Years
A New Year verse.

Translated by Andrew Firestone (2014)

I
In the obscure gloomy green grey
of the last lines of trees
there at the end of the world b the sky bends down
carefully to the earth
and listens to the quiet passing
of the years, which swim
out like a tear, and fall
down somewhere like a tear.

II
Every night
black-eyed worlds sing
black-hearted songs,
and stars fall
down in fear:

"Who is the father?
Who is the mother?
The years are born
to neglect and abandon.
Far beyond the forests
on a wild foreign isle
the years lie
thrown about in wild chaos,
blind and sickly
and dark as the forests
and silent like the island
unable to cry
they can't cry...
and over them hangs
a frozen curse".

Every night
black-eyed worlds sing
black-hearted songs,
and stars fall
down in fear.

III
Ding! Ding! Ding! \textbullet\textbullet\textbullet
the hours run
from the town's clock-tower
down into the world
and make the call:
A year is born! \textbullet\textbullet\textbullet
the hours ring down
onto the stones
and the copper coins
in the tin of "Charity
saves from death"*...

Ding! Ding! Ding! \textbullet\textbullet\textbullet
A dog comes along
and stops in the market
with two moist eyes
and can't remember the way
to the village to his master...
A young year wanders lost
from the town belltower
into the night
and falls exhausted
down on the stones
and lies there broken...

Ding! Ding! Ding! \textbullet\textbullet\textbullet
on the dark-blue ladder
of the dark-blue night
my heavy heart dreams
up towards the tower,
where the bell of time restlessly
throws itself upon
the night-blinded clock...

and the hours fall
like leaves in Tishrei
down onto the pavement,
until the stones groan
and say to the streets:

"Every year wanders
from star to star
but finds no renewal
and bearing its misfortune flees
from God and the heavens
and falls down
like a sinful angel
to seek out in our
cold land
its eternal rest..."

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in "Moment", Warsaw, October 15, 1919.

* "Tsedoke tahisl memoves" = "charity saves from death" was the cry of charity collectors at
funerals.