



חבורת שיר חדש Havurah Shir Hadash

A Jewish Renewal Community in Ashland, Oregon

185 N. Mountain Ave. Ashland, OR 97520 • 541.488.7716

An Anthology of Purim Poetry

Collected and edited by Jonah Bornstein
and Rabbi David Zaslow



Painting by Elana Flerova

What's In The Name (A Purim Rap)

by Bruce Barton

I'm not the rabbi,
my tallit's in the shop,
but I'll be hangin' out
in minyans
cause I can't stop,
not till I can show you
what's in the name.

I'm not the rabbi.

Just a guy with a pulpit
and a band at my back
stringing out tunes,
musical flights
praising the name,
with intention
without shame,
spelling it out for you
right to left
across the ages
on parchment pages
scribed by sages
to deliver to you
through all these stages
in ecstatic psalms
and talmudic rages.

Gather round me
can you see me, this guy
who's not the rabbi,
hoping to make you see
shimmering in place
through time and space.

I'm not the rabbi,
my tallit's in the shop,
but I'll be hangin' out
in minyans
cause I can't stop,
not till I can show you
what's in the name.

A Purim Poem

by Deborah Rosenberg

My Purim costume was turquoise,
gold and flowing.
They said "Ooh, Good queen Esther."

But I was Vashti!
The king's first wife who refused to dance
for drunken lords and the King's decree.
Reviled, disgraced and divorced away.
The first villain of the tale.

Sure, with yielding, sweetness, sacrifice,
Esther saved us all.
But Vashti,
in defiance,
fierceness, and with real spite,
she saved herself.

Are these two options, opposite?
Do I decide, or let the king
Determine who will dance?

Masked

by Madeleine Sklar

Taught to be a good girl
The mask I wear
Is most becoming for a lady
Whose behavior must never be
Unbecoming

My mask seems a good fit
And so becoming fitting
Should always know
When to laugh smile speak
To express care
Or interest show
Occasionally though
The mask grows tight
Like shoes that press a bunion
I squeeze my Self small
Cut off an inappropriate corner of face
I don't bleed much to force the fit

Even so
My mask may slip
And slides aside
Exposing fangs
I've strived to hide

Undermind

by Jonah Bornstein

I caught my glance in the mirror:
A Welsh poet's mad undersphere
Hung from my face in old fear
Bags of burdened expectations
Shifting like clouds in another's eyes
So quietly, lost in mishandled grace

What Mask Is This I Wear?

by David Zaslow

What mask
is this
I wear?
A part
of me
I'm not
but want
to be?
Or
something else?

A part
of me
so dark
I fear is
hidden
deep inside?

Esther calls:
"Reveal
yourself
as I
have done
to show
you how.

You risk
your life
no matter
what you do.

So now
just laugh!
It's spring
outside
so worry not.

It happens
by itself
no matter
what
you do."





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