

ON THAT DAY A PERSON COMMITTED SUICIDE

By Yisroel Shtern

(dedicated to Sh. Ho.)

Translated by Miriam Koral (2005)

He comes from the world's iniquity,
where man learned to hear the wind,
as if the earth hadn't aged at all,
and the tree is God's child, as in antiquity;
he comes from the world's iniquity,
he comes from the silent density,
he comes from the distant woods.

He's not come to quarrel with anyone,
he's not here to change his luck,
he fondles his luck and pets it,
for it comes from the distant woods.

But he won't ever go back.
It's here he wants to pass the time and stay,
here he wants to be sweet and ascend.

So what if not a branch is in sight?
No fields with buckwheat sown?
Only people, like stretched out ropes,
hanging one other?

So what if not a branch is in sight?
He has hands, that stay silent like prayers,

and eyes that grow in space
far richer than a tree,

and a heart that shimmers in weeping,
like a flower dozing in clay...

and he wants to flower like this, in silence.

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And if the world has steel nails,
clamps its teeth into its own skull,--
deeply he'll color the earth with his blood,
so the sweetness can rise higher still...
No, he doesn't want to die in peace.

So he runs about the paths
and keeps on asking and asking:
God, where is your fortune then?

If the tiny woods is your home,
if a straight little guy sits in clay,
and the great little world's not okay –
Where is your fortune now, God,
if the tiny woods is your home?..

Published in "Haynt Yoyvl-bukh, 1908 – 1928", Warsaw 1928.