

THE KAUFMANS OF KALINKOWITZ

A FEW ITEMS INTENDED FOR THEIR DESCENDANTS

Family Tree and Photographs

Sixty-One Poems

by Israel M. Kaufman

As a Child in Europe, 1913-1925

by Harry Kaufman

What a Shiduch!

by Betty (Kaufman) Berger

A Sample of Sixteen

by Israel M. Kaufman and Archie Kaufman

Israel Michael Kaufman wrote 61 engrossing Yiddish poems before he died in 1954, but almost no one ever saw them in the 39 years since. The original handwritten pages were beginning to fade and disintegrate, and there was the danger that the poems would be lost even to Israel's own descendants. It was decided to "put the poems down" immediately, in almost any form. But once the task was started, it would have been a pity not to add some biographical material and to translate a few of the poems. The present pamphlet was put together in this spirit by Israel's children in 1993, the 100th anniversary of his birth.



SOSHE IN 1929



KAUFMAN FAMILY IN 1940



SHMUEL IN 1929



STISHE IN 1929



ISRAEL IN 1929



KAUFMAN FAMILY IN 1954



ANNE-HARRY 1946



JANICE-ARCHIE 1958



PHYLLIS-BEN 1956



BETTY-ARNIE 1955

AS A CHILD IN EUROPE, 1913-1925

My mother and I came to the U.S. on January 24, 1925. We came to my father whom I had never seen in person or photograph. My mother had a vague memory of my father. It was more than eleven and a half years, and then again their togetherness or knowing each other was less than a year. My mother was from Chvanik and my father from Kalinkowitz. A matchmaker paired them. My mother was an orphan and my father had both his parents living. Jewish law has it that if you help in marriage an orphan girl, it is one of the greatest mitzvahs (good deeds). Uncle Yoel and Zaidde Artche stood by her side at the chupa. Many from Kalinkowitz tried to attend, and maybe receive some of the great mitzvah. They had no invitations to any simcha or happy occasion, mouth to ear was enough.

When I was two weeks young, and my father nineteen, Russia was getting involved in the first World War. My father was to be drafted into the Russian army. The wise solution was to run to America, as all of Europe one way or another was at war. Other draft age men made blemishes on their person, by rubbing sugar on an eye or hitting a hammer on their ankle, so they would be rejected from the army. The Russians treated Jewish soldiers very harshly. They even kept them longer in service.

I was raised by my mother, grandparents, and their daughter, my aunt Heshe Baille. When I was about five years old, I started cheder (Hebrew school). My aunt Heshe Baille, who was only six years older than I, was my only guardian during the week. My mother, who was a seamstress, would leave for about two weeks at a time, looking for a customer for whom she would sew a dress or shirt. Bubbe, my grandmother, would leave early in the morning to sell her traifa (unkosher) meat to the Christian people at the railroad station and return in the evening. My Zaidde (grandfather) would leave Sunday morning with his horse and wagon full of dishes, pans of glass and drinking glasses. In each farm or hamlet, he would try to barter away his wares, sometimes for corn, butter, eggs, fish, etc. He would return home Friday noon.

His return home was a most happy occasion for me, with all the goodies in the wagon. My grandma, remaining at home on Fridays to prepare for Shabbus (the Sabbath), had pancakes ready with a chicory drink for Zaidde and milk for me and Heshe. After feeding the horse in one stable and the cow in another, Zaidde and I would go to the mikvah. The mikvah is something like a pool where religious Jews cleanse their bodies before Shabbus and on other important occasions. After dunking in the hot water of the mikvah, I remember it being too hot for me, we would go to the far corner with a pail of luke-warm water and wash our bodies. Sometimes, Zaidde would go to where someone would beat him with a thin broom. Sometimes his body would get red from that pleasure.

When we returned home, it was almost time to get dressed in our best. Soon it was time for shul. Bubbe would bless the candles and Shabbus was here. As we left for shul, I would smell the intoxicating aroma of Bubbe's cooking and feel like staying at home.

In the shul, everyone looked so joyous and happy as if they were in a new world. Who remembers all the week before, it was Shabbus, Friday evening! After the services and the greetings of "Good Shabbus", my grandfather and the other men at the shul, would invite those people who had no where to stay, into their homes for Shabbus. These were people who were passing through Kalinkowitz and could not reach

their destinations before Shabbus began. (There were no inns or hotels in Kalinkowitz.) My Zaidde would put me on his shoulder and say, "Hershele, pick two people for Shabbus". As we approached our house, my Zaidde would sing in a certain tune "Peace to you angels of peace."

The door opened, the candles were still flickering, and we would say "Good Shabbus" to Bubbe and Heshe Baille. We would invite the two guests to stand at the head of the table near the two chalaks. Zaidde would take the cup of wine and make kid-dush (prayer over wine) in a melody I will always remember. Then he would move the knife over the chalah and cut a piece as he made the blessing over bread. We would all lower ourselves into our chairs, excepting Bubbe and Heshe Baille. They would serve us the gefilte fish. The largest portions were served to our two guests. Everything the most and best belonged to them. Of course, we sang zmiros (religious songs) and heard experiences from our two travelers about the outside world (outside Kalinkowitz). This was how we learned the news. When we retired for the night, our guests were given the softest beds and warmest covers. After Saturday evening prayers, they would be on their way.

● Saturday was the most glorious day, as if a halo had surrounded us. When Zaidde came home from synogogue on Saturday evening, he would light a long twisted candle and say Havdolah (a prayer of leaving the Shabbus, separating the holy from the week-day.)

Early Sunday morning, Zaidde would recite a few Psalms from T'hilim and then load his wagon with wares for barter, and also his talis and tfilin and his food for the week, a big loaf of black bread and five herrings. (His food had to be kosher.) Then he would harness the horse to his wagon and be on his way to some farm or hamlet. When the morning got lighter it was time to pray. He would tie his horse to a tree, put on his talis and tfilin and recite the morning prayer. He didn't need a prayer book as he knew it all by heart. Then he continued on his way to his first stop. After a warm exchange of greetings (he knew all his customers for many years), he would loosen the horse from his harness and feed him. Then he would have his own breakfast consisting of herring, black bread and one or two glasses of water. Finishing the barter transaction, he would leave for his second stop. Here he would have lunch of two hard boiled eggs, black bread and a glass of milk before transacting his business. At the end of the day he ate bread, herring and sometimes a glass of chicory. This was his life from Sunday until Friday afternoon.

Although I heard that Zaidde was not the best trader, my Bubbe, who was totally illiterate was a good business woman. She brought home hundreds of rubles. There was no bank to keep the money, so the safest place to hide it was the mattress on which I slept. As the money accumulated, I slept closer and closer to the ceiling. I understand that when the government started changing, the paper money became worthless. Perhaps that is why the people she dealt with didn't care about the amount they paid.

My mother would return home every few weeks from a working trip. She would hug and kiss me and then ask how I was treated. Sometimes I would be mean and say that my young aunt was teasing me. Well, my Zaidde and Bubbe who loved me very much would run after her until I confessed that it was a lie, that my aunt treated me very well. This, then, was the composition of our family in Kalinkowitz.

As I think back, Kalinkowitz was a small town of around two hundred and fifty families. The town had two sections, a Christian section inhabited by wealthy people with estates and, in contrast, the poor Jewish quarter. It was located about 200 miles from Kiev. The river Pripat ran through it and a wooden bridge connected the two sides of town. The river was shallow and narrow so one could also wade across and, of course, during the cold winter the river froze so you could slide across (if you didn't mind taking a few flops). Ice skates were unknown to us. Instead, we took the round part of a barrel rib, put one foot on it and pushed with the other. That was good exercise and loads of fun.

The section of town that we lived in had a cobbled street starting from the bridge all the way till the end of town. (If one continued, he would reach the city of Mozir.) This street was called the Soshey or Main Street. It had a bakery shop, a hatter, a jeweler, the fire house and my aunt Faigge's two story brick building, the tallest building in Kalinkowitz. (Aunt Faigge was my aunt on my mother's side.) A church was located at the end of the Soshey on the northern side. On Sunday, when the church bells would ring, most of the Christians would cross over the bridge to attend services. I would go over to aunt Faigge's house, be rewarded with a cookie, go up to the second floor, look out of a window and see everything that was happening. I felt real tall.

Perpendicular to the Soshey, were two streets leading north to a forest. We had forests to the north and east of us. The forest had many dirt passages and if one could recognize their directions, he reached his destination. The two side streets had no names and consequently the homes had no numbers. Everyone knew where Moishe the short one or Chaim the tall one lived, so I ask you what's the need for street names or numbers?

Kalinkowitz had no doctors, lawyers, a mayor, police, firemen, pharmacy, newspaper or mailmen. Don't ask how it was possible. The answer is this, the rabbi fulfilled some of these roles. For example, if our home medical remedies did not work, the rabbi would say a prayer to make us well. It was he who handled divorce cases and money disputes. He based his decision on Halachic law. There were no property disputes since Jews were not permitted to own land. Rather, they leased land from the Russian aristocracy. Also there were few criminals to judge since crime was almost nonexistent. News of the world was of little importance as each inhabitant had his own problem - why bother with the world? When mail started to have meaning as the sons of the town were drafted into the army, a Jew who knew the Russian alphabet would act as the mailman. The train stopping at our railroad station would drop a sack of mail for our group.

The streets had no sidewalks or sewers and the ground was always quite muddy, sometimes knee deep, due to rain and melted snow. Those who could afford it, built wooden walks near the entrances to their houses. These looked like ladders, being made by simply nailing crossbars to two-by-fours. Of course there were no indoor toilets, and walking to the outhouse through knee deep mud was not something to look forward to.

Our home was located opposite the new shul. To the east, or right, of us was the old shul and further on was the well that supplied drinking water to our section of the town or hamlet. Further on, there was a narrow passage which led to the other street. There was a large open area between our house and the new shul. This was used as a market place in the early part of the summer, when many farmers would bring their

produce for trade. At other times, travelling acrobats or other kinds of entertainers would perform here. The whole town would come to watch and give the performer a few coins. All this I saw through my bedroom window.

Our home was quite large. It had three bedrooms, a big parlor, a kitchen and a foyer. One bedroom was rented to a childless couple who adopted an orphan girl. He was a shochet (a slaughterer of chickens and cows in the kosher manner). The foyer was rented to a shoemaker and used as his shop. The second bedroom was Zaidde's, Bubbe's and aunt Heshe's, and the third bedroom was where my mother and I slept. Our bedroom was very large. In addition to a bed, it also had a large table where we often ate.

In 1917 the Germans captured Kalinkowitz. The German army officers came into our home asking for permission to sleep on the floor in our parlor. Permission was granted and they spread hay on the floor. They were very nice to me, giving me crackers with marmalade; I had never eaten marmalade before.

Soon the Russian revolution began. Economic conditions worsened and the Jews were blamed. One day, it was heard that the Balahowitz gangs (of bandits) were heading towards our town. The girls who could afford it, including Heshe ran to other towns for safety. Those who couldn't, hid in attics or cellars. Anything of value was put out of sight. One evening three dirty, unkempt bandits, one rifle between them, entered our house and asked for chicken. Bubbe and Zaidde said that they didn't have any. The one holding the rifle pointed it at my Bubbe's face and threatened to kill her if she did not serve him chicken. Bubbe nodded her head affirmatively, climbed underneath the stove (called kaluch), took the hidden chicken, and cooked it for them.

When they finished eating, they began looking for women. They found the 13 year old orphan hiding under a bed. They took her to the bedroom where I was sleeping, put her on the floor and started to rape her. She screamed for mercy, begged them to leave her alone but each bandit in turn raped and beat her to hysteria. Then, they left our house. The shochet, his wife, Bubbe and Zaidde ran into the room. The girl (I don't remember her name) was hysterical. The four of them carried her into her room and took care of her. I don't know what they did. My Bubbe came back to see if I was okay. I kept quiet during the beastly attack because, I guess, I was afraid they would harm me also.

The next morning I heard shooting near the bridge. Without anyone knowing, I got out of the house to see the goings on. When I came across the body of one of the bandits that made the little girl cry, I took revenge by jumping on his belly, slapping his face and telling him that he was bad. In the meantime, my grandma realized that I was not in the house. She ran outside looking for me and when she saw me on the other side of the street, she braved the bullets flying in all directions to reach my side. Without waiting for the shooting to stop, she protected me with her body and brought me back to our home and safety. Later, the animal gangs were weakened by the Russian revolutionaries.

My mother and Heshe came home when tranquility was restored to the town. My mother would always argue with my grandparents. She often asked them for monetary assistance so that we could leave for America to join my father. My mother's repeated reasoning was that my grandparents helped two of their daughters to reach America and join their husbands there. Finally, my Bubbe and Zaidde agreed to help. So, when

I was about 6 years old, we began our journey to America. It would take us six years to arrive there.

We had to find reliable gentiles who, for a large sum of money, would help us cross the border. We found two such men. At first, we planned to head towards Harbin, China and from there to the U. S. West Coast. However, when we heard that there were pogroms in this direction, we decided to go through Poland and reach the Atlantic coast. I remember we crossed a river by row boat until we reached Poland. It was an adventurous trip since we had to hide in a cove whenever we heard a motor boat nearby. At one point, the men requested additional compensation as things were getting too dangerous. They threatened to abandon us in the forest if my mother did not comply. Mom started to argue and plead that we had no more money, but finally she found a gold ring and a pair of earrings in the pillows we carried with us. When we arrived at our destination which was David Gorodok we had no money.

I will never forget that as we were walking in the city, penniless, a Jewish family invited us into their home. It was Friday and the lady baked a sponge cake. She gave me a piece, but as I started eating it, my mom took it away from me. "You don't take anything for nothing" she shouted at me. She explained to the lady of the house that if she wanted us to have something to eat, she should give my mother some housework to do like washing the floor. It was difficult for the lady to understand my mom. Finally, my mother got on her knees and scrubbed all the floors. Then I was allowed to eat and stay there. After Shabbus, my mother, being a seamstress, repaired some of our hostess' clothes. Then she received sewing jobs from other people. Soon we had some money and it was time to move on.

Our next stop was Pinsk where we stayed for half a year. We travelled there by foot, wagon and train. I became sick along the way and was hospitalized because the doctors believed I had a contagious disease. I remained in the hospital almost a month until I was declared cured. In Pinsk, mom became acquainted with other Jewish people who gave us room and board in exchange for her sewing and mending their clothes. She made some dresses and other things.

My mother was totally illiterate. I didn't have schooling since cheder, a few years back. When my father wrote, his letters would reach us through HIAS. There were usually a few dollars in the envelope which was a great help. It was embarrassing for my mother to have someone else read her letters for her, so she decided to learn how to read and write Yiddish. With much effort and some tutoring, she reached her goal of independence. She wrote my father the longest letters one can imagine. I suppose she had much to say and much longing to see him. Now the most important thing to my mom was getting a letter from my father and getting to America as quickly as possible. The address to America had to be written by someone else.

From Pinsk we travelled to Warsaw. We passed through many cities along the way such as Tilovsk and Likov. In each city we spent time. My mother and I, in the meantime, learned to speak some Polish. One time, while travelling from one city to another by train, we were robbed of a small wicker basket containing some of our belongings. A man grabbed the basket as the train was slowing down at a station and jumped off. It taught us that you must always watch your belongings.

In Warsaw, HIAS arranged housing for us with other immigrants. We lived on a street called Shmalemille. We lived in Warsaw a whole year. I didn't have to go to

WHAT A SHIDUCH!

What a shiduch! Stishe (Stella) Channe Yampolsky marries Yisroel Michel (Israel Michael) Kaufman June 1912 in Kalinkowitz. A shiduch was proposed by a match-maker who had introduced Israel to many eligible young women whom he had turned down. But when he met Stishe, she was the one for him.

Stishe was an orphan. Her mother died from a fall while reaching for the Sabbath candlesticks; she was pregnant with her second set of twins (born dead). Dudge (David) and Stishe were twins, the eldest of all the children. They were 7 years old - then came Itte and Michel. Hersh Laib, her father, was a travelling merchant. His second wife was a widow and she had a son who was older than his children. Since her husband had been an only child, her son lived with his paternal grandparents and when he came to visit, he taught the girls some Yiddish. Mom told us that it was essential for boys to have a Hebrew education and that girls could have one but it wasn't necessary for them to have an education.

They lived in the same town as Hersh's parents so when he went on the road his parents kept an eye on the children (as you see the stepmother was a typical stepmother). When he came home from the road he went to see his mother and she told him her daughter-in-law had smacked Stishe so hard that she knocked out her teeth. Hersh was a pretty wise man so before he went home, he sought Stishe out and nonchalantly examined her mouth and found that his mother had exaggerated a little so he went home and nothing was said. On another occasion mama wanted a pair of gold earrings but her stepmother wouldn't let her have them; so she threatened that she would drown herself, but the lake had dried up. Hersh Laib died a year or two before Stishe got married.

Zaidde Hersh's father was one of two sons due to be drafted into the Russian army. They tried to avoid the draft because Jewish soldiers were treated very brutally. One brother had the name Reichman and the other the name Yampolsky. We're not sure which is the original name, but whichever it was, the other came from a family which had no sons. This way neither went into the army because the Russians did not draft a one and only son.

Mom and her brother, Dudge, went to work at an early age. The both of them worked in a match factory and Dudge injured himself, losing a hand. Mama and her sister Itte were seamstresses. They had their own sewing machines and they would travel from villages to towns and people would hire them to sew clothes for their families. They had a very good reputation among the townspeople and they were protected by them. If bandits or vandals came to these villages looking for Jewish people, they would protect them by saying they weren't there or hide them or do anything they could to save them.

Mama's mother was born in Kalinkowitz. Her name was Rivve, and her parents' names were Artche and Broche Komisar. Artche was the brother of Hersh's mother, so that Hersh and Rivve were first cousins. Bubbe Soshe Rivve and Zaidde Shmuel Laib (Israel Michael's parents) were also first cousins. But Stishe Channe and Israel Michael were not related. However they did have mutual cousins: if one cousin was mama's first, he might be papa's second or third.

Bubbe Rivve's brother, Yoel, was in love with Zaidde Hersh's sister, Faigge, and her father's name was Yoel, also. Grand Zaidde Yoel would not permit the marriage between his daughter and nephew, because the name, Yoel, was the same as his. It would be like doing as is done by the Gentiles who name their children after themselves. This is forbidden by European Jewry. Yoel and Faigge never married each other, but they did marry. Both of them died young and their mates ended up marrying each other.

Papa Israel Michael was born in Kalinkowitz August 15, 1893. He was one of six children. His oldest sister was Gittel, next came Maryashe, and then a couple of children were born dead. Bubbe went to the rabbi and asked what she should do. He told her to move to another house and she did. Pop was then born, but he had a problem - he was blind. Bubbe then went back to the rabbi and he told her what to do and papa was able to see. Then the next older brother, Jake (Yakov Moshe), the third brother, Itche (Yitzak Lipman), and the baby, Heshe Baille were born. Gittel was married at an early age, but divorced and left for America at the age of sixteen. When she arrived, she stayed with Uncle Aaron and Aunt Chaya Elke. She met and married another man and had two daughters with him. Maryashe married a man while she still lived in Kalinkowitz and they had two daughters. He left for America alone. She followed with her daughters and then they had three more children.

Jake and Itche were too young to marry when they still lived in Russia. The three sons left for America in July of 1913, and the youngest daughter, Heshe Baille, couldn't get a visa due to her age. Papa and his two younger brothers fled Kalinkowitz in the middle of the night so that no one would know and turn them in to the authorities, because he wanted to evade the draft. He left mama and their three-month old son, Harry, to arrive in America on August 15, 1913. Heshe Baille stayed in Russia where she married and had five sons. Several years after arriving in America, Jake married and had three children and Itche also married and had one son. Bubbe and Zaidde immigrated to America in the early 1920's.

It took many years for Mama and Harry to reach America because they couldn't get visas. Uncle Jake was drafted into the army and became an American citizen in Nov. 1919 so he was able to sponsor them to get visas in November 1922. Papa wasn't an American citizen so he couldn't get anything activated. He did go down to the draft board and tell them that he would join the army if visas were issued for his wife and son, but he was refused. Uncle Itche enlisted in the Jewish Legion of the British Army and was shipped to Palestine. He wrote wonderful letters from the sands of Palestine and when papa read us his letters it just made us feel wonderful. Papa kept his letters for a long time.

Papa (a dress presser) and Uncle Jake (a tailor) went into the dress manufacturing business. Both of them were members of the ILGWU (the dressmakers' union), so they could not work in the factory since they were owners. So the business was put in mama's and Aunt Mary's (Jake's wife) names. The third partner was a front office man and he sort of ran everything. There were many times that Jake and papa didn't bring home any pay, but the workers got their pay every week without fail.

When mama came to America with Harry, cousin Leah got her a job so that she could become Americanized. I remember mama saying that one day when she came home from work, papa was in bed. When she asked why, he replied that as long as she was working there was no need for him to go to work any more. So she quit her job

and that was the end of her learning English. She tried to learn to read and write English but she couldn't seem to master it.

Mama with her lack of the English language was still able to get her point across. Mr. Young, our landlord on Clinton Avenue, wasn't Jewish and, of course, couldn't speak Yiddish. So she would ask us, "How would you say shower curtain in English?", and wallah we had a new shower curtain in our bathroom. When the Jewish holidays (Passover or Rosh Hashana) came, she wanted the apartment painted. She asked us again, "How would you say paint the apartment in English?", and wallah it was painted. During the rest of the year she painted what needed painting, herself. When mama wanted a refrigerator to replace the icebox, she had to give Mr. Young a 2 or 3 dollar raise which brought our rent to 38 dollars a month.

Mama had a large family to feed, so she would go shopping just about every day except Saturday and, of course, Sunday (stores were closed by the blue laws). She was 5'1" or 5'2" tall, and she would come home with two bags full of fruits, vegetables, meats and so forth. The bags were packed to the brim, and if you were to take one away from her she would probably tilt over; that's how heavy they were. Mama didn't go to the local stores because the food was too expensive. She would rather walk to Bathgate Avenue (the market street), which was twelve to fifteen blocks away. She was very thrifty when it meant she, herself, was extending herself; she didn't mind walking that far or doing the laundry by hand. When she did the laundry (sheets, towels, and etc.), first the scrub board, then the rinsing, and then she would wring out the wash more thoroughly than a washing machine could (there was very little water dripping from the line). Papa would argue with her to send the laundry to Fox's Laundry so she wouldn't be so tired. Oh by the way, he also argued with her about going to the local stores, because he said that they also had to make a living. She was so tired at night, she would sit down at the dining room table with us and lift up the tablecloth across her arms and put her head on them and she was out like a light. Mama's muscles were in her arms and papa's were in his calves.

Papa's wages were not that great so she felt the least she could do was scrimp and save any way she could. It was her scrimping and saving that enabled them to send Archie to Yeshiva, Benny to Hebrew school and myself to learn Yiddish (before I took sick). They were also able to send Benny to college before he was drafted. When it came to charities, they gave very generous donations with her scrimping and saving. When Israel became a nation and the UJA had drives going on, so did the Kalinkowitzer Progressive Aid Society have a drive. Their donation was so nice that Uncle Aaron stood up at the meeting and made a point of mentioning the generous gift Stishe and Israel had given. This embarrassed wealthier members, and so they increased their donations. I also remember when the yeshiva Archie went to was having a raffle, and mama and papa won 250 dollars; they turned it over to the yeshiva.

Mom also sewed clothes for us: shirts, pants, jackets for winter and dresses for me. She also bought muslin for heavy-duty sheets and stuffed her own pillows. So she did a good day's work. She taught me to iron. Hankies at first and then I graduated to bigger things. I did so well that the owner of the Chinese laundry, where Archie hung out, offered me a job.

In addition to her scrimping and saving, mom also rented out one of our rooms. Mrs. Kushinsky was our first roomer (that I can remember). She was a widow and didn't have any children, and she took a liking to Archie. The year that I had rheumat-

ic fever, papa decided that we were going to spend the summer at cousin Elia Kornisar's farm. So Mrs. Kushinsky moved out. Mama didn't want to go to the farm because it would cost additional money, and so till the last minute she wasn't going and finally she came along. We went to the farm for several years till 1940 and sometimes the roomers came along and spent some time with us. Cousin Bunnie (Itche's son) came to the farm with us every year, and cousins Julie and Edith (Jake's kids) also spent some of the time with us.

When a Jewish holiday fell on a Sunday night, mama would buy the food before the weekend. She bought live fish (pike, buffel, white fish, etc.) and put them in the bathtub until Sunday morning when she would start preparing the gefilte fish. She killed the fish and gutted it, then separated the meat from the skin and bones, leaving the latter intact. She used a wooden chopping bowl, putting the fish into it, she would chop it up and add spices till it had the right taste and consistency. She then stuffed this into the skeleton-supported skin, and cut it into serving pieces, and cooked it with the head which was a delicacy for mom and pop. Mama was also able to peel the potatoes so that the peelings were like paper, thinner than with a potato peeler.

We also had gefilte fish on Fridays, which she bought on Thursday which was cooked Fridays. Every Friday and holiday, she baked chala and onion rolls. (She always threw a piece of dough into the oven because this made the chala kosher; it burned to a crisp). And, of course, she baked cakes. The house always smelled so delicious when we came home from school. When we came home from school, we cleaned and polished the furniture and floors; it sparkled for whatever the occasion was.

Every Saturday afternoon papa, Archie and myself would lie down in bed and he would tell us stories about the old country. The stories were so vivid that if we were transplanted to Kalinkowitz, we would be able to know how to get around: where the schul was, where the house that they lived in, where the church was located and etc. Papa was a very good story teller. Every evening he would tell us a portion of the Bible which we enjoyed very much. If it were not for his telling us about the Bible, I would not have known anything about our heritage.

Papa's family were merchants (travelling). They also had a store, and because papa was a scholar and not trained for anything, he ran the store. He was considered a very educated person, polite (Eidleman). Bubbe would go down to the station and sell meat on account. Even though she had no formal education, she would keep all the accounts in her head accurately. Zaidde, when Sunday morning rolled around, would go into the neighboring towns to sell his wares and return home on Friday in time for the Sabbath. Zaidde also was a big tease. He once took a young boy on one of his selling trips and on their return home, he told the boy (Nathan Wolfson, a friend of papa's that I remember) that they would be coming to a town that looked like Kalinkowitz and that the houses looked the same, and that there was even a woman who looked like his mother though she wasn't. Nathan was very upset.

When we were children we would go every Saturday with our parents to visit Uncle Aaron and Aunt Chaya Elke and spend the afternoon with them. Uncle Aaron was Zaidde Shmuel Laib's youngest brother (20 years younger). Since there was such a big age difference, Uncle was more of a friend than an uncle to papa. From what I understood, their politics were very similar, but they would pick a topic and tear it apart, one taking the pro and the other the con. It could turn out to be heated. We sat for several hours as part of the walls. We were not permitted to take anything to eat

because mom didn't want anyone to think that we didn't have anything to eat at home. But Auntie knew mama, so she would call us into the kitchen and sneak us some goodies.

Mom taught herself to read and write Yiddish in the early 1920's while waiting for the visas to be sent from America. This way she was able to correspond with papa during their long separation. Mama's eyesight deteriorated as she got older, and during her last years she was considered legally blind. Still, nothing stopped her. She took care of all her personal needs, and even helped me in the house, too. Mom also made a housecoat for herself. She cut out the pattern and sewed it up by feeling each stitch with her fingers. It may not have been perfect, but it was certainly very good. When the girls came home from school, she would take their coats and feel for the buttons to make sure they weren't loose. If they were, she'd ask you to thread a needle and she would secure them.

Scissors 1918 and 1919, were then - in Russia being paring down hair and raised in the very process of and construction work. It was a time of Eastern Europe, picked themselves up a group which was integrated in the large cities of America, the spirit of independence and open horizons. In a very short while, these people were faced by major changes in their lives. Changes in living every aspect of their existence and way of life. This included changes in their way of relating to each other, of working a living, of getting married, of raising children, ways of thinking and doing, and above all of making their way in the old country and possessing economic and social life. This is marked in the various stages which this generation found in their way to the new world. The stages, in the manner which help them not immigrating, but also in the way in which they did. The stages which help them to immigrate and to live, the Great Migration and the years of struggle and suffering which followed in the aftermath of the war and the economic depression.

The first generation that immigrated in the early 1900s which is part of the screen was made up of immigrants from Eastern Europe and probably, the very people for whom this was done. They were forced to leave their homes and their way of life in their own countries. The reason for this is that the people were crowded with Yiddish speakers, and the Yiddish language was then mostly spoken off the face of the earth. In 1900, there were about 2 million people of all ages who spoke Yiddish, and in 1910, there were about 4 million people of all ages who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 1920, there were about 6 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 1930, there were about 8 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 1940, there were about 10 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 1950, there were about 12 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 1960, there were about 14 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 1970, there were about 16 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 1980, there were about 18 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 1990, there were about 20 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 2000, there were about 22 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 2010, there were about 24 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish. In 2020, there were about 26 million people who spoke Yiddish. This was almost all Yiddish.

Working - this is the 90 people of the world - the first stage with the entire world. The solution was making the people of the world and the people of the world. Some of the 10 million people who were considered "Yiddish" were considered because they were an ethnic group which was considered important. The first of these were the people who were considered to be Yiddish.

A SAMPLE OF SIXTEEN

Between 1945 and 1954, Israel Michael Kaufman (*A) wrote 61 poems in the Yiddish language. The present compilation, of the first 16 of these to be translated into English, is intended as a way of introducing him to his descendants who never knew him. In 1993 these numbered 35 and included grandchildren, great-grandchildren, children-in-law and grandchildren-in-law. Translating the poems is very time consuming and it may be some time before the rest are done. It was thought best, therefore, to distribute at least these 16 now, on the 100th anniversary of Israel Kaufman's birth.

Not everyone has a great interest in his own roots, but even those who labor to work out their family trees usually end up with little more than a list of names and dates. The descendants of Israel Kaufman are more fortunate because his poems (many of them symbolic) give them an idea of what must have been going on in his mind. About one-half of the poems are on uncontroversial subjects such as nature, love and everyday human experience. But the other half involve socio-philosophical ideas and strongly reflect the environment in which Israel Kaufman grew up and in which his sense of values was shaped. Some of the poems in this category are on distinctly Jewish subjects. Thus his poems may give the reader insight into something of much broader significance, because Israel Kaufman was a deeply thoughtful man and he lived through an unusually eventful period in the history of his people.

Between 1890 and 1914, more than two million Jews, having been born and raised in the very primitive and traditional small towns (shtetls) of Eastern Europe, picked themselves up as young adults and immigrated to the large cities of America, the epitome of modernity and open-mindedness. In a very short while, these people were forced to make extremely drastic changes in almost every aspect of their centuries-old way of life. This included changes in their ways of relating to each other, of earning a living, of getting married, of treating elderly parents, even of dressing and eating, and above all of practicing their religion, which in the old country had permeated almost every single facet of life. The tremendous emotional stresses which this suddenness forced on them were further exacerbated, soon after, by the traumas which befell their non-immigrating relatives back in Europe, in the form of World War I, the Russian Revolution and Civil War, the Great Depression, and the rise of fascistic anti-semitism which culminated in the extinction of two out of every three European Jews.

Thus East European Jewry underwent an upheaval in the last 100 years which is one of the severest ever undergone by any nation in all of history. And ironically, the very people for whom this was most traumatic found it hard to really express their bitterness even to their own descendants. The reason for this is that the people most involved were Yiddish speakers, and the Yiddish language has been essentially wiped off the face of the earth. In 1890, there were about 7 million people of all ages who could express themselves, either only in Yiddish, or at least much better in Yiddish than in any other language. Today in 1993, if a few thousand of such people still remain, they are almost all over 60 years of age. Israel Kaufman had a lot to say, but he could only say it in Yiddish. Yet he knew, that as time went on fewer and fewer people, and his own descendants among them, would be able to read what he wrote.

Deciding which of the 61 poems to translate in this first stage was no simple task. The selection was made by the translator, Israel's son Archie, primarily on a subjective basis. Some of the 16 were simply the ones he considered most interesting. Many were included because they were on subjects which Israel, himself, obviously considered important. And two or three were selected simply because they were so beautiful.

But, of course, translating the poems was much more difficult than selecting them. The original intention was to translate absolutely literally, regardless of what the resulting English version would look like. But the loss of the music present in the Yiddish was unacceptable. With neither meter nor rhyme (the Yiddish version includes both), the poems lost too much of their beauty, and the translator decided to retain at least the meter. This, of course, required that words be chosen that said things which Israel Kaufman didn't quite mean. But this is the price of all translations, especially those of poetry. The translator regrets that he was not sufficiently competent to always find English words which were both accented on the right syllable and exact equivalents of the Yiddish. He hopes that he succeeded, on those occasions, to at least communicate the gist of what Israel Kaufman had in mind.

It is a real pity that those who don't understand Yiddish will have to miss the richness with which that language expresses ideas. But so that not all is lost, such readers are urged to read at least some of the transliteration aloud. In this way, they will get a feel for the unique music of that language's sound, especially as may be heard in a well constructed poem.

When all of Israel Kaufman's poems are presented in translated form, hopefully in the not too distant future, we plan to accompany them by a fairly detailed biography. The following is a first installment of that biography and its purpose is to give the reader a minimal framework into which he can try to fit the many subtle ideas encountered in the poems.

Israel, the third of six children, was born in 1893 in Kalinkowitz (*B), Belorussia, a town of 1300 people, the vast majority of whom were Jews who followed the exacting rules of their faith unquestioningly. His father, Shmuel Laib, was an itinerant peddler who made a decent living driving his horse and cart to nearby villages, bartering household items for agricultural produce. Israel's mother, Soshe, augmented the family income by selling the hind (unkosher) quarters of oxen to Christian townspeople. As was the general practice in East European shtetls, Israel studied in the local cheder (religious school) only until the age of 14. He then went to work in a general store.

During the next four years, Israel was apparently a member of the town study group. Such groups, under the influence of the Haskalah Movement, were popular at that time among the Jewish youth of the Eastern European towns. Israel continued to adhere strongly to the Jewish religion, but the more conservative older Jews, including his parents, undoubtedly considered much of the activities of these study groups to be anti-religious and tried to do away with them. These activities included the study of modern Hebrew (only biblical Hebrew was condoned by the conservatives), Jewish History, Russian, Russian History, and a collection of other general subjects such as literature and philosophy. During this period Israel seems to have developed a strong sympathy for socialistic political ideas, seeing in them a similarity to the principles of the ancient Hebrew prophets. Apparently, these study groups had no full-time teachers. The young people would somehow obtain the appropriate books, and then take turns in reading one day what they would lecture on, the next.

In 1912, when Israel was not yet 19, he married Stishe (Stella) Channe Yampolsky who hailed from the nearby village of Dvorish (near Chvanik), but had close relatives living in Kalinkowitz. The marriage was arranged, in the sense that the couple had not met until their parents (in the case of the orphan Stishe, the guardians) set up the meeting. But the youngsters would then be permitted to get to know each other and to turn down a candidate they didn't like.

In 1913, Stishe gave birth to their first son, Harry. But those were troublesome times and it was decided that Israel would sail to America and quickly save enough money to bring over Stishe and Harry. Israel left shortly after Harry's birth. He would not see either Stishe or Harry for almost 12 years.

Between the years 1914 and 1919, Belorussia was not a conducive place for taking trips. It was constantly being overrun by armies and bands of brigands, whether as part of World War I, of the Russian Revolution, or of the civil war which followed. Kalinkowitz was in turn under the control of Tsarists, Germans, Communists and Austrians, with all sorts of rapacious armed bands in between. The Kaufmans stayed put, and somehow survived.

Stishe and Harry finally received passage tickets for America in 1919 when they left Kalinkowitz. Because of the political difficulties in the intervening countries, they didn't make it to Rotterdam, whence their ship was to depart, until 1921. By time they arrived, America's immigration policy had changed, and Stishe and Harry were forced to wait for three more years in that city, until the preceding quotas were all filled first. Fortunately, the Holland-America Line, with which passage had been booked, assumed responsibility for the delay and provided them with reasonable subsistence for the duration of their stay.

During the same years, 1913 to 1924, Israel first found work as a porter in New York City and then in the grocery store of the husband of his sister, Maryashe, in Detroit. When it was clear that Stishe and Harry would soon be arriving, he moved back to New York City and found work as a dress presser, a profession which he worked at until his death in 1954. He remained, throughout, a devoted supporter of the activist wing of the clothing worker's union.

The family was happily reunited on January 24, 1925 and lived reasonably well, always near close relatives, in various lower middle class neighborhoods in New York City. A son Benjamin (Benny) was born in 1925, a daughter Betty in 1929, and finally a son Aaron (Archie) in 1931. Except for the very difficult peak-Depression years of 1936-1938, the family managed not too badly. The children grew up feeling certainly not rich, but not poor either.

During this period, Israel suffered two very great tragedies. In about the year 1928, his youngest brother, Itche, died of pneumonia at the age of 29, and about eight years later, the middle brother, Jake, died of cancer at the age of 40. Israel, who was extremely close to his brothers, was severely affected by both events.

Israel and Stishe took the anti-semitism of Hitler Germany very hard. This was brought to an extreme in 1942 when Germany invaded the Soviet Union, since Stishe had three brothers and a sister and Israel had a sister, still there. Their concerns grew even greater in 1943, when Harry was sent to Europe with the American army and Benny to the Pacific islands with the American navy. The war ended, the two sons returned safely, and news was received from the Soviet Union that none of their close relatives had fallen under Nazi occupation, though Israel's brother-in-law had been killed in battle.

Israel wrote his first poem in the summer of 1945, when he did not yet know the full extent of the Nazi terror. He wrote little at first, but he continued to write, with greater and greater frequency, until his death from cerebral hemorrhage in 1954. He wrote a total of 61 poems.

2. My Belief

I can't bring myself to imagine,
Just the thought fills my heart with despair,
That the heavens above are all vacant,
And the earth spins around without aim.

That death and destruction are final,
And these are the only ends,
That it's been so and will be forever,
Nature's frivolity, its game.

I can't bring myself to suppose
That life has no meaning, no worth;
That man with his thoughts and intents,
Will become but manure for the soil.

Man whose intellect ascended
To space, and fathomed earth's depths,
Fails to grasp basic truth,
And dimms his own brightness with doubts.

I can't bring myself to abandon
The belief that creation took place
As the will of an Almighty Being,
Who reigns over heaven and earth.

The Almighty Being provides us
With all that we need in this life,
He suffers misconduct from no one,
Judging harshly both master and slave.

3. The Survivor

I had mom and dad, grandma and grandpa,
Three sisters and two brothers too;
This sizable family this fine clan of Jews
Is now gone, I'm all that's left of it.

Their lifelines were cut off by furious demons,
Not one of them was overlooked,
I alone escaped all the carnage,
Only I have survived the ordeal.

1948 זומער

2. מײן גלױבן

שווער איז צו טראכטן און גלױבן
עס באפאלט דיך איאוש אשׂרעק
אז פּוּסט איז דער הימל פּון אויבן
און עס דרייט זיך די ערד אן אצוועק

אז טויט און פּאַרניכטונג פּאַרענדיקט
און דאס איז דער איינציקער ציל
געווען און וועט זיין אזוי שטענדיק
ביי דער נאַטור אפּאַרוויילונג אשפּיל

שווער איז צו דענקן אז לעבן
איז אומזין און האט נישט קיין ווערט
אז דער מענטש מיט זיין שכל און שטײעבן
איז אשטאף וואס באפּרוכפּערט דער ערד

דער מענטש וואס זיין שכל טוט גרייכן
די הימלען און פארשט אויך די ערד
באגרייפט נישט דעם אמת דעם הויכן
און פאַרשטונקעלט מיט ספקות זיין ווערט

שווער איז אוועקגיין פון גלױבן
וואס האט די יצירה עיקלערט
מיט דער השגחה פון אויבן
וואס הערשט איבער הימל און ערד

די השגחה פּאַרזארגט יעדער איינעם
מיט אלעס וואס לעבן באדארף
רשעות פּאַרגיט זי נישט קיינעם
און איז גרויזאם צום האר און צום שקלאף

1949 זומער

3. דער פּליט

געווען טאטע מאמע אבאבע אזיידע
דריי שוועסטער מיט ברידערלעך צוויי
אגרויסע משפּחה און אידן אן עדה
געבליבן בין איך איצט אליין

די רוצחים זיי האבן די לעבנס פּאַרשניטן
נישט געלאזן קיין איינעם פון זיי
נאר מיך אליין האט דער טויט אויסגעמיטן
אפליט פון שויעקלעכן גרויל

2. Mein Glauben

Shver iz tsoo trachten oon gloiben
Es befallt dich a yooosh a shrek
Az poost iz der himel foon oiben
Oon es drait zich die erd un a tsvek

Az toit oon farnichtung farendikt
Oon dus iz dus aintsige tsil
Geven oon vet zein azoi shtendik
Bei der natur a farveilung a shpil

Shver iz tsoo denken az leben
Iz oomzin oon hut nit kein vert
Az der mentsh mit zein saichel oon shtreben
Iz a shtuf vus hafroochpert der erd

Der mentsh vus zein saichel toot graichen
Die himlen oon fursht oich die erd
Bagreift nit dem emes dem hoichen
Oon hatoonkelt mit sfaikes zein vert

Shver iz avekgain foon gloiben
Vus hut die yetsire erklet
Mit der hashguche foon oiben
Vus hersht iber himel oon erd

Die hashguche farzurgt yeder ainem
Mit ales vus leben badarf
Rishoos fargit zie nit kainem
Oon iz groizam tsum har oon tsum shklaf

3. Der Pulit

Geven tate mame a bube a zaide
Drei shvester mit briderlech tsvai
A groise mishpuche oon Iden an aide
Gehliben bin itst ich alain

Die roitschim zai huben die lebens farschniten
Nit geluzen kein ainem foon zai
Nur mich alain hut der toit oisgemiten
A pulit foon shroklochen groil

Of unbridled sadism which has no equal
In the shame-ridden annals of man,
Of whole congregations drowning in rivers,
Of millions succumbing to flames.

פון גרויזאמן רשעות וואס האט נישט קיין גלייכן
אין דער באנצער געשיכטע פון מענטש
פון באנצע קהילות דערטרונקן אין טייכן
מיליאנען אויף שייטערס פארברענט

Of blind human fear abetting the slaughter
Of entire communities like sheep,
Of pits full of corpses as yet uncovered,
Human bodies dishonored and scorned.

פון מענטשלעכע פחד וואס שרייבט צו דער שחיטה
באנצע געמיינדעס ווי שאף
פון גריבער מיט הרוגים נאך נישט קיין פארשיטע
פון געשענדעטן מענטשלעכן גוף

Why was just my life spared such a fate?
That life now exudes pain and guilt.
I'm spiritually crushed by all the horror,
The nightmare haunts me still today.

צו וואס האט דער שיקזאל מיין לעבן געראטעט
אלעבן פון פיין און פון צער
די צרות זיי האבן מיר גייסטיק צושמעטערט
עס פארפאלגט מיך נאך אלץ דער קאשטער

Of mothers clasping children so tight,
Together forced into death's jaws
By human beasts merry and drinking,
Earning by savagery their wage.

פון מוטערס וואס טראגן די קינדער געטוליעט
און ווערן געטריבן צום טויט
פון מענטשלעכע בעסטיע וואס זויפט און וואס הוליעט
און קריגט פון רציחה זיין ברויט

Of cultured hangmen torturing victims,
Accompanied by the strains of music;
Of elegant ladies who became demented,
Seeking their fortunes by looting.

פון געבילדעטן הענקער וואס פייניקט זיין קרבן
באגלייט פון דעם רוש פון מוזיק
פון איידעלע דאמען וואס זיינען פארדארבן
און זוכן אין רויב זייער גליק

Of bustling towns completely destroyed,
No trace being left of the people,
All that remain are graveyards and ruins,
As witness to merciless terror.

פון ישובים וואס זיינען פארניכטעט געווארן
נישט געבליבן קיין זכר פון זיי
פארבליבן בלויז חורבות און פעלדער מיט קברים
די שרעקלעכע עדות פון גרויל

All's now serene as if nothing happened,
Our disaster no longer concerns them.
None can remember our near desolation,
That holocaust is no longer mentioned.

די וועלט איז שוין רואיק ווי בארניט געוועזן
איר גייט אונזער אומגליק נישט אן
אונזער חורבן זעט גרעסטן זי האט שוין פארגעסן
די רציחה ווערט מער נישט דערמאנט

I have in my youth become an old man,
Soaked through with anguish and sorrow,
Though I beat death, I'm really the loser,
My life has no joy, it's all mourning.

איך בין אין מיין יוגנט אקום געווארן
זאט מיט יסורים און לייד
געקעמפט מיט דעם טויט עס באזיגט און פארלארן
מיין לעבן איז טרויער אן פרייד

Foon groizamen rishoos vus hut nit kein gleichen
In der gantser geshichte foon mentsh
Foon gantse kehiles dertroonken in teichen
Milyunen oif sheiters farbrent

Foon mentshloche pachad vus treibt tsoo der shchite
Gantse gamaindes vie shuf
Foon griber mit haroogim nuch nit kein farshite
Foon gehendeten mentshlochen goof

Tsoo vus hut der shikzal mein leben geratet
A leben foon pcin ooi foon tsa'ar
Die tsures zai huben mich geistik tsooshmetert
Es farfulgt mich nuch alts der kashmar

Foon moeters vus trugen die kinder getoolyet
Oon veren getriben tsoom toit
Foon mentshloche bestye vus zoift oon vus hoolyet
Oon krigt foon retsiche zein broit

Foon gebildeten henker vus peinkt zein kurben
Baglait foon der roish foon moozik
Foon aidele damen vus zeinen fardurben
Oon zoochen in roib zaier glik

Foon yshuvim vus zeinen farnichtet gevuren
Nisht gebliben kein zaicher foon zai
Farbliben bloiz choorves oon felder mit kvorim
Die shrekleche aides foon groil

Die velt iz shoin rooik vie gurnit gevuzen
Ir gait oonzer oomglik nit un
Oonzer choorben dem gresten zie hut shoin fargesen
Die retsiche vert mer nit dermunt

Ich bin in mein yoogent a zuken gevuren
Zat mit yisoorim oon leid
Gekemft mit dem toit em bazigt oon farluren
Mein leben iz troier un fraid

11. Green Leaves - Dedicated to my newborn granddaughter, Frances Sharon
May she live long and happily.
On her birthday.

Tiny green leaves blessed be you,
We delight at your arrival;
We'll not think what later may be,
Now in this splendor of flowers.

You're greeted by skies dressed up in blue,
By the sun with its brightest of rays;
All of creation radiates glee,
There's elation in mountains and valleys.

The bird rejoices in his nest on the tree,
The worm as he crawls on the ground,
The mother and kids in their own home,
The father at work in the field.

Your coming bestows on us Plenty,
Provides for each living creature;
It strengthens the elderly and the infirm,
And brings far-off thoughts to the youthful.

Tiny green leaves, our dear friends,
Your leaving will hurt us all deeply,
So let's rejoice now for time is so short,
Soon autumn will come with its wilting.

And feeling is removed,
The beautiful is lost,
We are bereaved for evermore.

The angel's hand provides
Bread and life and joy,
He blessed the newborn,
He provided for a great year.

11. גרינע בלעטער - געווירמעט מיין ניי
געבוירענע אייניקל, פייגע שרה.
זאל זיין מיט לאנגע יאר און גליקלעך.
אין טאג פון איר געבורט. 29/4/50

גרינינקע בלעטלעך געבענטשט זאלט איר זיין
מיר פרייען זיך מיט אייער קומען
עס ווילט זיך נישט טראכטן וואס שפעטער וועט זיין
אין יום טוב פון צווייט און פון בלומען

עס באגריסן אייך הימלען אין בלויען געקליידט
די זון מיט די ליכטיקע שטראלן
דער גאנצער באשאף איז איצט שטארק פון פרייד
מען פריידט זיך אויף בערג און אין טאלן

עס פריידט זיך די פייגל אין נעסט אויסן בוים
דער ווארעם וואס קריכט אויף דער ערד
די מאמע מיט קינדער ביי זיך אין דער היים
דער מאן ביי דער ארבעט אין פעלד

עס האט אייער קומען אונז שפע געבראכט
חיונה פאר אלעס וואס לעבט
די אלטע און קראנקע געזינשער געמאכט
דער יוגנט פאנטאזיעס געוועבט

גרינינקע בלעטלעך טייערע פריינט
שווער וועט זיין מיט אייך זיך שידן
טא לאמיר זיך פרייען ווייל קורץ איז די צייט
באלד קומט דער הארבסט מיט די לייזן

און פילע זענען צוריק
די אונזערע זענען צוריק
די אונזערע זענען צוריק

עס האט דער אונזערע זענען צוריק
עס האט דער אונזערע זענען צוריק
עס האט דער אונזערע זענען צוריק
עס האט דער אונזערע זענען צוריק

11. Grine Bleter - gevidmet mein nei
geboirenem ainikel, Faige Sure.
Zul zein mit lange yur oon gliklech.
In tug foon ir geboort.

Grinke bletlech gehentsht zult ir zein
Mir fraien zich mit cier koomen
Es vilt zich nit trachten vus shpeter vet zein
In yoim toiv foon tsvit oon foon bloomen

Es bagrisen cich himlen in bloien geklaidt
Die zoon mit die lichtige shtralen
Der gantser hashaf iz itst shiker foon fraid
Men fraidt zich oif berg oon oif talen

Es fraidt zich die faigel in nest oifen boim
Der vurem vus kricht oif der erd
Die mames mit kinder bei zich in der haim
Der man bei der arbet in feld

Es hut cier koomen oonz shefa gebracht
Chiyoone far ales vus lebt
Die alte oon kranke gezinter gemacht
Der yoogent fantazyes gevebt

Grinke bletlech teire freint
Shver vet zein mit cich zich shaiden
Tu lumir zich fraien veil koorts iz die tsit
Bald koomt der harbst mit die leiden

און פילע זענען צוריק
די אונזערע זענען צוריק
די אונזערע זענען צוריק

עס האט דער אונזערע זענען צוריק
עס האט דער אונזערע זענען צוריק
עס האט דער אונזערע זענען צוריק
עס האט דער אונזערע זענען צוריק

20. Judgement Day
Rosh Hashana Eve, 5710

The shofar (*I) blasts warn:
Snap out of your stupor
We'll be disrobed today;
Examined by heaven.

Angels are scurrying
On G-d's judgement day,
Carrying the ledgers,
Records of our performance.

All the files are brought
To the ultimate court;
Deeds will be weighed,
The good against the bad.

Two angels will debate,
A friend versus a foe;
We're snow-white to the first,
Sin-black to the second.

The friend-angel rejoices
If we're truly innocent;
The foe is then vanquished
And must brood silently.

But if we're sin-laden
And lacking in remorse,
The foe-angel gloats;
We've betrayed our own cause.

The shofar blasts promise:
Repent and do good,
Be blessed by heaven,
Be inscribed for a good year.

20. שופר

ערב ראש השנה תש"י 9/50

עס שאלט דער שופר רופט און וועקט
ערואכט פון אייער דרעמלען
עס ווערט דער מענטש היינט אויפגעדעקט
מען בעטראכט עס אין די הימלען

די מלאכים איילן זיך מיט שרעק
אין יום הדין צום בורא
זיי טראגן ביכער שווערע פעק
מיט מצוות און עבירות

עס ווערט יעדן מענטשנס בוך געבראכט
צום נידערדיגן דעם אלהעכסטן
דעם מענטשנס מעשים ווערט בעטראכט
די גוטע און די שלעכטע

ס'האט יעדער מענטש מלאכים צוויי
אפריינט און אויך אשונא
ביים ערשטן איז ער ווייס ווי שניי
ביים צווייטן פול עונות

דער גוטער מלאך ווערט באגליקט
ווען דער מענטש איז ערלעך פרום
און זיין שונא ווערט באזיגט
דער קטגור בלייבט דאן שטום

נאר אויב דער מענטש האט אסאך זינד
און האט ניט קיין חרטה
דער שלעכטער מלאך דאן געוויינט
דער מענטש האט זיך פארדאטן

עס שאלט דער שופר רופט דעם מענטש
צו תשובה און מעשים טובים
ער וועט פון הימל זיין געבענטשט
לשנה טובה תכתבו

20. Shofar
Erev Rush Hashana, T'SH'Y

Es shalt der shoifer rooft oon vekt
Ervacht foon eier dremlen
Es vert der mentsh heint oifgedekt
Men betracht em in die himlen

Die maluchim eilen zich mit shrek
In yom hadin tsoom boire
Zai trugen bicher shvere pek
Mit mitsves oon avaires

Es vert yeden mentshens booch gebracht
Tsoom besdin dem alhechstn
Dem mentshens ma'asim veren betracht
Die goote oon die shlechte

Es hut yeder mentsh maluchim tsvai
A freint oon oich a soine
Beim ershten iz er veis vie shnai
Beim tsvaiten fool avoines

Der gooter malech vert baglikt
Ven der mentsh iz erlech froom
Oon zein soine vert bazigt
Der kataiger bleiht dan shtoom

Nur oib der mentsh hut asach zind
Oon hut nit kein charute
Der schlechter malech dan gevint
Der mentsh hut zich farraten

Es shalt der shoifer rooft dem mentsh
Tsoo tshoove oon ma'asim toivim
Er vet foon himel zein gebentsht
Leshune toive tikusaivoo

25. The Minyan (*2)

An old Jew is walking all hunched over,
Carrying his talis (*3) and tfilin (*4).
He's on his way to the synagogue,
To help fill the ten of a minyan.

Though he's determined he's really quite ill,
And a downpour has just started;
But lack of fervor was never his sin,
He pushes on like one of twenty.

He has taken this path to synagogue for years,
At the same hour every morning,
But this time it seems different somehow,
He's sure that the way has grown longer.

The blowing rain whips cruelly and sharp,
It knocks the old man off his feet.
"They'll have to pray without me today,
It's a pity there won't be all ten."

The old man's life has been long and hard,
He experienced the entire diaspora;
Yet he rarely has missed this synagogue trek,
Praying faithfully each evening and morning.

Now he's lying with no one to help,
All weakened and soaked through and through;
He begs the Almighty to forgive him this once,
If he prays right there with no minyan.

He never came to synagogue again,
His condition continued to worsen;
He was not taken home till later that day,
It was clear that this trip was his last one.

Now he's stretched out and all at peace,
The talis his only cover;
The scenes of his life quickly pass by his eyes,
That an angel has just closed for him.

3/51 . זיין לעצטער גאנג

עס גייט איין אלטער איד געהויקערט
טראגט זיין טלית חפילין מיט
ער גייט אין שול כאור הבקר
ווייל ער איז דער צענטער איד

ער איז נעבעך קראנק צובראכן
און אין גאס ארעגן גיסט
עס שטארקט עס אבער דער בטחון
און ער לאזט זיך ווי אריז

ער גייט אין שול אזוי פון יארן
יעדן טאג די זעלבע צייט
נאר עפעס היינט איז עס געווארן
דער וועג צום שול-גיין זייער ווייט

דער רעגן שמייסט עס שטארק אין פנים
ווארפט עס אומעט פון די פיס
מען וועט שוין מוזן דאוונען אן עס
אן אמנין עס פארדריסט

ער האט אין לעבן פיל געליטן
דעם גאנצן גלות דורכגעמאכט
ער האט קיין איין טאג אויסגעמיטן
דאוונען פרי און אויף דער נאכט

איצטער ליגט ער אומבאהאלפן
זייער שוואך אין גאנצן נאס
וועט עס גאט דערפאר ניט שטראפן
אז ער וועט דאווענען דא אין גאס

ער איז אין שול מער ניט געקומען
ער איז געווען געפערלעך קראנק
מען האט עס דאן אהיים גענומען
דאס איז געווען זיין לעצטער גאנג

איצטער ליגט ער אויסגעצויגן
בלויז זיין טלית עס באוואכט
און זעט זיין הכלית מיט די אויגן
וואס אמלאך האט פארמאכט

25. Zein Letster Gang

Es gait ein alter Id gehoikert
Trugt zein talis tfilin mit
Er gait in shool k'oir haboiker
Veil er iz der tsender Id

Er iz nebech krank tsoobruchen
Oon in gas a regen gist
Es shtarkt em uber der bituchen
Oon er lutz zich vie a riz

Er gait azai in shool far yuren
Yeden tug die zelbe tseit
Nur epes heint iz em gevuren
Der veg tsoom shool-gain zaier veit

Der regen shmeist em shtark in punim
Varft em oomet foon die fis
Men vet shoin moozen davenen un em
Un a minyen em fardrist

Er hut in leben fil geliten
Dem gantsen gules doorchgemacht
Er hut kein ain tug oisgemiten
Davenen frie oon oif der nacht

Itster ligt er oombahulfen
Zaier shvach in gantsen nas
Vet em Gut derfar nit shtrufen
Az er vet davenen du in gas

Er iz in shool mer nit gekoomen
Er iz geven gefeferlech krank
Men hut em dan ahaim genoomen
Dus iz geven zein letster gang

Itster ligt er oisgetsoigen
Bloiz zein talis em bavacht
Oon zet zein tachlis mit die oigen
Vus a malech hut farmacht

A bird started crying bitterly,
Upon coming back to his home
He'd just returned from his annual flight.
This trip always brought joy and luck.

But this year he lost his nest in the park,
The tree which was his had fallen.
That's where he'd always constructed his nest,
It's there that he felt his home was.

Now all the spots in the park are taken,
Not a single tree is still vacant.
His beloved mate will soon be coming,
And there'll be no nest waiting for her.

The bird is crying, his eyes full of tears,
Yet his voice is so sweet and appealing,
That everyone passing stops to listen,
Unaware it's his pain they're enjoying.

None of them knows if the bird has a home
And that its with joy he is singing.
Or whether he's crying on that branch
And it's his bad luck he's hemoaning.

28. My Own garden

I've neglected my garden,
I rarely tend it of late;
Now only weeds grow there
And it yields no more fruit.

My garden was considered
Among the best in the land.
I went to garden for others,
Leaving mine with no care.

My garden had been sacred,
Passed from father to son.
It was a family heirloom,
Its ruin's my own fault.

ס'האט א פייגל שטארק צוויינט זיך
קומענדיק אהיים צוריק
פון דער רייזע וואס געוויינטלעך
פלעגט עס ברענגען פרייד און גליק

ער האט אין פארק זיין נעסט פארלארן
אומגעפאלן איז דער בוים
ווי ער האט זיין נעסט פאר יארן
ווי עס איז געווען זיין היים

איצט איז שוין דער פארק פארנומען
יעדער בוים איז שוין באזעצט
זיין באשערטער דארף באלד קומען
און ער האט נאך נישט קיין נעסט

עס וויינט דער פייגל גיסט מיט טרערן
אזוי זיס און איינגענעט
יעדער שטעלט זיך אפ עס הערן
האט חנאה פון זיין קלעט

קיינער ווייסט נישט אויב דער פייגל
האט א היים און זינגט פון פרייד
צי אפשר וויינט ער אויף דער צווייגל
און באדויערט זיינע לייך

28. ב'האב פארנאכלעטיקט מיין גארטן 5/51

איך האב פארנאכלעטיקט מיין גארטן
איך האב עס זעלטן ווען באזוכט
איצטער וואקסט בלויז ווילד-גראז דארטן
און ער גיט פער נישט קיין פרוכט

מיין גארטן איז געווען פאר צייטן
פון די בעסטע אויף דער וועלט
בין איך געלאפן העלפן לייטן
און מיין גארטן אויסגעפעלט

דער גארטן האט געהאט אקדושה
דורות האבן עס באוואכט
פון די אבות אידושה
האב איך אליין אהל געמאכט

S'hut a faigel shtark tsoovaint zich
Koomendik ahaim tsoorik
Foon der reize vus gevaintlech
Flegt em brengen fraid oon glik

Er hut in park zein nest farluren
Oomgefallen iz der boim
Voo er hut zein nest far yuren
Voo es iz geven zein haim

Itst iz shoin der park farnoomen
Yeder boim iz shoin bazetst
Zein basherter darf hald koomen
Oon er hut nuch nit kein nest

Es vaint der faigel gist mit treren
Azoi zis oon eingenem
Yeder shtelt zich up em heren
Hut hanuye foon zein klem

Kainer vaist nit oib der faigel
Hut a haim oon zingt foon fraid
Tsie efsher vaint er oif der tsveigel
Oon hadoiert zeine leid

28. Ch'hub Farnachlesikt Mein Gurten

Ich hub farnachlesikt mein gurten
Ich hub em zelten ven bazoocht
Itster vakst bloiz vild-gruz durten
Oon er git mer nit kein froocht

Mein gurten iz geven far tseitn
Foon die beste oif die velt
Bin ich gelufen helfen leiten
Oon mein gurten oisgefelt

Der gurten hut gehat a kedooshe
Doires huben em bavacht
Foon die uves a yerooshe
Huh ich alain a tel gemacht

I served the strangers with devotion,
They were the envy of their peers.
But then they came to despise me,
An outsider no longer needed.

I'm going back to my garden,
I won't spare it my toil.
I'll then belong to it wholly
And it'll be all mine again.

29. Two Mothers - A present for my
granddaughters, Marsha and Frances.

Two little sisters were playing
A mother-daughter game;
Their play was proceeding smoothly,
The actors wholly immersed,

The older sister was the mother,
The younger was her child.
The child at one point misbehaved,
Her mother's rules were broken.

The mother knew from her mother,
How misconduct should be treated.
She must be stern for her child's own good,
And punished for the mischief.

The child began to make a racket,
Bursting out with bitter tears;
This brought on the big mother's rage,
And the little mother punished.

The child's cries then became much louder,
The little mother joined too,
Seeing such tears, the big mother softened,
And showered both daughters with kisses.

The game had thus become much wider,
There were two mothers and a child.
But which of the two the child preferred,
She could not decide so quickly.

כ' האב געטריי געדינט די פרעמדע
זיי זעהוויבן זיך זערימס
איצטער בין איך אפארשעמטער
כ' בין זיי פרעמד מ' דארף מיך נישט

איך וועל צום גארטן זיך אומקערן
איך וועל נישט קארגן עס מיין מי
איך וועל אין גאנצן עס געהערן
און ער וועט דאן געהערן מיר

29. צוויי מאמעס - מיינע אייניקלעך,
מארשע און פרענציש - אמחנה 5/51

עס האבן צוויי מיידעלעך געשפילט זיך
אין א "מאמע-קינדער" שפיל
דער שפיל איז אנגעגאנגען פרידלעך
זייער ערנסט מיט געפיל

די גרויסע איז געווען די מאמע
די קליינע איז געווען איר קינד
ווערט דאס קינד דאך ווילד מסתמא
און כאבייט אגרויסע זינד

ווייסט די מאמע פון דער מאמען
וואס מען טוט א ווילדער קינד
און נעמט דאס קינד מיט שטארקייט צאמען
איר באשטראפן פאר דעם זינד

מאכט דאס קינד אין הויז ארעם
און צושרייט זיך מיט אגוואלד
לויפט די מאמע מיט אכעס
און באשטראפט דער מאמען באלד

שרייען קינדער איצטער העכער
די קליינע מאמע שרייט אויך מיט
ווערט די גרויסע מאמע ווייכער
און זי קושט זיי יעדער בליד

ווערט דער שפיל שוין איצטער גרעסער
פון צוויי מאמעס מיט איין קינד
נאר וועלכע מאמע איז איר בעסער
ווייסט די קליינע נעבעך נישט

Ch'hub getrei gedint die fremde
Zai derhoiben zich dermit
Itster bin ich a farshemter
Ch'bin zai fremd m'darf mich nit

Ich vel tsoom gurten zich oomkeren
Ich vel nit kargen em mein mie
Ich vel in gantsen em geheren
Oon er vet dan geheren mir

29. Tsvai Mames - meine ainiklech,
Marsha oon Frenzes, a matune.

Es huben tsvai maidlelech geshpilt zich
In a "mame-kinder" shpil
Der shpil iz ungebraigen friedlech
Zaier erenst mit gefil

Die groise iz geven die mame
Die klaine iz geven ir kind
Vert dus kind duch vild mistame
Oon bagait a groise zind

Vaist die mame foon der mamen
Vus men toot a vilder kind
Oon nemt dus kind mit shtarkeit tsamen
Ir bashtrufen far dem zind

Macht dus kind in hoiz a ra'ash
Oon tsooshreit zich mit a gvald
Lofit die mame mit a ka'as
Oon bashtrufft der mamen bald

Shreien kinder itster hecher
Die klaine mame shreit oich mit
Vert die groise mame vaicher
Oon zie koosht zai yeder glid

Vert der shpil shoin itster geser
I'oon tsvai mames mit ain kind
Nur velche mame iz ir beser
Vais die klaine neboch nit

Blond hair, black hair,
In old age gray hair;
Another year, a couple
And that's all.

Lived well, lived poorly,
In old age all drained out;
Another step, a drag,
And you're exhausted.

Big man, little man,
All dance the same that final dance
Of existence; the wreaths
Are discarded.

Good deeds, had deeds,
All evaluated in old age;
The angel records and makes his report;
And it's final.

With feeling, without feeling,
Fortunate's the one who has a goal,
For quiet and cold,
And the game ends.

46. My Song

I can't find the words to put down,
I have trouble composing the lines,
Yet something prevents me from resting,
When I'm struck with that certain pressure.

My heart can then only be lightened,
And the oppressive force be relieved,
If I write a song to be sung,
One which arose in my heart.

I don't often sing of rejoicing,
I was abandoned by joy long ago,
My song is of human anguish,
Of man's aloneness and fear.

My songs don't relax any person,
But alert him to be on his guard,
Not to let anybody oppress him,
And to get rid of injustice with force.

בלאנדע האר שווארצע האר
אויף דער עלטער גרויע האר
נאך איאהר אפאר
און דאס איז גאר

גוט געלעבט שלעכט געלעבט
אויף דער עלטער אויסגעשעפט
נאך אטרעפ אשלעפ
און אויסגעוועפט

גרויסער מענטש קליינער מענטש
זיי טאנצען גלייך די לעצטע טענץ
פון עקזיסטענץ די קרענץ
ווערן פארלענדט

גוטע טאט שלעכטע טאט
ווערט אויף דער עלטער אפגעשאצט
דער קלייבער קלייבט פארשרייבט
און דאס פארבלייבט

מיט געפיל אן געפיל
ווייל איז דעם וואס האט אציל
ווייל שטיל און קיל
און ס'ענדיקט זיך דער שפיל

23/6/52

46. מײן ליד

עס פעלן מיר ווערטער צום שרייבן
די שורות איך וועג נישט און מעסט
נאר עפעס דערלאזט מיך נישט בלייבן
מיט דעם וואס עס דריקט מיך און פרעסט

עס ווערט אויפן הארצן מיר גרינגער
כ'באפריי זיך פון דעם וואס מיך דריקט
ווען כ'שרייב אן אלידל צום זינגען
אליד פון מײן הארצן דיקטירט

איך זינג זייער זעלטן פון פריידן
ווייל פרייד איז פון מיר לאנג אוועק
מײן ליד איז פון מענטשלעכע ליידין
פון מענטשלעכע עלענד און שרעק

מײן ליד זוכט דעם מענטש נישט פארױבן
נאר וועקט עס צו זיין אויף דער וואך
נישט לאזן זיך מער אונטערדריקן
אויסראמען די רשעות מיט מאכט

Blunde hur shvartse hur
Oif der elter groie hur
Nuch a yur a pur
Oon dus iz gur

Goot gelebt shlecht gelebt
Oif der elter oisgeshept
Nuch a trep a shlep
Oon oisgevept

Groiser mentsh klainer mentsh
Zai tantsen gleich die letste tents
Foon ekzistents die krents
Veren farlendt

Goote tat shlechte tat
Vert oif der elter upgeshatst
Der kleiher kleibt farshreibt
Oon dus farbleibt

Mit gefil un gefil
Voil iz dem vus hut a tail
Veil shtil oon kil
Oon s'endikt zich der shpil

46. Mein Lid

Es felen mir verter tsoom shreiben
Die shoores ich veg nit oon mest
Nur epes derluzt mich nit bleiben
Mit dem vus es drikt mich oon prest

Es vert oiften hartsen mir gringer
Ch'hafrei zich foon dem vus mich drikt
Ven ch'shreib un a lidel tsoom zingen
A lid foon mein hartsen diktirt

Ich zing zaier zelten foon fraiden
Veil fraid iz foon mir lang avek
Mein lid iz foon mentshloche leiden
Foon mentshloche elend oon shrek

Mein lid zoocht dem mentsh nit farvigen
Nur vekt em tsoo zein oif der vach
Nit luzen zich mer oonterdrooken
Oisramen die rishoos mit macht

A tune suddenly burst forth from in me;
Can't recall when I'd heard it first.
Was it at our Sabbath table
Or was it already in youth?

One could sing many songs to that tune,
Like "This day is honored above others" (*5);
Or the poem I composed when still young
Which challenged time-honored conventions.

The tune was sung also at cheder (*6)
Accompanying "Two are holding a talis" (*7).
It was also played by the musicians
At weddings when brides would be seated (*8).

The Jew always sang it in times of despair,
In the dark night of his diaspora.
Walked, accompanied by it, in the shadow of death,
Gaining strength so he could face all dangers.

The tune was also a song of hope,
Of spring, of youth and of love;
A prayer for the old approaching their end,
In those soul-searching days of fear.

I sang that old tune during treks in the woods
And while climbing high on the mounts.
It was with me when I would approach any peak
And when I would stray from a path.

That tune accompanied me everywhere,
It consistently strengthened my spirit;
I hummed it along in all moments of stress,
It's the tune which gave heart to my people.

עס האט זיך אנגון צוזונגען אין מיר
איך ווייס ניט פון וואנען ער קומט
צי דאס איז דער פון שבת ביים טיש
צי אפשר דאס פון מיין יוגנט

עס האט זיך דער נגון צו אלעס געפאסט
צו "יום זה מכבד מכל ימים"
און אויך צו אלייך פון דער יוגנט פארפאסט
וואס שטורעמט צוברעכן די צאמען

מיר פלעגן אין חדר אויך זינגען מיט עס
"שנייט אוהזין בטלית"
אויך פלעגן כלי זמרים באזעצן מיט עס
אין יום החופה די כלות

עס האט עס געזונגען דער איד אין זיין נויט
אין דער פינצטערער נאכט פון זיין גלות
מיט עס מיטגעגאנגען אין שאטן פון טויט
געשטארקט זיך אין אלע בהלות

געווען אויך דער נגון פון האפנונג אלייך
פון פריילינג פון יוגנט פון ליבע
אגעבעט פאר דעם עלטער וואס פארט פון יריד
אין פארכטיקע טעג און פון טריבע

כ'האב אמאל מיט דעם נגון אין וועלער שפאצירט
געקלעטערט גאנץ הויך אויף די בערג
כ'האב אין מיין שטייגן די הימעלן בארירט
פארבלאנדזשעט אראפ פון דעם וועג

נאר ס'האט מיך דער נגון באגלייט אומעסוט
און שטענדיק געשטארקט מיין געמיט
כ'האב יעדער סכנה עם אונטערגעברומט
דעם הארטיקן נגון פון איד

Es hut zich a nigen tsoozongen in mir
Ich vais nit foon vanen er koomt
Tsie dus iz der foon shabes beim tish
Tsie efsher dus foon mein yoogent

Es hut zich der nigen tsoo ales gepast
Tsoo "Yoim ze mechoobud mikul hayumim"
Oon oich tsoo a lid foon der yoogent farfast
Vus shtooremt tsoobrechen die tsamen

Mir flegen in cheder oich zingen mit em
"Shnayim oichzim hatalis"
Oich flegen klezmerim bazetsen mit em
In yoim hachoope die kaless

Es hut em gezoongen der Id in zein noit
In der finstterer nacht foon zein gules
Mit em mitgegangen in shuten foon toit
Geshtarkt zich in ale behules

Geven oich der nigen foon hufhoong a lid
Foon frieling foon yoogent foon libe
A gebet far dem elter vus furt foon yerid
In furchtike teg oon foon tribe

Ch'hub a mul mit dem nigen in velder shpatziert
Gekletert gants hoich oif die berg
Ich hub in mein shteiigen die himlen barirt
Farblunjet arup foon der veg

Nur s'hut mich der nigen baglait oometoom
Oon shtendik geshtarkt mein gemit
Ch'hub yeder sakune em oontergebroomt
Dem hartsiken nigen foon Id

55. My Best Friend

My best friend I've been seeking you,
Where are you to be found?
You were extinguished much too young,
My life has lost all meaning.

My world has no more sunshine,
My surroundings bring no joy,
My childhood friend you've disappeared,
And taken my dream along.

I'll continue to seek you forever
I'll never give you up,
You have my youthful dream with you,
Without you I can't go on living.

56. Man and Wife

The two grew up together,
United by one common purpose:
First to be bride and groom,
And then to be mother and father.

Of course they don't always agree,
And it sometimes may come to dispute;
Especially when income is meager
And perhaps when a glance is misread.

Yet together they live quite serenely,
And now they've hut one main concern:
That their kids not be struck with misfortune,
It's this that they pray every day.

They also have one more desire:
That they live as a pair till the end,
That fate not bring on any parting
That they not be estranged come what may.

I remember the first meeting,
The wedding, the birth and the raising,
The home, the school and the university,
And now when the time has come again

55. מײן בעסטער פריינט

מײן בעסטער פריינט איך זוך דיר אום
וואו קען איך דיר געפינען
מ'האט דיר אויסגעלאשן יונג
מײן לעבן האט קיין זינען

מײן וועלט איז איצט אן זונען-שיין
אן פרייד איז מײן ארום
פארשוונדן איז מײן יוגנט פריינט
און האט מיט זיך מײן טרוים

איך וועל אייביק זוכן דיר
איך וועל דיר נישט אויפגעבן
דו האסט מײן יוגנט טרוים מיט זיך
איך קען אן דיר נישט לעבן

56. מאן און ווייב

זיי זיינען צוזאמען געוואקסן
עס האט זיי באהעפט איין באגער
פון אנהויב אלס כלה און חתן
און איצטער אלס שוויגער און שווער

זיי זיינען נישט אלע מאל אייניק
און ס'קומט אויך אמאל צו אקריג
איבערהויפט ווען פרנסה איז ווייניק
און אמאל בלויז דער חשד פון אבליק

דאך לעבן זיי ביידע גאנץ פרידלעך
זיי האבן צוזאמען איין זאג
צו זען די קינדערלעך גליקלעך
זיי בעטן ביי גאט אלע טאג

און נאך איין באגער איז ביי ביידן
צוזאמען דערלעבן די ענד
זיך קיינמאל חלילה נישט שיידן
און קיינמאל נישט ווערן פארפרעמדט

איך געדענק דעם ערשטן טראפ
פונדעם וואוינען פון די קינדער
פונדעם וואוינען פון די קינדער
פונדעם וואוינען פון די קינדער

55. Mein Bester Freund

Mein bester freint ich zooch dich oom
Voo ken ich dir gefinen
M'hut dich oisgelushen yoong
Mein leben hut kein zinen

Mein velt iz itst un zoonen-shein
Un fraid iz mein aroom
Farshvoonden iz mein yoogent freint
Oon hut mit zich mein troim

Ich vel aibik zoochen dich
Ich vel dich nit oifgeben
Doo hust mein yoogent troim mit zich
Ich ken un dir nit leben

56. Man Oon Veib

Zai zeinen tsoozamen gevuxsen
Es hut zai baheft ain hager
Foon unhoif als kale oon chusen
Oon itster als shviger oon shver

Zai zeinen nit ale mul ainik
Oon s'koomt oich a mul tsoo a krig
Iberhoipt ven parnuse iz vainik
Oon a mul bloiz der cheshad foon a blik

Duch leben zai baide gants friedlech
Zai huben tsoozamen ain zurg
Tsoo zen die kinderlech gliklech
Zai beten hei Gut ale tug

Oon nuch ain hager iz bei baiden
Tsoozamen derlehen die end
Zich kainmul chalile nit shaiden
Oon kainmul nit veren farfremdt

איך געדענק דעם ערשטן טראפ
פונדעם וואוינען פון די קינדער
פונדעם וואוינען פון די קינדער
פונדעם וואוינען פון די קינדער

Rejoice, rejoice, thieves in the night,
Darkness will always protect you.
Everyone is already asleep,
No one's on guard to molest you.

Their wealth now lies unprotected,
Take as much as desired.
But careful not to shorten their sleep;
Make it smooth and quiet.

Take till nothing remains for them,
Leave them only their bodies.
And those who dare awaken too soon,
Quickly bring an end to them.

Extinguish the sun so that dawn doesn't come,
Let it always be night-time.
For then you'll be in command without fear,
Darkness will give you the power.

Rejoice, rejoice, thieves in the night,
It'll be night for a long time yet.
As long as the world continues to sleep,
Just continue on your merry way.

59. My Shtetl (*9)

In the province of Polesye (*10),
Mid the forests, hills and marshes,
In a very little shtetl;
Is the place I once called home.

She consisted of three streets only,
Plus a synagogue and a market,
And many shoplets for bazaar-time.
Which provided meager earnings.

I remember also the train station,
Teamsters, peddlers and investors,
Sextons, tailors and shoemakers,
And our house and barn and garden.

פריידט זיך פריידט זיך נאכט גנבים
חסך אייך באשיצט
אלעס האט איינגעשלאפן
קיינער וואכט נישט איצט

הפקר איז דער פאלקס פארמעגן
נעמט וויפיל איר ווילט
נאר זעט איר זאלט זיי נישט אויפוועקן
מאכט עס גלאטיק שטיל

נעמט עס זאל זיי גאר נישט בלייבן
לאזט זיי בלויז דעם גוף
און די וואס וועלן זיך אויפכאפן
מאכט זיי כאלד דעם סוף

פארלעשט די זון ס'זאל נישט טאגן
זיין זאל שטענדיק נאכט
וועט איר שאלטן אומערשראקן
חסך גיט אייך מאכט

פריידט זיך פריידט זיך נאכט גנבים
נאכט וועט זיין נאך לאנג
ווי לאנג דער עולם האלט אין שלאפן
גיט זיך אייער גאנג

59. אין דעם געגנט פון פאלעסיע

אין דעם געגנט פון פאלעסיע
אין אשטעטל זייער קליין
צווישן בערגלעך וואלד און בלאטעס
איז אמאל געווען מיין היים

געווען איז דארטן בלויז דריי געסלעך
מיט אשולחויף און אמטיק
פאר יארידן אסך קרעמלעך
נאר פרנסה ווייניק קשיג

אויך געדענקט זיך בעלי עגלות
סוחרים פעקלער און אקאזאל
שוסטער שניידער און כלי קודש
אהויז אנארטן מיט אשטאל

Fraidt zich fraidt zich nacht ganuvim
Choishech eich bashitst
Ales hut itst cingeschlafen
Kainer vacht nit itst

Hefker iz der fulks farmegen
Nemt viefil ir vilt
Nur zet ir zult zai nit oifveken
Macht es glatik shtil

Nemt es zul zai gur nit bleiben
Lazt zai bloiz dem goof
Oon die vus velen zich oifchapen
Macht zai bald dem suf

Farlesht die zoon s'zul nit tugen
Zein zul shtendik nacht
Vet ir shalten oomershruken
Choishech git eich macht

Fraidt zich fraidt zich nacht ganuvim
Nacht vet zein nuch lang
Vie lang der oilom halt in shlufen
Gait zich oier gang

59. In Dem Gegent P'oon Polesye

In dem gegent foon Polesye
In a shtetl zaier klain
Tsvishen berglech vald oon blutes
Iz amul geven mein haim

Geven iz durt bloiz drei geslech
Mit a shooldhoif oon a mark
Far yeriden asach kremlech
Nur parnuse vainik karg

Oich gedenkt zich bal agules
Soichrim mekler a vakzal
Shooster shneider oon klai koidesh
A hoiz a gurten mit a shtul

And a shepherd with a trumpet,
Who awoke the sleeping sun,
Whose bedroom was among the oaks,
His blankets hides of cattle.

The shtetl was a giant suka (*11),
Put together by our Lord,
With tall pine forests for its walls,
And blue heaven for its s'chach (*12).

My granddad's house was also there,
Built by his granddad before him;
From my shtetl I was driven by Need,
Only that could tear me from her.

Where children would sing every eve,
Returning from their cheder;
I still find myself singing along,
How I yearn for my dear shtetl.

Where every Friday was a party,
And the greatest joy semester's end;
Wherever else can one be so happy,
As we children of the shtetl were?

Though mom and dad would sometimes fear,
Lest we youngsters lack good food,
Or sufficient garments sturdy and whole,
To protect us from the winter's cold.

Of course we were unaware of these.
Such thoughts were only for them,
Ours were only of laughter and play,
Never mind that the skies were cloudy.

But my old shtetl's different now,
No laughter there a long while,
The German devil saw to that,
My relatives and friends long gone.

My shtetl forgot me long ago,
But forget her I never can,
Wherever I look she comes into view,
And wherever I go she goes too.

און אפאטעך מיט אטרובע
וואס האט די זון פון שלאף געוועקט
וואס איז געשלאפן ווייט אויף דובעס
מיט בעמאזעס צוגעזעקט

געווען איז שטעטל ווי אסוכה
וואס דער בורא האט געמאכט
די ווענט פון גרויסע סאטנע וועלדער
און דער הימל בלויער סך

געווען איז דארט מיין זיידעס שטיבל
וואס זיין זיידע האט געבויט
די נויט האט מיך פון דארט פארטריבן
מיט מיין שטעטל מיך צושיידט

עס בענקט זיך נאך מיין ליבער שטעטל
ווי קינדער גייען מיט געזאנג
פון דער חור שפעט אין אווענט
און איך גיי אויך מיט זיי אין גאנג

ווי פרייטיק איז געווען איווט טוב
דער גרעסטע פרייד דער סוף הזמן
ווי קען מען נאך אזוי זיין גליקלעך
ווי מיר פלעגן דארטן זיין

כאטש טאטע מאמע פלעגט דארט זארגן
וואס אונז קליינרווארג נארונג פעלט
און גאנצע בגדים לעך צום טראגן
זיך באשיצן פון די קעלט

נאר מיר פלעגן דאס ניט וויסן
דאס איז געווען בלויז זייער זארג
מיר פלעגן דארט פון פרייד געניסן
אפילו אין אכטארנעט טאג

די שטעטל איז ניט ווי געוועזן
ניט געווען קיין פרייד דארט זייער לאנג
דער צורד האט זי ניט פארגעסן
מיין משפחה מייענע פריינט

די שטעטל האט מיך לאנג פארגעסן
נאר זי פארגעסן קען איך ניט
זי שטייט מיר חמיד פאר זי אויגן
און ווי איך גיי גייט זי אויך מיט

Oon a partech mit a troobe
Vus hut die zoon foon shluf gevakt
Vus iz geschlufen veit oif doobes
Mit hemazes troogedekt

Geven iz shtetl vie a sooke
Vus der boire hut gemacht
Die vent foon groise sasne velder
Oon der himel bloien s'chach

Geven iz durt mein zaidens shtibel
Vus zein zaide hut geboit
Die noit hut mich foon durt fartriben
Mit mein shtetl mich tsooshaidt

Es haintk zich nuch mein lieber shtetl
Voo kinder gaien mit gezang
Foon der cheder shpet in uvent
Oon ich gai oich mit zai in gang

Voo Freitik iz geven a yoim toiv
Der greste fraid der soif hazman
Voo ken men nuch azoi zein gliklech
Vie mir flegen durten zein

Chutsh tate mame flegt durt zurgen
Vus oonz klainvarg narooong felt
Oon gantse b'gudimlech tsoom trugen
Zich bashitsen foon die kelt

Nur mir flegen dus nit visen
Dus iz geven bloiz zaier zurg
Mir flegen durt foon fraid genisen
Afiloo in a chmarnem tug

Die shtetl iz nit vie gevezen
Nit geven kein fraid durt zaier lang
Der tsoirer hut zie nit fargesen
Mein mishpuche meine freint

Die shtetl hut nich lang fargesen
Nur zie fargesen ken ich nit
Zie shtait mir tumid far die oigen
Oon voo ich gai gait zie oich mit

Tommorrow when everything lies concealed,
In the mist of forgetting in the veil of time,
When our lives will be all played out,
In the game of life versus death,

מארגן ווען אלעס וועט ווערן פארהילט
אין נעביל פון שכחה אין שלייער פון צייט
ווען אונזערע לעבנס וועלן זיין פארשפילט
אין שפיל פון דעם לעבן מיט דעם שפיל פון טויט

Murgen ven ales vet veren farhilt
In nebil foon shikche in shleier foon tseit
Ven oonzere lebens velen zein farshpilt
In shpil foon dem leben mit dem shpil foon toit

When no trace remains in your memory,
Of all things holy which cost us so dear,
Battle for life, conflict of the generation,
And all will disperse as by blowing wind,

ווען אין אייער זכרון וועט בלייבן קיין שפור
פון אלעס וואס הייליק וואס טייער אונז קאסט
דעם קאמף פאר דעם לעבן דער שטרייט פון דעם דור
פארווייען וועט אלעס ווי ווינד ווען עס בלאזט

Ven in eier zikuren vet bleiben kein shpur
Foon ales vus hailik vus teier oonz kust
Dem kamf far dem leben der shtreit foon dem dur
Farvaien vet ales vic vint ven es bluzt

Tommorrow when everything's hidden from you
By the battle of life in the mist of time,
Remember at least the course we plotted,
And unite to forge the golden chain.

מארגן ווען אלעס וועט אייך זיין פארהילט
דורך קאמף פאר דעם לעבן אין נעביל פון צייט
געדענקט כאטש דעם שטרעבן וואס מירן געצילט
פאראייניקט צו שמידן די גאלדענע קייט

Murgen ven ales vet eich zein farhilt
Durch kamf far dem leben in nebil foon tseit
Gedenkt chutsh dem shtreben vus miren getsilt
Faraingt tsoo shmiden die guldene kait

FOOTNOTES

- (*A) The original pronunciation of the family name was actually "Cuff-mahn", but this was changed when a U. S. Immigration official decided to spell it "Kaufman".
- (*B) Today's Russians spell it "Kalinkovichi", but our ancestors pronounced it "Kalenkovich".
- (*1) The shofar is a ram's horn, fashioned to be used as a trumpet for religious occasions.
- (*2) A minyan is the minimum number (ten) of Jews needed for a formal Jewish prayer service. One may pray less formally with fewer people.
- (*3) A talis is a special shawl or cloak which is worn during the morning prayer.
- (*4) Tfilin are two small leather cubes enclosing inscribed biblical passages; these are tied to the arm and forehead by leather bands during the weekday morning prayer.
- (*5) One of the "zemirot" - a melodious group of religious songs composed in the Middle Ages. These are sung at the table every Sabbath after the noon-time meal.
- (*6) Cheder is the school to which Jewish boys went throughout the centuries. They learned, primarily, to read and write Hebrew and were familiarized with the contents of prayers, the bible and the talmud.
- (*7) The opening words of the talmudic volume, Baba Metzia. These are especially meaningful to boys who received traditional educations because they ushered in a long relationship with that compendium of Jewish law and tradition. Boys started studying the talmud at age 10 and the number of hours devoted to it per day would gradually increase to as much as 6 by age 14.
- (*8) At Jewish weddings in Belorussia, the bride would "be seated" ceremoniously in a special area. Meanwhile, the groom would be with the rabbi and the two fathers who would be finalizing the wedding contract. When this was done, the groom would come and ceremoniously cover the bride's face with a veil. At this point the actual marriage ceremony began.
- (*9) A shtetl is a small town. In the Russian Empire, most Jews lived in shtetls since they were forbidden from either living in cities or owning farms without special permission.
- (*10) Polesye is a province in the southeastern part of Belorussia.
- (*11) A suka is a temporary hut in which Jews must live during the holiday of Sukoth.
- (*12) S'chach is the thatching which must serve as the roof of a suka.