

By the Same Author

Rembrandt's Bible

Songs from Bialik: Selected Poems of H.N. Bialik Lives of the Dead: Collected Poems of Hanoch Levin



Atar Hadari



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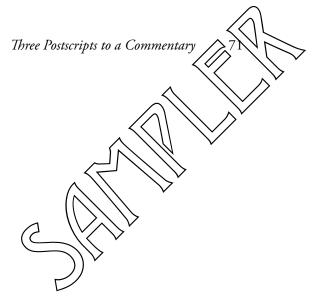
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'A Shroud in Turin' appeared in Pretty Coo Poetry Thing, 'Pietà' in America Media, 'Salmon' in Going Down Swinging, 'Another Pietà' won 2nd prize in the Personal Lord Salviour contest. 'Fishers of Men' is forthcoming in Grub Street Grackle. Ten of these poems were commissioned as a 19-minute audio play for the 50 Jewish Objects project at University of Manchester's Centre for Jewish Studies.

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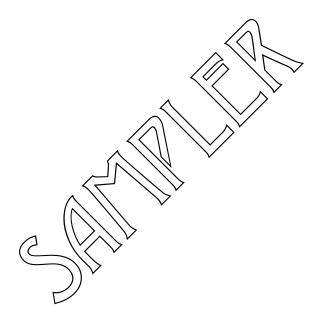
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Gethsemane





Pietà

His cries quieted eventually like ants disappearing down an ant-hole, he'd woken on the underground from a passion of outstretched on his mother's lap sleeping the bottle had already dropped and she bent so his hand held stretched out almost touched the floor, but it missed and she picked the bottle up where it rattled on the train floor before it stopped, and he didn't wake only the copper lights with ornamental shadows made him outstretched, the bone-buttons bowed on his duffel coat and his lower midriff bared where the teachirt rode up on his mother's tartan pants and shining patent leather boots: he screamed, he screamed and she rocked him and comforted, eventually the and fled but Judas came with his rifling hands and before sleep came again made cure they got off and proceeded round the station through a brilliant tunnel and some starts rising toward the stars.

Another Pietà

She is looking out over his shoulder Eyes wide awake to what's in store And the babe is no longer a baby, He sprawls across her arms, her chair.

His eyes too are now itinerant, He has a look like he has known Too many tables set like this, Sees a last one with twelve plates down.

But they sit there in a huddle,
The radiant mother and longed for child,
Both now more darkness in their eyes than won
Both now in wait for the lion on the providence.

That slouches toward Bethlehem.

Trailing a crowd with prayer-shawls

Tourists desperate to believe in anything,

Addicts who have seen it all

But want the blood to spure
Out of a tiny child holding a ball
Before they watch the cracks
Run to the ceiling as the cake crumbles,

His maid mother weeping with abandon, The streets run with blood entirely pure, The Temple empty finally of tourists When the last family meal has done. Where is the baby, where is his mother?
The lion's on the loose, stay in her lap, don't run.
A man with a cup is looking to anoint another,
Whatever you do, play dumb.



Salmon

He is not comfortable in her arms, No longer snuggling, or leaning close. He leaps athletically like an arch, A river flowing from her hands to earth.

And his sweet belly is no longer fat, He arches, you can see his ribs. The smile on his face like the Cheshire cat That's eaten more than just the cream.

And the admirers. People smile at him Randomly in the street, like he's a star. The girls stand on street corners to meet And say his name shyly, holding their hear

This can't go on. She's holding strong
But he is leaping like a fish to go up stream
And in those pools where he was first a frogspawn
There's a star that's turned into the blackest ice, an open seam.

A Shroud in Turin

There was a man, they say, in Cairo Left his face burnt in a cloth; Not the sort of cross you'd make in biro Or the tale you'd leave in students' mouths

But his face – two eyes, a nose, some sort of pursed lip. How can you tell what a man kissed From the bits that burned frayed linen crisp? But they see him, those who believe,

Say they feel him in those prints
Left by a man in the shroud in a tout
And found near Turin in a skift.
But who he was who can be sure.

What he said we barely know-But he wiped his mouth on a noth one Passover night And two thousand years on The crumbs stick in the snow.

Healing on Sabbath

It isn't meant to be any kind of labour.

Light just makes its way - Out of me

And the healing

Comes with no disclaimer.

Did you make a paste?

I didn't make a paste. When I did that it wasn't a Saturday.

Did you draw in sand?

I didn't draw in sand. That was the adulteress.

They don't stone to death on the Sabbath.

Do they pay you?

Are you kidding me? They don't put in the kitty

Let alone the healing.

Did you squeeze lemon on the factor

There was no salmon consumed at this knowsh.

Why do they report you descrated the Salbath?

I have some students who pluck corn and eat it.

You can't teach all your students.

The best you can hope is to halp them to cope

With the truth

When it trashes their preconceptions.

And leave them a note

They can sing

When all your creditors

Come to rearrange your bones.

And a little path

To walk

When you are past caring for such things.

The Beginning of Healing

Healing is a ticklish matter. When you held your hand above his knee He started, though his eyes were closed as shutters And he never let his head lay back again So long as you were in the room. Later you learned trust and permission But you never lost the hunger to perform: The instigators of your sudden vision Never learned to feel less than alone Though you whispered to them And comforted as you led them up to Where all your oil was palm scented, Your towels were all warm But they always woke discov From the touch And wanted to go home