

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

Ding! Ding! Ding!  
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!  
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 tahtsl memoves*" = "charity saves from death" was the cry of charity collectors at funerals.