

ON THE SHORE, TEL AVIV, WINTER 1974

A crocodile cloud swallowed a cloud-cloud.  
All is clogged  
and where did the war go?  
The pier is painted yellow and red  
with the inscription: Tel Aviv.  
The drums of the depths are indifferent.  
In the sky shadowy figures  
slowly go berserk. An infinite wrestling arena  
in slow-motion takes.  
A crane rises above the luxury hotel  
Hilton. And where did the war go.  
A crocodile cloud swallowed a cloud-cloud. Where  
did the war go. Up in the depths  
soft clouds make love to planes.  
The air fills the lungs  
with spiky salt and laughter.  
The sun, a fading photograph.  
Shorebirds grayly peck the sand.  
The sea—its muscles groan.  
A lone woman, a synthetic kerchief  
on her head what is she  
in face of a thunderstorm.  
The diving board, too, is painted orange.

An old woman, her lips attempt:

He was an angel

He was an angel

FROM THE SONGS OF CRAZY DOLORES

I.

I am the child  
above whose bed  
Mexican gods laugh

Seasons go by, a sun reigns  
and pyramids do not turn upside down

There are many antiquities in the land of *Mejico*  
and I am the smallest among them

2.

I love Beli-Belik-Boom  
(once I called him Le-Le-Le)  
and I'll always love Le-Le-Le.  
But Belik does not understand  
what love is.

Belik is a strange man.  
He wrote me a poem of love  
yet refused to kiss my bare soul  
under the *huppa*\*. It was a *huppa*  
made of a parachute  
and he jumped with it out of there  
down,  
leaving me to freefall.

Of course I arrived before him.  
Boom.

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\* The wedding canopy.

I managed somehow  
to break my bones.  
And I have a few memories left.

When I was broken  
and a memory only  
Belik would kiss me on my cheek (Le-Le-Le)  
every evening.  
Later he swapped me  
for a cat.  
When he photographed me  
he would photograph me in double  
exposure.  
Somehow I managed to appear in the picture.

Boom.

3.  
I am made of glass  
and my father is a glazier  
I tell you I'm as  
transparent as a yogurt jar  
without the yogurt  
try to look through me just try  
and you'll see that you can see everything  
lean your head on me children  
and your noses will be squashed flat  
and your mouths will be pulled  
like a down-in-the-mouth blowfish  
take a look inside me I'm transparent  
absolutely  
I am made of glass  
because my daddy is a glazier  
and my mother dons a tulle dress  
take a look children take a look

it will do you good  
only be a little cautious please  
yesterday someone looked through me too hard  
and saw as far as the Bali islands  
and he rode a blue whale in the Bali islands  
and then my glass broke  
into a zillion shards  
and I was pricked and pricked and pricked  
and I was all glass glass  
in a zillion red puddles

4.  
Dolores jumps rope  
Dolores plays hopscotch

She looks into a kaleidoscope  
tube builds  
broken tunnels in a dream  
Dolores lives her life backward  
swings on a rusty groaning gate  
looks for puppies to adopt  
dead chicks to revive  
diamonds buried in trashcans  
in order to help refugees  
hiding in a tunnel under  
Keren Hakayemet Boulevard\*  
on the other side of the world

Dolores jumps rope  
always jumps rope  
to the other side of the world

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\* Boulevard in Tel Aviv named for the Jewish National Fund.

5.

I am Dolores-not-Dolores  
I am in the dream of some god

It seems to me that my life is a life  
but really it is only  
a particle in the dream  
of a sleeping god  
who dreams me with love

Dolores-not-Dolores

I have to pinch myself hard  
because the hour when images switch in his brain  
is near

Yes Dolores no Dolores yes Dolores no  
Dolores birds Dolores sea Dolores  
a loose shoelace Dolores a broken blue glass a milky  
way bathing a world  
a white horse lost in the plain  
tunnels inside time  
time going backward  
a snake shedding its skin a mobile of broken galaxies  
suspended on fine transparent fiber

I have to pinch myself hard  
because the hour when images switch in his brain is near  
I must watch myself so I don't sink  
in a dream  
when he dumps me from his brain  
like a crumb dropping  
from indolent fingers

A BRIEF LOVE

Slices slices silence cut  
into us

He took me from the noise  
and time became a summer of grace  
between killings  
and I reached my hand and he came like a rain of grace  
and on Mount Zion the darkness was thick  
and the little light in the churchyard was frail frail  
and I reached my hand and he fell into me in despair  
despair  
and later he led me by the hand  
like the sighted lead the blind  
and we saw so much so much  
it was possible to touch the very roots of things  
and we saw until our eyes refused to retain  
two beautiful weeks  
between wars  
do you know what it means two full innocent weeks  
between death and death  
one cannot ask for more and were we to ask for more  
it would have been a kind of arrogance

It was a cruel beauty

And such a silence  
on the altar\*

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\* Alludes to the covenant God made with Abram (Genesis 15:18).

From *Freefall* (1979)





TRAVELING TO JERUSALEM ON A MOON NIGHT

The window travels the clouds travel I  
travel the road travels the moon travels the trees travel the pane  
travels the moon travels the travelers travel  
the earth travels the mountains travel the planet travels the  
thoughts travel  
the time travels  
the light travels the glass travels the galaxy travels the moon  
travels  
and God  
eternally  
stands

## HAIR OF NIGHT

To weave the locks of darkness  
a thick braid on the downy nape  
of the earth  
to mold with moist hands  
the clay of dark craving  
tremor-plaited trees  
coiled branches of devotion  
and a broad meadow  
waiting in vain

Night combs its long hair like a woman  
seated at her window at night

Night hungry runs barefoot through the streets  
weeds spread rumors about it

Night begets day what will day bring  
night its dreams undone  
breaks the heart of a city  
tears a street apart  
how I wish to dye  
the hair of night  
a startling orange

How we wished for a blaze to spread in the twigs   twigs as  
blaze  
to sweep the trail of excess words  
to leave a clear polished dance floor for thick dense emotions  
to spin into a dance into a giant ball

How I wished for the great night's hair  
to wrap around me like snakes   but warm

Such naked truth even the down of dusk  
stiffens  
the mind's shutters knock violently  
a blow of darkness  
rescues a night  
whose hairs got all tangled up

Dreams, the heart's sweat,  
on night's taut skin  
its hair pulled back its temples damp  
secretions of dreams drop from it  
drip  
drop  
cool  
salty

Such an old night  
its chimes still clear

And we  
crawl on its belly  
and it welcomes us inside  
like a mad satyr who's fallen asleep  
blissfully

FREEFALL

And until the sound of my falling plea was heard  
I would eagerly fall  
through the sky's chimneys  
toward the land of my desires

Falling falling the floating angels wailed  
this is how the wishes drop from  
the bitter gravitational pull this is how it is in life  
this is it said the stones lying inert  
on the ground since time immemorial  
long ago we too dropped with a bitter wail  
look at our this-is-it-ness  
and learn from us  
soon you will be lying with us  
hard dull cold to your wants

The sound of the thud  
was brief.

Since then  
I lie inert.

THE WATER QUEEN OF JERUSALEM

The Water Queen of Jerusalem  
dived into history

History was hard and she grew fins  
she had no air and she schemed  
gills rowing and rowing through memory

The Water Queen of Jerusalem has  
a bathing suit made of Yiddish  
the Water Queen of Jerusalem wallows on a stone beach in  
Ladino  
fearing the rise of water levels in Arabic  
the Water Queen of Jerusalem has no  
sea in Jerusalem  
she has a history  
Jewish  
and she holds  
holds her head  
above water

RECKLESS LOVE

*blues*

I was a little reckless  
he was a little reckless  
in a cheap café on the eve of Purim  
everyone around us with the face to the TV  
up on the wall.  
He broadcast to me on a high frequency. I wanted  
to broadcast low-low but it came out  
high. I was a little reckless he was a little  
reckless. My hair was unruly his hair was unruly  
my past was undone his past was marred  
he had a nervous tick in his hand and I chain-smoked  
his dark face twisted in a child's smile  
in my face raced electric currents  
we were reckless and we knew we wouldn't  
come out clean.

Outside people with plastic hammers banged  
each other over the head and we drank hot chocolate.  
His eyes transmitted a black madness and I bit  
into it as into a cake. The waitress came out of a Fellini movie  
and asked if we wanted Hamantaschen.

He talked about epilepsy. I about paranoia.  
It was the eve of Purim. Two clowns showed us some tricks.  
We were like children when a large ship  
blares and leaves them behind.

Later, in the park, Your skin is like velvet.  
Later, in the park, Go home, or your wife will cuss you out.  
Later later later I was pure and beautiful.

It was Purim in the street. The air was scented  
with early spring.  
I put lipstick on my nose and matches in my ears.  
A red-nosed clown wept his childhood with him.  
He was damaged  
I was damaged  
he traveled in me in land and sea  
but he was reckless and I was reckless  
he spoke of convulsions I of conclusions  
he called for help I called for help  
he spoke of silence and I agreed with him about everything.

What a thing it was  
a great madness.  
We were like two kids when a large ship blares  
and leaves them  
far behind  
in the sand

I DREW MY END NEAR

I drew my end near  
and it came near

A couple of cats sat in the tree like calm fruit  
I called my end to come near and it lingered on the street  
corner  
one cat leapt and sat on my shoulder  
I stroked the animal but my hand hastened to stroke the  
blood  
flowing in my end

My end is soft, I know, and patient,  
I wanted so to rub against it  
be warm at its side  
like an old contented woman next to her old man



FOR

For it is as if  
you chose to die to  
preserve your shadow

The flicker of light that is present and vanishes  
at once  
the open warm night  
that is already sinking  
in the sludge of lost winters

Things I have loved  
are spread like a stain of oil upon  
heavy water

## HANDLING PAIN

The pain comes  
after the inner image

First a dull pain  
in the senses which have no words

Later I project for myself  
images of future painful states  
or of the past or of other times later  
on comes the pain the senses can handle and the words too  
express it as pain

Whoever watches me at this moment sitting cross-legged  
may think I'm deep in Tibetan meditation

DAILY RECORD

I put on Bach's Cantata 87  
and my spirit soared free.  
Yet it lasted only a moment.  
On the windowsill, to the right, crystal stones—  
hard gleaming forms, a world within a world.  
They stand opaque before me, completely opaque.  
Behind them a glass pane stands between me  
and South Jerusalem and I am not  
in South Jerusalem.  
Life flows at the fringes of life.  
I am in the music and the music is in me  
the stones come in me, my lover, who has placed them here,  
Jerusalem in me  
I am in me  
but by the time I had finished writing "I"  
I was no longer in me only the words only the words  
remained like stone-weights at my feet.  
So it flows, life, flows at the fringes of life.  
Yesterday, an evening with Joe, Jean-Claude, Shami, Karen.  
I was more in me more in them  
I wove experimental cobwebs  
over the ever-present abyss  
my body filling up with me.  
These are people I love because they help me  
love myself.  
The Cantata continues, without me. It doesn't need me  
but I, I am hungry  
for me, longing for something that is more me.  
So life flows at the fringes of life.  
Jean-Claude, on the stone path, at night, in the stillness,  
said that Buddhism is becoming more and more important in  
his life.  
It grows in him and grows.

I envied him so much. I could have devoured him  
for envy. I wanted his blood to come in my blood,  
I wanted to become like him. I told him that in me  
nothing grows. And that which does grow for moments  
dissolves into the void.

He told me in a clear and enlightened voice  
that even the knowledge of nothing is something.  
I was not inside the nothing when he spoke  
about the feeling of nothing inside me.  
Later, I'm undone again, filament after filament,  
and again aspire for myself  
with desperate hunger.

Now I'm alone.  
The crystals to the right, the Cantata in the back,  
my friends distant, downstairs,  
darkness ahead, to the left a faint light.  
What a rhymed finale, the void held tight  
with one thing leading to another, orderly.  
All right, let it be. Another day.  
Who was it who said: There's another world  
and it dwells within this one.