

Mikhoels

The wounds on your face are covered by the snow,
 So that the black Satan shall not touch you.
 But your dead eyes blaze with woe,
 And your heart they trampled on cries out against the murderous crew:

'I shall come to your defiled threshold, eternity,
 With murder marks on my face, and blasphemy,
 So that you see how my people live in this five-sixths of the earth,
 With hate and the hangman in the land of their birth.

'Read the marks, cut them into your memory,
 And let remembering never stop
 For every mark the murderers left on me,
 A mother and her child escaped the hangman's rope.'

You were not deafened by the murderer's hand.
 The snow does not hide the marks you bear.
 The sufferings in your bruised eyes demand,
 And from under your brows to heaven tear.

Sleep quietly, sleep! No sorrow touches you now.
 Yet one watches you as you lie there dead.
 The light of the star of righteousness is on you shed.
 And Rabbi Levi Yitzchok sings through you.

Is love extinguished because we mourn?
 Can snow cover up our anger and scorn?
 Like two lighted Sabbath candles
 Your hands out of your coffin shine.

You loved to close your eyes in thought,
 When you were thinking, to see clearer.
 Now you hold under lock and key your woe,
 So that it should not out of your coffin overflow.

So much light round you, and mirrors,
 As when you were making up for a first-night.
 Your lips seem about to open,
 To say goodbye, as you set out for the stars on their height.

Your face-lineaments are transformed back into stuff,
 Death is already at his destructive work.
 Absorb music for the last time—the last time heard—
 The music from your beloved play 'Benjamin the Third.'

Under its sounds, soaked with tears and light,
 Go into eternity, with unpainted colours.
 Don't feel ashamed of your ancient bruised face, full
 Of holes through your kingly skull.

This is your word and blood, your best make-up,
 In which in death you live on the stage.
 Go into eternity! Your name still draws!
 The stars will welcome you with applause!

Somewhere in heaven, between the wandering shine,
 A star lights up in honour of your name.
 Don't feel ashamed of the holes in you, and your pain!
 Let eternity feel the shame!