Not Drying Swamp nor Dancing Hora

Only Yesterday           S.Y. Agnon
Delicate Confession     Nathan Zach
You Shall Walk in the Field Lea Goldberg
Like all our brethren of the Second Aliya, the bearers of our Salvation, Isaac Kumer left his country and his homeland and his city and ascended to the Land of Israel to build it from its destruction and to be rebuilt by it. From the day our comrade Isaac knew his mind, not a day went by that he didn’t think about it. A blessed dwelling place was his image of the whole Land of Israel and its inhabitants blessed by God. Its villages hidden in the shade of vineyards and olive groves, the fields enveloped in grains and the orchard trees crowned with fruit, the valleys yielding flowers and the forest trees swaying; the whole firmament is sky blue and all the houses are filled with rejoicing. By day they plow and sow and plant and reap and gather and pick, threshing wheat and pressing wine, and at eventide they sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, his wife and his sons and daughters sitting with him, happy at their work and rejoicing in their sitting, and they reminisce about the days of yore Outside the Land, like people who in happy times recall days of woe, and enjoy the good twice over. A man of imagination was Isaac, what his heart desired, his imagination would conjure up for him.

The days of his youth departed in his yearning for the Land of Israel. Some of Isaac’s friends had already taken wives and opened shops for themselves, and they’re distinguished in the eyes of folks and are invited to all public events. When they enter the bank, the clerk sits them down on a chair; when they come to a government office, the dignitaries return their greetings. And others of Isaac’s friends are at the university studying all manner of wisdom that sustains those who possess it and magnifies their honor. While Isaac
Isaac spent that day and all that night in the hostel. He drank a lot and slept a little and waited for dawn to go to a village. When day broke and he wanted to go, the landlord said to him, Eat first and then go. When he had eaten and got up to go, he said to him, Where are you going? He told him, To Petakh Tikva, the Opening of Our Hope. The landlord said, The wagon’s already gone. He wanted to go to Rishon Le-Tsion, the First of Zion, and he told him, Today the car doesn’t go there. He wanted to go to some other place, and he told him, Arabs attacked that place and destroyed it. And so with every place Isaac wanted to go to, the owner of the hostel found something to delay him. At that time, the hostel was empty, had no guests, and when a guest wound up in the hostel, the innkeeper held on to him until his money ran out. Isaac fathomed the innkeeper’s mind, and he got up and went to find himself a cart.

Isaac went out to look for a cart. As soon as he took one step, both his feet sank in the sand. This is the sand of Jaffa that digs underneath you to swallow you up. As soon as you stand on it, it runs out and turns into holes on top of holes.

The sun was strong in its dominion and beat down on Isaac’s head. His eyes were filled with salt water and the fire lapped it and boiled it. His clothes are heavy and his shoes are blazing like coals. The ironed shirt he donned in honor of the Land sits on his heart like a soaked Matzo, and the hat rains salty dews down on his face.

Shapeless houses are strewn over the sand, which rises above their thresholds and rubs into the walls. The windows are closed and the shutters gleam in the sun. No sign of life is evident in those houses, but puddles of slops standing full and smelling foul indicate that human beings dwell there.

Isaac walks around in the wasteland of Jaffa. No man on earth, no bird in the sky. Only the sun stands between sky and earth like a dreadful being that won’t bear any other being in its presence. If he isn’t burned in fire, he will dissolve in sweat. Isaac no longer feels his clothes and shoes, for he and they have become one single mass. In the end, even the sense of himself was stripped from him,
God took pity on him and he didn't lose his head. Isaac knew the road he came from and knew that he could go back to the hostel. He made his heart obstinate and didn't return. He said to himself, Today I'll get to the settlement and I'll go into the forest and dwell in the shade of a tree and no sun in the world will overcome me. An imaginative man was Isaac and he imagined that the people of the settlements had planted forests to dwell in their shade.

Soon after, Isaac left the desert of sand and reached a dwelling place. Camels and donkeys and mules loaded with wares were standing around as if they bore no burden. Nearby sat a few Arabs with long, multicolored tubes in their mouths, and their eyes were raised to the sky. Nearby stood a few Jews and debated with the Arabs.

Isaac encountered one fellow. He said to him, “Pray, my lord, where might I find here a vehicle going to one of the settlements of the Jews?” The fellow held out his hand and greeted him. He welcomed him, saying, A new man, a new man. Isaac nodded in reply and said, I arrived yesterday, and now I want to go to Petakh Tikva or Rishon Le-Tsion. Does my lord know where I might find a vehicle?

The fellow replied, “Does my loyalty see dose green trees standin in a line? If it may please my loyalty, he’ll toyd dose green trees; and dere my loyalty would please to find de carriages my loyalty is seekin, both dose dat journey to Pysakh Tivoy and dose dat journey to Rehoysis and to Rishoyn-le-Tsoyn, and dose dat journey to de udder dwellings of our brudders, children of Isroyel, who dwell on de holy soil in de Holy Land.” All that to make fun of him for talking in his Ashkenazi Hebrew of the Exile. Isaac got into conversation with him, and in the end they went into a coffeehouse to drink lemonade.
Delicate Confession

I was born to be delicate.
Fact: I have soft hair.
You want to check? Be my guest,
My shampooed head is exposed to your gaze. Please excuse
The little bald patches. They’re just
The ravages of time.

I was born to be delicate. As it happens
My parents decided they should emigrate
To a country that is not delicate. They did not decide in haste,
They consulted with everyone. Even Hitler supported their decision,
He said it was very sensible.

That’s how someone born to be delicate
Came to a country that is not delicate. You tell me
What choice did I have? I still comb my hair
With a delicate comb, brush my teeth, lose my hair, send my clothes
To the cleaners. I never insult the neighbors except when
There’s no choice.

It’s all a mistake, they said, a terrible mistake has been made. I myself
Make do with shouting in my sleep. Do you think
it will help?
Don’t make me laugh. I’m a serious person
If I had not been cursed by the generation, I mean my generation,
I would have a crushing answer for you
But maybe it wouldn’t be delicate.
וידיי עדן

נדדתי להיוות עדן.

ועבדה: יש לי שערות עדנות.
אאぬר רצויים בלדווים? בבקש, ראות החרטום חמשה לפנייכם. אצוי סלוה על הכרחות הכרחות. זה רכ.
שיניו חציו.

נולדתי להיוות עדן. במקורה.
החרטום חמשה חמשה עדנות, לәאڕ עייגנה. על החרטום הפגינים, הח蕈עינע עכ מוי שיכלו. אפיייל מיזקלו חמות בחרטום.
אפימ שׂייאו בוגנה בחרטום.

 kd הגרינ מוי שונדלו להיוות עדן
kd לәאڕ עייגנה. אופרער על אטום:
אָיִינוו בֵּרֵרָה חֵי לָי. אָיִינוו מַסְטָרָן
במַמְסָרָן זְדִיָּו, מְצָחָה שֵׁנִיָּו, מְקָרִים, מְוסָר בָּגָד
לָמְכָּבָהס, לא מַצְלִילָם אתך חשבנים אזלו אום ון
אמיך בֶּרֶךֶה.

מהול טוּות, אָמָר גַּפָה כָּאָו אייוו טוּות נָרָאָה. גַּני עַצְמִי
מקפטס בְּכָּז שְׁאֵיגי צוּיעֶתָא. מַה דְּעָטְקִים,
גַּה טְעָוָרוו!铝合金 שאתי. אָגֵנְו פֵּנוּ-אָצְמִי
אֵאָנִיָּאָלָּו צוּילָא שְׁאֵיגי חֶדוּר, הַחֳוָפְצָהָו קְדוּרִי,
הִיִּיָּתָה עַלָּוָה קִלֵּם חַשְבוֹת
אָבָל אָוָלו לָא קְלָ כְּדַעָדוּה.
You Shall Walk in the Field    Lea Goldberg

Is it true - will there ever come days of forgiveness and mercy?
And you’ll walk in the field, and it will be an innocent's walk.
And your feet on the alfalfa's small leaves will be gently caressing,
And sweet will be stings, when you're stung by the rye's broken stalks!

And the drizzle will catch you in pounding raindrops' folly
On your shoulders, your breast and your neck, while your mind will be clean,
You will walk the wet field, and the silence will fill you -
As does light in a dark cloud's rim

And you’ll breathe in the furrow in breaths calm and even,
And the pond's golden mirror will show you the Sun up above,
And once more all the things will be simple, and present, and living,
And once more you will love - yes, you will, yes, once more you will love!

You will walk. All alone. Never hurt by the blazing inferno
Of the fires on the roads fed by horrors too awful to stand,
And in your heart of hearts you’ll be able to humbly surrender,
In the way of the weeds, in the way of free men.

Rachel Tzvia Back

And will they ever come, days of forgiveness and grace,
when you’ll walk in the fields, simple wanderer,
and your bare soles will be caressed by the clover,
or wheat-stubble will sting your feet, and its sting will be sweet?

Or the rainfall will catch you, the downpour pounding
on your shoulders, your breast, your neck, your head.
And you’ll walk in the wet fields, quiet widening within
like light on the cloud’s rim.

And you’ll breathe in the scent of the furrow, full and calm,
and you’ll see the sun in the rain-pool’s golden mirror,
and all things are simple and alive, and you may touch them,
you are allowed, you are allowed to love.

You’ll walk in the field. Alone, not scorched by the blaze
of the fires, along roads stiffened with blood and terror.
And true to your heart you’ll be humble and softened,
as one of the grass, as one of humankind.[2]
האמרה על יבואו ימים / לאה גולדברג

...