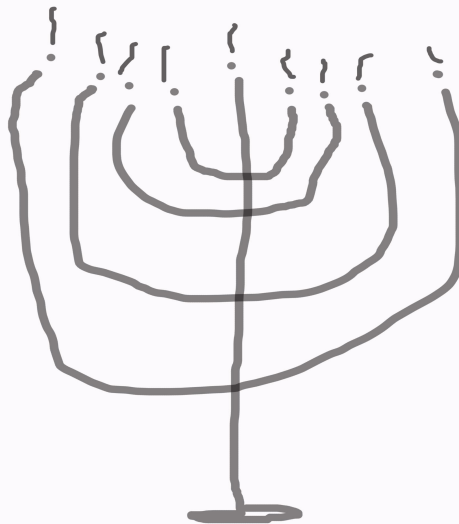


Eleven Poems For Hanukkah

Collected by Rabbi David Zaslow
Kislev, 5776



Of Darkness and Light

By Noel Chatroux

This soft grey pillow weighs a ton
A granite boulder dragging my chest down
A hump in my swallowing
Life breath aborted mid term

Leaving a faint trace of smoke
It vanishes as passion emerges
Shining clarity and lightness
Freeing the flow of creative energy

Back and forth pulses my life force
From darkness to light and back again
Moving seamlessly and mysteriously
Through all the shades of grey

Out of sight most of the time
This story is as old as the world.
In the silence of inner inquiry,
Glimpses of understanding flicker

When I have experienced awake
This yoyo enough times
I start sensing, beyond and in between,
A deep ocean, a golden pool, of ease.

There, here, is stillness and vibrancy,
Vacuum and fullness,
Light and darkness.
And me?

Judah Maccabee, Soldier At Rest

By Jonah Bornstein

The desert, a wind of bone and rock and sand,
a starless night, the bleached light

The sadness that exists within all things

 and yet the joy!
of a desert flower

a bird's spirit glides
inches above a breaking wave
mist drifting
across the sands

waves bridging

the solidity of earth

the glare of light in salt and air

a soldier raises his head
to an autumn rain
his mind with the desert
 fallen
what they learned of love
packing each other home

or the chaos that dripped to their toes.

At the shoreline a bird nests
its wings spread for flight
on earth, the sand, the dried sea
its broken legs the link
he walks toward.

This will save him

What we are
 so simple
shadow and light
 An ancient tide curling
beneath our wings

drifting back
a prayer of sorts to what we cannot know

In sleep
 an arm draped over a lover's shoulder
 wings ferrying us across
the night sea to a cliff, a nest What wind
 will nest in my lungs

Have I succumbed this long
quivering
at the base of an expanse of light
a harp string vibrating across
an arc of stone and steel

Time's delicacy floating in air

What is it to cross, to
be human or bird a wing
a bridge to one place
and back
 to the other

simply a membrane between earth and air

night and day, history and going forward

my heart, yours

Everything

The Darkened light

By Marvin Ratner

And he spoketh:

Get your lamp and enter into the darkness.

Go there now.

Go there now.

Go there now.

Into the darkened void.

Light, light, light, brighten unto darkness.

Oh sweet scent of truth, reveal to me,

darkened light, lightened darkness.

Bright oh so dark, my soul revealed.

Iliad

By Rivkah Raven Wood

today i hold the sun
on one shoulder,
my arm curled around it
painfully, it burns, but I blaze joyous that - I can.
a woman walking to the river
with a bright jug, blazing colors painted
to hide the cracks, the scars, the mended places
I breathe and lift my head to the light,
always the desire in art is that it seem easy-
effortless, simple.
I am Achilles of Troy
triumphant
choosing glory today, briefly,
defiant against that early darkness that comes with my choice.
Tomorrow, perhaps,
I'll put down the sun,
it blazes, trumpeting scarlet, oranges, shading the mountains in luminous gold -
may my releasing burn so brightly, as I sink beyond the horizon
letting go never came quietly to me.
come, sun- I'll carry you now, yes, I'll shoulder you daily
while I am strong

sweet rain this morning

By Ruth Resch

sweet rain this morning
fall color washing away
bones of trees to live with
us for months though the
turning of long nights
meanwhile
I light candles to
remember
the joy of light
in my sky
astonishing awe

my part of the earth

By Ruth Resch

my part of the earth
turns its face farther and
farther from the sun the days
grow short nights longer

it is fall now the blazes of
color whisk way in the wind
the morning sun makes streaks

across my yard
at a visible slant

the greying wicker
chair sits beside
the ancient sequoia
her face into the
sun glints sideways
across her form
she is bright and
beautiful stands
glorious in the
blackness around
her

a shred of light down
the coarse bark of the
sequoia mirrors the
chair both enlightened
by the spin of morning

Now I See

by David Zaslow

The light of you
bent back,
reflected
from a far star
years away
has reached
my eyes today.
I swear it's now
but know it was
a light bent back
from long ago.

And now my light
from this star here,
our sun,
will travel far
to meet your eyes
someday.
To you it will be now
in years to come,
you'll swear.
When I say "I recall"
and you say,
"Now I see!"

This I've learned:
my past is your tomorrow,
as yours is my today.
And now I see
what was so long ago
to you, to me is now.
And so I say,
"Now, I see!"

Light, Dark and Gray

By Alica Gutman Mannix

Light **dark** light **dark** light **dark**

*feeling **dark** in the light*

*feeling light in the **dark***

*feeling **dark** and light*

Mixing **dark** and light on my palette

getting gray

Light gray and dark gray

feeling gray, many shades of gray

trying to unmix the gray

many, many times

craving, longing, crying

feeling nothing

the pain of nothing

starting over: light **dark**



Woman in Gray (acrylic, 2007)

Hannukah Morning

By Rebecca Gabriel

Fingers of light
Reach over the mountains,
Plucking the music of
Shape into
Landscape.

The baskets of my eyes
Fill and overflow...

My husband
brings my tea.

Two birds
Land on a branch -
A menorah.

Burnished flames
Flicker,
Then extinguish,
Into radiant sky.

The Universe and The Writer

by Bruce Barton

Our boat races darkness.

Once there was nothing but time
Life was born out of endless patience
Innocence thrived in this slowness

Rays from a pleated sun form a collapsible lantern
bobbing on the ocean.

Innocence needed experience
Experience sought explanation
Explanation brought about change

Daylight flatlines at the edge of visibility.

Change conflicted with permanence
The internal judged the external

A need arose to record these events

Our boat races darkness.
The haze of years lifts as we approach the mainland.

Black and White

By Moshe Ross

From his book *Really Being With You*

Black and white join
in a continuum, all of a “oneness.”
Opposites live as brothers.
Eventually our dreams of wrong
bring us to the good and real.

Another vision, in the middle of the night:
Everything white, just as naturally as the black,
so it took a split second to realize.
Brilliant yet soft like satin roses.
Everything is its own opposite –
the light shining in the darkness –
omnifertile all-embracing No Thingness.

Phosphenes: spontaneous light-activity of the eye,
which increases in the dark.
The light that dwells in the darkness softly,
Beingness within Nothingness. My lady is two.
We are filigreed bodies of light and dark,
dancing over the edge
of the self-cancellation of this world,
miraculously, freely, into Really Being With You.