

## מיין היים.

### Mayn heym. Avrom Reyzen

(an entf'ert tsu di "Zukher" a heym far yidn)

Kh'bin a shtetldiker yid  
Un ikh shem mikh nit dos zogn,  
Un ikh ken es nit fartrogn,  
Ven zey zogn mir, az nit!

Dort hob ikh farbrakht fil yor  
In a zoyber kleynem shtibl;  
Ikh ver beyz un hob faribl  
Ven ir ruft es goles gor!

Ikh hob lib mayn alte heym  
Un ikh zog es aykh oysdriklekh,  
Az geshpilt hob ikh zikh gliklekh  
Bay di prizbelikh fun leym.

"Milkh un honig" – yo gevis,  
Alts iz in der heym gevezen  
Nit in khumash bloyz gelezen.  
Milkh un honig – akh vi zis!

"On a land bin ikh" – nisht vor!  
Dos volt dokh geven a bushe!  
Undzer shtibl iz b'yerushe  
Fun an alter zeydn gor!

In mayn shtetele di shul –  
Hert un shtoynt un blaybt farvundert – !  
Sheyt shoyt yorn zibn hundert  
Un mit koydesh iz zi ful.

On traditsies, zagt ir – neyn!  
S'iz an oysgetrakhte mayse:  
Fraytik est men bulkes vayse,  
Shabes est men fish mit khreyn!

(אן ענטפער צו די „זוכער“ א היים פאר אידען)

כ'בין א שטעטלעך/דיגער איד  
און איך שעם מיך ניט דאס זאגען,  
און איך קען עס ניט פערטראגען,  
ווען זיי זאגען מיר, אז ניט !

דארט האב איך פערבראכט פיעל יאָהר  
אין א זויכער קליינעם שטיבעל;  
איך ווער ביז און האב פעראיבעל  
ווען איהר רופט עס גלות נאָר !

איך האב ליב מיין אלטע היים  
און איך זאג עס אייך אויסדריקליך,  
אז געשפילט האב איך זיך גליקליך  
ביי די פריזבעליך פון לעהם.

„מילך און האָניג“ – יא געוויס,  
אלץ איז אין דער היים געוועזען,  
ניט אין חומש בלויז געלעזען.  
מילך און האָניג – אף ווי זיס !

„און א לאנד בין איך“ – נישט וואָהר!  
דאס וואָלט דאָ געווען א בושה!  
אונזער שטיבעל איז בירושא  
פון אז אלטער זיידען נאָר !

אין מיין שטעטלעך די שוהל –  
הערט און שמוינט און בלייבט פערוואונדערט ! –  
שטעהט שוין יאָהרען זייערען הונדערט  
און מיט קדושה איז זי פול.

און טראַדיציעס, זאגט איהר, – ניין !  
ס'איז אן אויסגעטראכטע מעשה :  
פרייטאָג עסט מען בולקעס ווייסע,  
שבת עסט מען פיש מיט כריין !

## My Home

*(An answer to the "seekers of a home for Jews)*

I am a small-town Jew,  
I'm not ashamed to say.  
I cannot stand it when  
They deny it all the way!

I spent a lot of years  
In a clean small house;  
When they call that Exile,  
I get mad and grouse!

I love my old home,  
And I say it in every way  
That I played happily  
On the ledges of clay.

"Milk and honey"—sure enough,  
We had everything to eat,  
Not just in the Bible read  
"Milk and honey"—oh, how sweet!

"I have no land"—not so!  
It would have been a shame!  
Our house came from a grandpa  
Inherited in his name!

In my small town the synagogue—  
It will everyone impress!—  
Standing for seven hundred years  
And filled with holiness.

You say no traditions —no!  
It's a fairy tale if you wish:  
Friday we consume white rolls,  
abbath—horseradish with fish!

To One (from *My People*) by Leyb Naydus

du host tsu mir a tayne,  
vos sheyn un zunik is mayn vort;  
vos in di shirim mayne  
farnemt mayn folk a kleynem ort

du zogst: di ferzn zaynen  
nit loyt dem yidishn geshmak,  
un s'blondzhen dortn shaynen  
fun a geheymen zodiak...

du bist gerekht avade:  
ikh bin der prister fun natur,  
un oykh fun der elade  
gefi nstu oft in mir a shpur

es treft, ven ikh tsevikl  
di goldne oytsres fun orient,  
di lorber fun perikl,  
tsi afrodites prakht, vos blendt –

o gloyb mir, liber rikhter:  
kh'hob lib mayn folk azoy vi du;  
nor nimes iz der dikhter  
di foyle groykayt un di ru.

kh'tseshpreyt di dalet ames  
un unzer shprakh vos payn nor molt;  
ikh tsir es un tsefi am es  
fun faynstn oysterlishn gold.

ikh vil durkhdem derhoybn  
di zel fun folk, vos shmakhht un kvelt,  
un laytern zayn gloybn  
in shtoltser sheynkayt fun der velt!

un kh'boy in groyen goles  
dem raykh'n shlos fun elfantbeyn;  
vi di geshtalt apolos,  
azoy zol zayn dos lebn sheyn!

You have made a charge against me,  
That my word is too beautiful and sunny;  
That in my poems  
My people occupies but a little place.

You say: These verses are not  
To the Jewish taste,  
And in them stray the glimmerings  
Of a secret zodiac . . .

You are right of course:  
I am the priest of nature,  
And also of the Hellenic  
You'll often find a trace in me.

It so happens when I deploy  
The golden treasures of the Orient,  
The laurels of Pericles  
Or Aphrodite's dazzling splendor –

Oh believe me, dear judge:  
I love my people as well as you;  
But the poet finds ever so tiresome  
The lazy grayness and the indolence.

I spread out the four cubits  
Of our language, which describes only pain;  
I adorn it and burnish it  
With the finest, uncommon gold.

By this I wish to elevate  
The languid, suffering soul of my people  
And to illuminate its faith  
With the proud beauty of the world!

And I build in grey Exile  
The sumptuous ivory palace;  
Like the statue of Apollo  
So shall life be beautiful!

trans. by Jordan Finkin

# Moyshe Kulbak

## Town (excerpt)

Midnight.

The bells have rung out!

And bronzed youths  
then were seized by the will  
to still  
the fears  
of years  
that were lost in tears...

And the bells have rung out!

Hey, let's go! Let's go!  
Let us leave behind the weak ones here...

The doors of far-off are broad, are free,  
our path is covered in dew and is new.  
Let's mark-out our steps—with stones for show—  
Let's go! Let's go!  
Let's leave behind the weak ones here...  
Let's throw wide the dreams and forge a new truth,  
let's search out the shining song for the youth.  
Perhaps a lonely singer now stands guard at his bed,  
perhaps the sounds of new prayers are woven instead.  
Perhaps hammers are raised both here and out there,  
and the glowing, forged word appears in the air.  
Let us, children of the dream,  
of the night and ravine,

let's go! Let's go!  
Let's leave behind the weak ones here...

When the eagle's cry is doused to an echo  
let us, striding farther, row after row,  
drink strength from the hills, sing songs of the night,  
and with strength and with rage let us seek out the fight.  
Let's leave behind the weak ones here...

And the bells have rung out...

