz dem zemer  
fun dem rebn fun terkay."

tsen yidn in soyblene shtraymlekh  
pliesken mit di hent,  
di shir-hamaylesn laykhtn  
arop fun ale vent.

\* \* \* \* \*

The birth amulets shine  
Down from all the walls,  
Ten Jews in sable shtraymlakh  
Clap their hands.

*"Ay bim-bam, bim-bam, father,  
Ay dai-dam, dai-dam, dai ..."*  
They are singing the holy nign [melody]  
Of the Turkish rebbe.

They eat boiled chickpeas,  
Their beards dipped in beer.  
"Reb Avrom, wonder of wonders,  
A miracle, a miracle happened."

Abraham our Patriarch smiles  
Into his gray beard.  
He hears little Isaac whimper  
Under the sheets.

For a moment he shuts his eyes  
And sees the three Turks coming,  
Holding on to the thread  
Of the child's cry.

Here, they brush off the dust  
From their clothes and shoes,  
And here, they kiss the mezuza  
And quickly say:

"Mazl tov, Reb Avrom.  
You surely remember the night  
When your wife, Sarah,  
Laughed at us."

And before Avrom can say:  
"Welcome, dear guests!  
Sit down at the table  
And drink and sing and eat"—

The Turks lift their coats  
And are gone in no time—  
Avrom opens his eyes:  
"Where are the visitors?"

"God is with you, Reb Avrom!  
Ay dai-dam, dai-dam, dai,  
Better sing with us the song  
Of the Turkish rebbe."

Ten Jews in sable shtraymlakh  
Clap their hands.  
The birth amulets shine  
Down from all the walls.

## 12. TOYBNSHTILE

(Hushed-Doves)

Poet: Mani Leib [Mani Leib Brahinski] (1883–1953)

*toybnshstile, bloye ovnt-shtundn!  
shpreyt far mir mayn ovnt-troyrn tshshpreyter!  
itster... itster brenen royter, royter  
mayne shtile royzn – mayne vundn.*

*itster shtarbt in gasn der gepilder;  
trit un verter hilkhn shtiler, veykher,  
oygn, benkendik nokh oygn, kukn bleykher,  
hent in hent gedrikte redn epes milder.*

*itster vert mayn benkschaft gold getsundn.  
heyser vert mayn blut, mayn oyg vert breyter!  
itster... itster brenen royter, royter  
mayne royte royzn – mayne vundn.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Hushed-doves, blue hour of dusk!  
Spread for me my evening dream still wider!  
Now ... now burning red, even more red are  
My quiet roses—my wounds.

Now the racket on the street is dying;  
Footsteps and words resound more gently, more softly,  
Eyes yearning for eyes look paler,  
Hands holding hands converse tenderly.

Now my longing is burning golden.  
My blood gets hotter, my eyes wider!  
Now ... burning red, even more red are  
My red roses—my wounds.

## 13. VIGLID

(Cradle Song)

Poet: Esther Shumiatcher-Hirshbein (1899–1980)

*s'krikht fun d'rerd a grezele  
shlofzshe, shlof mayn hezele.  
lyulinke, mayn kind.*

*tsu dayn vig on vindelekh  
kumen shof un rindelekh.  
lyulinke, mayn kind.*

*shtub iz nokh on dekhele  
shlofzshe untern strekhele.  
lyulinke, mayn kind.*

*du bist an iber vanderer,  
du un ikh un andere.  
lyulinke, mayn kind.*

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*dayn tate iz in feld faran;  
der tate mitn oksnshpan.  
lyulinke, mayn kind*

*kvelt der bob in shoytele;  
in feld geyt uf a broytele.  
lyulinke, mayn kind.*

*vaks, mayn kind, a groyser oys,  
es kukt af dir dos feld aroys.  
lyulinke, mayn kind.*

\* \* \* \* \*

A small blade of grass crawls out from the earth—  
Sleep, sleep my little one,  
Lullaby my child.

To your crib,  
Where you lie without swaddling,  
Sheep and cattle come,  
Lullaby my child.

The house is still without a roof,  
Sleep then under the thatch,  
Lullaby my child.

You will always be a wanderer,  
You and I and others,  
Lullaby my child.

Your father is in the field,  
Father threshing with the oxen.  
Lullaby my child.

The pea is happy in its pod;  
From the field we will gain bread.  
Lullaby my child.

Grow, my child, to adulthood,  
The field awaits you.  
Lullaby my child.

## 14. FUN VAYTE TEG

(From Distant Days)

Poet: H. Leivick [Leivick Halpern] (1886–1962)

*fun vayte teg an alt gezang  
hilkht op in mir mit frish geklang.*

*a tfile-ruf, a nakhtgebet  
tsu dem vos hert, tsu dem vos zet.*

*tsu dem vos shpreyt zayn gob, zayn guts  
un brengt gnod un treyst un shuts.*

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*tsu dem vos vakht, tsu dem vos hit  
mayn shvartsapl un mayn trit.*

*tsu dem vos tut zayn likht arayn  
mir tif in layb, un vigt mikh ayn.*

*a freyd aza in shpeter sho—  
di alte freyd vos got iz do.*

\* \* \* \* \*

From long-gone days an old song  
Resounds in me with a fresh rhythm.

A call to prayer, an evening supplication  
To the One who hears, to the One who sees.

To the One who spreads out His bounty, His goods,  
And brings compassion and consolation and protection.

To the one who guards, to the one who shields  
My pupil and my step.

To the one who shines His light  
Deep into my being, and cradles me in.

What a joy in this late hour,  
That ancient joy, that God is here.

#### 15. **BALD VET ZAYN A REGN**

(Soon It Will Rain)

Poet: A. Lutzky [Aaron Tsuker] (1894–1957)

*bald vet zayn a regn,  
azoy dertseyt di gas.  
kukn ale hayzer  
dershroken un blas.*

*trogt zikh a papir  
un lyaremt in gas:  
gvald! gvald!  
ikh vel vern nas!*

*kumt a zun fun himl,  
shtelt zikh op in gas,  
un la-a-a-kht:  
es vet nit zayn keyn regn.—  
nor gemakht a shpas.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Soon it will rain:  
So goes the story on the street.  
All houses look  
Frightened and pale.

A piece of paper floats around  
And shouts in the street:

Help me! Help me!  
I will get wet!

The sun emerges from the heavens  
And pauses in the street  
And laughs—  
There will be no rain.  
It was just a joke.

#### 16. **A PAPIR VIL BAGEYN ZELBSTMORD**

(A Paper Wants to Commit Suicide)

Poet: A. Lutzky [Aaron Tsuker] (1894–1957)

*a papir iz nimes gevorn dos lebn,  
iz er tsugefaln tsu a rels  
un hot opgevart di ban.  
ven di ban hot zikh ongeyogt—  
hot er zikh dershrokn farn impet,  
zikh geton  
a—hojb-uf  
un iz avek mit a moyrediker freyd.*

\* \* \* \* \*

A piece of paper lost its appetite for life,  
So it dropped itself upon the rails  
And awaited the train.  
With the train fast approaching,  
It was frightened by the rush.  
It picked itself up,  
And off it went with an awesome joy.

#### 17. **DER YID MITN FIDL**

(The Jew with the Fiddle)

Poet: A. Lutzky [Aaron Tsuker] (1894–1957)

*amol hot a yidl geheysn yidl,  
hot yidl dos yidl geshpilt af a fidl.  
fidlt a lidl dos orime yidl,  
vos er aley n yidl bazingt in a lidl.  
ay-day-day ...*

*bet im zayn vaybele:  
libinker yidl,  
fidl dos lidl mit fodim un nidl.  
mir darfn parnose, vos toyg mir dayn lidl.  
ver mir a shnayderl, zay a gut yidl.*

*lidl dos yidl mit harts afn fidl;  
dos lebn iz biter, un zis iz dos lidl.*

*zogt im zayn vaybele:  
shlekhhtinker yidl,  
fidl dayn lidl a matse mit ridl.*

*ikh red tsu dir takhles, barekhn zikh, yidl;  
a vint in der midbor a yidl mit lidl.*

*fidlt der yidl zayn lid afn fidl;  
fun ale parnoses gefelt mir dos lidl.*

*tsornt zayn vaybele:  
yidl, du yidl!  
dayn vaybele yomert un du zingst a lidl!*

*veyndl un kheyndl der yid afn fidl;  
ikh ken mir nit helfn mayn lebn iz fidl!*

*azoy vet dos lidl  
shoyn blaybn derziglt:  
dos vaybele taynet, dos yidele yidlt,  
fidlt un lidlt, der yid mitn fidl  
un merer se yidlt alts shener dos lidl.  
ay-day-day ...*

\* \* \* \* \*

Once there was a Jew called Yidl,  
Yidl the Jew played the fiddle.  
The poor Yidl fiddles a song,  
As only Yidl can.  
Ay-day-day ...

His wife pleads with him:  
"Yidl, my love,  
Fiddle your song with thread and needle.  
We need sustenance; what good is your song?  
Become a tailor, be a good Jew."

The little Jew sings with his heart on the fiddle:  
"Life is bitter and the song is sweet."

His wife then says to him:  
"You incorrigible Jew, Yidl!  
Your fiddling is as useless as a shovel made of matza.  
I'm talking about practical matters—think about it, Yidl;  
A Jew with a song is like a wind in the desert."

The Jew fiddles his song on the fiddle:  
"Of all the things one could do with himself, I like music."

His wife rages:  
"Yidl, you Jew!  
Your wife wails and you sing a song!"

The Jew cried and pleaded with his fiddle:  
"I can't help myself, my life is the fiddle!"

So the battle over the song goes on:  
The wife pleads; the little Jew plays a Jewish song.  
He fiddles and sings, the Jew with the fiddle.

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And the more the Jew plays, the prettier the song.  
Ay-day-day ...

**18. BAYM BENTSHN LIKHT**  
(While Lighting the Candles)  
Poet: Joseph Rubinstein (1905–1978)

*mayn mame veynt baym bentshn likht,  
ikh her nisht ire verter,  
ikh ze nor vi di ttern trifn op af ir gezikht.  
ikh kuk zikh tsu—a laykhter shteyt in gantsn a fartrerter,  
a laykhter veynt vi zi mit heyse tropns fun a likht.*

*ikh ze nokh alts mayn mames hent, vos fligln bay ir shtern,  
di oygn ire halb-farmakhte in der vayt gevendt  
un durkh der heler shayn vos finklt op in ire ttern  
a keynmol nisht-fargesenem, a shabesdikn blend.*

\* \* \* \* \*

My mother weeps when lighting the [Sabbath] candles;  
I do not hear her words;  
I can only see the tears rolling down her face.  
I observe—the candlestick stands showered in tears.  
The candlestick weeps like her, with hot drops of wax.

I still see how my mother's hands flutter at her forehead,  
Her eyes half shut, peering into the distance.  
And through the bright glow that glimmers from  
her tears,  
A forever unforgettable Sabbath glow.

**19. A GEBET**  
(A Prayer)  
Poet: Joseph Rolnick (1879–1955)

*reboyne-sheloylem, du got fun mayn foter,  
mayn hartsike tfile her tsu:  
makh gants di tserisene shtiker fun hartsn  
un shenk mir a bisele ru.*

*reboyne-shel-oylem, du got fun mayn foter,  
mayn hartsike tfile her tsu:  
tsushter di farlibene shtiker fun hartsn  
un shenk mir a bisele ru.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Master of the universe, You God of my father,  
Hear my heartfelt prayer:  
Mend the torn pieces of my heart  
And grant me a little relief.

Master of the universe, You God of my father,  
Hear my heartfelt prayer:

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Destroy the remaining pieces of my heart  
And grant me a little respite.

**20. SHTILE TENER** (1893–1958)  
(Hushed Tones)

Poet: Nahum Baruch Minkoff

*shtile tener,  
khumrne himl,  
feygl raysn tsu di volkns zikh,  
es vet regenen, mayn kroyn,  
feygl veln ergets vu farflien  
mit farbenkte fligl.*

*mate tener,  
mayn farvolknt harts—  
un du, mayn benkshaf, rayst zikh tsu di volkns hoykh.  
es vet regenen, mayn kroyn,  
un du, mayn benkshaf, vest farflien ergets vu  
mit farnetste fligl.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Hushed tones,  
Gloomy sky.  
Birds ascend toward the clouds.  
It will rain, my precious one.  
Birds will fly off somewhere  
With longing wings.

Dull tones,  
My overcast heart—  
And you, my longing, aspire to the clouds above.  
It will rain, my precious one.  
And you, my longing, will fly off somewhere  
With soaked wings.

**21. A FOTER TSU ZAYN ZUN**  
(A Father to His Son)

Poet: Jacob Glatstein (1896–1971)

*mayn kind, ikh hob gefirt dayne blinde finger  
iber yidishe shrift vi iber breil  
kh'hob dir ayngegebn,  
begneyve, es-leffen yidishkayt.  
host zikh gekrumt  
vi s'volt geven ritsneyl.  
host keynmol nit farshtanen vos kh'bin geven oysn.  
mayn kind, kh'hob dir geshtelt pokn,  
tsu bavornen dikh kegn droysn.*

*kh'hob dikh tog-ayn un tog-oys geyidisht.  
geshnitn dayn layb mit libshaf, mit tsubund.*

*host zikh tomid gekhidesht  
vi a tate ken zayn aza akhzer,  
vi ken er dem kinds vund  
makhn vundiker un royer.  
mayn kind, kh'hob dir ayngegebn  
haft un yidishn doyer.*

*itst blondzhestu avek.  
s'hot dikh di fremd farshlept.  
s'tsit dikh tsum barg,  
s'ruft dikh der tol.  
antloyfst. dem tatns toyre iz oysgevept.  
ober ale dayne farbenkte evyrim  
shrayen shma-yisroel*

\* \* \* \* \*

My Child, I have led your blind fingers  
Over Yiddish writing as over Braille.  
I have fed you, clandestinely,  
Tablespoons of Judaism.  
And you grimaced  
As though it were castor oil.  
Your could never understand what I was after.  
My child, I inoculated you  
To protect you from the outside world.

Day in and day out I filled you with Jewishness,  
Cut into your flesh with love, with deep devotion.  
Your were always shocked  
How a father could be so cruel,  
How he made his child's  
Wound deeper and more raw.  
My child, I instilled in you  
Perseverance and Jewish endurance.

Now you wander away;  
The alien world has pulled you away.  
You are drawn to the mountain,  
To a call from the valley.  
You run away. Your father's Torah is desiccated.  
Yet all your yearning bones  
Shout *sh'ma yisra'el* [...God is one].

**22. VOLT MAYN TATE RAYKH GEVEN**  
(If My Father Were Rich)

Poet: Aaron Nissenson (1898–1964)

*volt mayn tate raykh geven,  
volt ikh zikh nit dingen;  
kh'volt gekoyft a ferd, vos ken  
bis tsum himl shpringen.*

*kh'volt a shprung ton azoy hoykh,  
un di zun derlangen,  
un dan kumen tsu der velt:  
kh'hob di zun gefangen.*

*voltn kumen fun der velt  
shenste fertsik froyen;  
voltn zey far mir—dem held  
zeyer harts fartroyern.*

*tsvishn shenste fun der velt  
volstu oykh gekumen;  
tsvishn shenste af der velt  
volt ikh dir genuen.*

*kh'volt di zun tsurik gehengt  
vu zi iz gehangen,  
un dem ferd avekgelozt,  
un mit dir gegangen.*

\* \* \* \* \*

If my father were rich,  
I would never bargain.  
I would buy a horse that could  
Leap up to the sky.

I would leap so high  
And seize the sun,  
And then come to the world and say:  
I have captured the sun.

From all over the world  
The forty most beautiful women will come;  
And to me—the hero—  
Their hearts they would pledge.

Amongst the beauties of the world  
You too would come:  
From amongst the beauties of the world  
I would choose you.

I would hang the sun back up  
Where it had been hanging,  
And let the horse loose,  
And stroll with you.

**23. DOS REYD FUNEM NOVI**  
(The Words of the Prophet)

Poet: L. Magister [Leibush Lehrer] (1887–1965)

*dos zenen di reyde funem novi  
tsu zayn folk un tsu ale felker.  
der himl farnemnt zan vort  
di erd efent oyf ire oyern:*

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*treyst zikh, treyst zikh folk, mayn folk  
a likht vet aroys shprotzn funem midbor shtam  
un untsindn di vilde grozen fun di deren,  
un varem di goldne zunen,  
di beymer fun di velder un di frukhtn fun di gertner,  
un di bliungen tsuvishn grozn in feld.*

*un eyn mentsh vet bagegenen a tsveytn un zogn:  
sholem, fridn tsu dir.*

*un der tsveyter vet enfern:  
sholem, gbenstet zol zayn der fridn.  
un sonim veln vern fraynt,  
un fraynt veln vern khaverim,  
un khaverim shvester un brider.*

*un kinder vet men mayses dertseyln,  
az amol, amol, orime zaynen geven af der velt,  
un hungerike hobn glekhtst nokh a shtikl broyt.  
un kranke zaynen oysgegangen far der tsayt.  
un umshuldike blut is  
fargosn gevron af der erd.*

*grolike mayses vet men dertseyln  
ober keyner, keyner vet zey nisht gloybn.  
to lomir oyskrietsn a tseykhen  
un oyfboyen a denkmol af eybik, af eybik.*

\* \* \* \* \*

These are the Prophet's words  
To his people and to all people.  
The heavens declare his word  
The earth turns its ears to listen.

Comfort, be comforted my folk.  
A light will spring from a desert stem  
And ignite the thorny weeds,  
And the golden sun will warm  
The trees in the forest  
And the fruits in the gardens  
And the blossoms among the grass in the fields.

And one man greeting another will say:  
*Shalom*, peace unto you.  
And the other will reply:  
*Shalom*, blessed be the peace.  
And enemies will turn into friends  
And friends will become comrades  
And comrades brothers and sisters.

And we will tell our children tales:  
There was a time when there  
Were poor people in the world,  
And the hungry begged for a scrap of bread.  
And the ill ones passed away before their time.

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And the blood of the innocent  
was spilled over the earth.  
Horrible tales we will tell,  
But no one will believe them.  
Thus let us carve out a remembrance  
And build a monument for ever and ever.

**24. OVNT-LID**  
(Evening Song)  
Poet: H. Leivick [Leivick Halpern] (1886–1962)

*iber ale shtiber,  
iber ale dekher;  
trogn zikh ariber  
zilber vayse fekher,  
un zey fokhn.  
un zey trogn  
treyst, bitokhn  
tzu di vos klogn—  
un tzum shvakhn—  
ru—  
un farmakhn  
oyg fun mide  
tzu.*

*ale—lyu.  
ale lider—  
ale lib:  
ale lipn—  
ale tzu.  
ale—liu,  
ha—lu—li,  
ale do,  
ale hi,  
ale tzu.*

*horkh, horkh.  
fun a blat—  
nit kayn shorkh,  
fun a groz—  
nit kayn rir,  
dokh horkh.*

*lyu—lyu—kol:  
a—le—lyu  
nokhamol.  
ha—lu—li,  
ale do,  
ale hi—  
alemol.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Over all the houses  
Above all the rooftops  
Silver-white fans  
Are flowing,  
And they flutter  
And they bring with them  
Consolation, faith  
To those who wail—  
And to the weary—  
Rest—  
And they close  
The eye of the tired.  
Shut.

*All—lyu,  
All songs—  
All love;  
All lips—  
All shut.  
All—lyu,  
Ha—lyu—li.  
All here.  
All near.  
All shut.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Listen, listen:  
From a leaf—  
Not a rustle.  
From a blade of grass—  
Not a stir.  
Listen, however.

*Lyu—lyu—a voice,  
A—le—lyu.  
Once again  
Ha—lyu—li,  
All here,  
All near—  
Forever!*

**25. GRAMEN GESHRIBN IN ZAMD**  
(Rhymes Traced in Sand)  
Poet: Melech Ravitch (Zekharye Khone Bergner)  
(1893–1976)

*in gortn. sof zumer. far nakht. af a bank.  
a letst-kehster turem in mayrevtsayt flamt.  
es shtarkt zikh der nakhtvint. un ikh shrayb a lid  
mit a ritl, a trukns in gortnzamd.*

"shlekht bistu mentsh un hefker vi vaser  
iz dayn khavers varem blut.  
got mayner, mentsh mayner, zog mir—farvos?  
es iz dokh azoy gring tsu zayn gut!

shlekht bistu, mentsh, vi a khalef dayn geshrey,  
az du bist eybik gerekht un gerekht!  
got mayner, mentsh mayner, zog mir—farvos?  
es iz dokh azoy shver tsu zayn shlekht!

shlekht bistu mentsh, un dokh zingstu tsu got,  
fun derlangen dem shleger di andere bak—  
ober unter der pole, gants veynik farborgn,  
halstu a nor-vos gesharfte hak."

in gortn. sof zumer. far nakht. fun der bank shtey ikh uf.  
der letst-hekhter turem—shoyng opgefamt.  
zog ikh stam in der pustkayt arayn: gute nakht!  
un tsetret in der finster mayn lid inem zand.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the garden. Late summer. Dusk. On a bench.  
A last towering spire flames in the west.  
The evening wind is gaining strength. And I write a poem  
With a dry twig in the garden sand.

"Evil art thou, man, and your friend's warm blood  
You regard as cheaply as free-flowing water!  
My God, my man, tell me—why?  
It is so easy to be good!

"Evil art thou, man. Your cry is like a butcher's knife:  
That you are always right and correct!  
My God, my man, tell me—why?  
It is so hard to be bad!

"Evil art thou, man, and still you sing to God  
About turning the other cheek to the one who strikes—  
While under your coat, scarcely concealed,  
You hold a freshly sharpened ax."

In the garden. Late summer. Dusk. I arise from the bench.  
The last towering spire—has flamed out.  
I just say into the hollowness: good night!  
And in the darkness I tread on my poem in the sand.

#### 26. IKH HOB DIKH SHOYN LANG

(Long Haven't I)  
Poet: Rajzel Zychlinska (1910–2001)

ikh hob dikh shoyng lang nit arumgenumen,  
mayn kind,  
zaynen leydik mayne hent.

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ikh hob dikh shoyng lang veynen nit gehert,  
zaynen trukn mayne teg.

ikh hob dikh shoyng lang lakhn nit gehert,  
iz zunloz mayn lebn.

ikh hob dikh shoyng lang nit gezen,  
mayn kind,  
bin ikh blind.

\* \* \* \* \*

Long haven't I hugged you,  
My child,  
So my hands are empty.

Long haven't I heard you cry,  
So my days are arid.

Long haven't I heard you laughing,  
So my life is sunless.

Long haven't I seen you,  
My child,  
So I am blind.

#### 27. VIGLID

Poet: Peretz Markish (1895–1952)

mikh hot farnart  
bay nakht  
der moyled  
mit a shney lid ...

firt mikh klor-vays tsigele  
fun mayn goldn vigele,  
firt mikh arum handlen  
rozshinkes mit mandlen ...

vayt, bay nakht, mistome,  
khapt zikh uf mayn mame.  
a! a! mame.  
unter mames vigele  
shteyt klor-vays tsigele,  
tsigele gegang iz handlen,  
rozshinkes mit mandlen ...

vigt di mame s'vigele,  
vigt a leydik vigele ...  
ikh mit klor-vays tsigele  
geyen arum handlen,  
geyen ergets handlen  
rozshinkes mit mandlen ...

\* \* \* \* \*

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At night  
the new moon  
bewitched me  
With a snowy song ...

The snow-white little goat is leading me  
From my golden crib;  
Leading me around to trade in  
Raisins and almonds.

Far away, at night, probably,  
My mother awakens,  
Ah! Ah! Mother!  
Under mother's cradle  
The little white goat stands.  
The little goat went off to trade  
Raisins and almonds.

Mother rocks the cradle,  
Rocks an empty cradle.  
I and the little snow-white goat  
Are going around dealing.  
Going somewhere to trade  
Raisins and almonds.

#### 28. DOS GOLD FUN DAYNE OYGN

(The Gold in Your Eyes)

Poet: Samuel Jacob Imber (1889–1942)

*dos gold fun dayne oygn,  
dos zilber fun dayn kol  
hot mikh mit toyznt shtraln geblent.*

*der otem fun dayn shvaygn,  
dayn shtarke tife ru  
hot mikh gor shtil gebundn di hent.*

*dayn tsiteriker tsoyer,  
dayn yugnt roynt un blas  
hot veykh aroysgetsoygn mayn harts.*

*dos fayer fun dayn libe,  
dos fayer fun dayn has  
hot zis aroysgetsoygn mayn blut.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The gold in your eyes,  
The silver in your voice  
Have blinded me with a thousand rays.

The breath of your silence,  
Your strong, deep calm  
Have so silently bound my hands.

Your trembling magic,  
Your youth, red and pale,  
Have softly sucked out my heart.

The fire of your love,  
The fire of your hate  
Have sweetly sucked my blood.

#### 29. DI MAYSE MIT DER VELT

(The Story of the World)

Poet: Moshe Leib Halpern (1886–1932)

*ikh bafel men zol aynnemen di velt,  
hot der kenig gezogt.  
iz dos land gevor gevorn derfun,  
hot di mame ir lebedikn zun vi an emesn toytn baklogt.  
ober dos aker-ayzn in feld,  
un di zoyl untern shusters hamer,  
un di moyz in kamer,  
hobn shtilerhayt gelakht  
ven men hot zey di bsure gebrakht  
di dosike finstere bsure.*

*istt hot men shoyrn ayngenumen di velt.  
vos zol men ton mit ir?  
zi kon nit arayn in dem kenigs shlos.  
me hot fargesn tsu nemen a mos  
fun der velt ven men hot gemakht di tir.  
ober dos aker-ayzn in feld,  
un di zoyl untern shusters hamer,  
un di moyz in kamer,  
kayklen zikh far gelekhter shoyrn.  
se tsitert azsh baym kenig di kroyn  
fun zeyer farshayt gelekhter.*

*di hoyflayt meynen di velt zol dervayl  
a bavakhte in droysn shteyn.  
nor der kenig iz vi der toyt azoy blas.  
er hot moyre di velt ken nokh vern nas,  
ven s'vet a regn geyn.  
ober dos aker-ayzn in feld,  
un di zoyl untern shusters hamer,  
un di moyz in kamer,  
lakhn azoy, az se iz shoyrn a shrek.  
zey shtarbn shier far gelekhter avek,  
vos di velt shteyt nokh alts in droysn.*

\* \* \* \* \*

I decree that the world be conquered,  
Said the king.  
As this became known throughout the land,  
The mother mourned her living son as though already  
dead.

But the plowshare in the field,  
And the sole under the cobbler's hammer,  
And the mouse in the chamber,  
Laughed silently  
When the news came their way,  
This dreadful news.

Now the world has been conquered!  
What should be done with it?  
It cannot fit into the king's castle.  
They forgot to measure the world  
When they built the gate.  
But the plowshare in the field,  
And the sole under the cobbler's hammer,  
And the mouse in the chamber,  
Are now rolling with laughter;  
The king's crown is trembling  
From their frivolous laughter.

The courtiers advise: In the meantime  
Let's keep the world guarded outside the castle,  
But the king is pale as death.  
He is fearful that the world will get wet  
When the rain comes.  
But the plowshare in the field  
And the sole under the cobbler's hammer,  
And the mouse in the chamber,  
Are laughing so—that it is frightening.  
They're nearly dying from laughter  
That the world is still left outside.

### 30. IKH BIN DER VAYNRIB

(I Am the Grapevine)

Poet: Mani Leib [Mani Leib Brahinski] (1883–1953)

*ikh bin der vaynrub der vilder.  
gey uf bay dem ployt fun dayn hoyf,  
kleter a royter, a vilder  
biz dayne fentster aroyf.*

*af dayne diln zikh leygn,  
hoykhn in shorkh fun dayn kleyd;  
bleykhn zikh in dayne oygn,  
troym fun dayne reyde.*

*loyern fun dayne lompn,  
harbstik un grin vi a shpin;  
ufgeyn farklert vi di lompn  
ashik in flam fun kamin.*

*lign a bleykher, a toyter,  
af dayne shoybn in shney.*

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*shneyik in shney a farshneyter,  
veynen tsu dir fun dem shney.*

\* \* \* \* \*

I am the wild grapevine.  
Rising up the fence of your yard,  
I climb, red and wild,  
Up to your window,

To lie down on your floor,  
Breathe in the rustle of your dress;  
Grow pale in your eyes  
And be saddened by your words.

To hang from your lamps,  
Autumnal and green like a spider,  
Ascending pensively like the light of the lamps,  
Like ash in the flames of the fireplace.

To lie, pale and dead  
On your windowsills in snow.  
Snowed in with snowy snow,  
Crying to you from the snow.

### 31. UNTER DAYNE VAYSE SHTERN

(Under Your White Stars)

Poet: Avraham Sutskever (b. 1913)

*unter dayne vayse shtern  
shtrek tsu mir dayn vayse hant.  
mayne verter zenen trern  
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 kelemn un lekher  
veynt di merderishe ru.  
loyf ikh hekher, iber dekher  
un ikh zuch: vu bistu, vu?*

*nemen yogn mikh meshune  
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.*

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*mayne verter zenen trenn  
viln ruen in dayn hant.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Under Your white stars  
Stretch to me Your white hand.  
My words are tears,  
That want to rest in Your hand.

See, their spark dims  
Through my penetrating cellar eyes.  
And I don't have a corner from which  
To return them to You.

And yet I still want, dear God,  
To confide in You all that I possess,  
For in me rages a fire  
And in the fire—my days.

But in cellars and in holes  
The murderous quiet weeps.  
I run higher, over rooftops  
And I search: Where are You, where?

Something strange pursues me  
Across stairs and yards with lament.  
I hang—a ruptured string,  
And I sing to You:

Under Your white stars  
Stretch to me Your white hand.  
My words are tears,  
That want to rest in Your hand.

### **32. YIDN ZINGEN ANI MAMIN**

(Jews Are Singing *ani mamin*)

Poet: H. Leivick [Leivick Halpern] (1886–1962)

*yidn zingen in di bunkers: ani mamin  
bevias hamoshiakh, af-al-pi,  
af-al-pi sheyismameyha ani mamin—  
er vet kumen say fun dortn, say fun hi.*

*yidn zingen in a lager: ani mamin—  
ani mamin, ani mamin, af-al-pi,  
az afile az er zamt zikh ani mamin—  
ani mamin vi a mamin a di-pi.*

*lomir zingen itster ale: ani mamin—  
oyb mir zingen es nisht—zingt zikh es say vi.  
say in ovnt, say baginen ani mamin,  
af-al-pi sheyismameyha, af-al-pi.*

*er vet kumen, er muz kumen—ani mamin.  
fregt nit keyner, fregt nit keynem ven un vi.  
yidn zingen: ani mamin, ani mamin—  
ot-o kumt er, ot-o iz er shoyt do hi.*

\* \* \* \* \*

In the bunkers Jews are singing: "*ani mamin*—I believe  
In the coming of the Messiah, even though,  
even though he may tarry, I believe"—  
He will come, from there and from here.

Jews are singing in a camp: "I believe—  
I believe, I believe, even though,"  
That even though he may tarry, I believe—  
I believe like a believer, a DP [displaced person].

Let's all sing now: "I believe"—  
If we do not sing it—it will sing itself anyway.  
Both at evening and at dawn, I believe,  
"Even though he may tarry, even though ..."

He will come, he must come—"I believe."  
Don't ask anyone, don't ask when and how.  
Jews are singing: "I believe, I believe"—  
Look, he is coming, look, he is already here.

## Credits

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**Publisher: Transcontinental**

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Producers: David Frost (4, 7-9, 18, 20) and Tim Martyn (1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 13, 19, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31)  
Engineer: Tom Lazarus  
Lefrac Concert Hall, Colden Center for the Arts, Flushing, NY  
December 2001

**Tracks 5, 12, 14, 17, 21, 23, 29, 32:**  
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Engineer: David Dusman  
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**Tracks 15, 16, 24, 30:**  
Live concert recording  
Sprague Hall, Yale University, CT  
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**Tracks 3, 27:**  
Producer: Simon Weir  
Engineer: Campbell Hughes  
Gateway Studios, Surrey, UK, July 2000

**NOTE: Biographical sketches of the performers on this recording can be found on the Milken Archive Web site: [www.milkenarchive.org](http://www.milkenarchive.org)**

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