

It Screams In the Night
by Yisroel Shtern (1919)

Translated by Miriam Koral (2006)

You devour beauty and spit it out,
the stars are fading out of shame;
there's no room beneath your brows for God,
the sky is darkening above.

You draw suffering and sin close to your breast,
you frighten yourselves just for a joke,
like dogs, you lick at maidenly feet,
your soul, in its hunger, can't sleep.

A curse spends the night above your beds,
you kiss bitter lips and quake;
the night plays dreamily over there somewhere.
But you devour your joy and spit it out.

And if God excuses your loneliness, and tries
to lull night-time worlds in your heart, --
you lie, tired latecomers, and hear
the cock's yawn in the grey of dawn.
