



# *Seder Poems*

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Printed on the Traditional Land of the Wendat, Haudenosaunee,  
Anishinaabe, most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit.

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## Kadesh

Swirling my cup.  
I have crushed  
the grapes  
and although  
I didn't see the yeasts  
they had at me.

I give my sweetness  
to the world  
and I am slowly digested,  
changed, broken  
and transformed.

Like my salty ancestors  
hobbling out  
into the mystery.

Blessed are You, for whom we are dear  
who brings us together again this year.

## Urchatz

I take a bath  
every night while Jenny is away.  
I turn off all the lights,  
slip off my clothes  
and by the light of a candle  
slip in  
    and under  
eyelids holding  
    back the world  
I break the surface.  
Am I born anew?

Jenny walks down the  
cottage road  
thinking and not thinking  
about work.  
Sap still in the minyan of maples...

## Karpas

I want to eat  
the fruit of this land  
but everything has been changed,  
made into the image  
of a god I do not know  
but sometimes if I look  
at the right angle  
at the right time of evening  
and I forget everything I know  
You appear in the green before me.

Blessed are You, always close at hand,  
who brings forth fruit from the land.

## Yachat

On days when  
all the energy runs out of me  
I hobble along  
and remember  
even this  
even this  
diminished part of me  
could be a thing  
worth keeping.

## Magid

And in saying these words  
I can hear a snippet  
of the years I've tried to  
find you here.  
And my father  
and my grandmother  
and my grandmother's father  
all adding a bit of flavour  
in the the way I read you now  
and search for you  
in the bitterness and in  
the stretching out of our arms.

Blessed are You, who in each generation  
helps us reach our full capacity.



## Rachtza

I am starting to get hungry  
but instead of rushing  
I slow down.  
Prepare further.  
I wash with water and  
I remember the flow of  
life and love.  
I remember the spring  
and how energy and blessings  
return.  
I think about the stages to come-  
variations,  
sandwiches and salt.

Blessed are You, who is with us in our yearning  
as we raise our hands in offering.

## Motzi

I will take  
out the land  
from my hand  
The insides  
    flat up against  
    the outside  
each a membrane  
through which this  
cracker passes.

Blessed are You, who takes bread  
out from the,  
    ah,  
        rest.

## Matza

I tried grinding down  
the grains  
watching for water  
of yeast.

I would squint  
and try to sanitize  
with alcohol, fermented  
by other yeasts. You  
are all around me.  
I am careful with You,  
so be careful with me.

Blessed are You, who gives me the opportunity  
to embrace simplicity.

## Marror

No point in being bitter  
if I said that it was fine  
that the system is ok with me  
and I'll learn to like it in time.

No point in getting sour  
even when things close in  
and I'm squeezed for all of it  
and you say "buck up" with a grin.

I place it between here and before,  
my chest and stomach,  
breathe in and exhale.  
If we didn't get to a free Jerusalem this time  
maybe we will next year.

Blessed are You, who helps us breathe in bitterness  
and then leave it at the door.

## Korech

My ancestors would  
take their food  
in an idiosyncratic way  
and pass on the meaning  
from year to year,  
raise, uncover and say:

I do this to remember  
even farther back  
then we do today  
when we struggled in the mud  
and prevailed  
and loved and fought  
and You helped us make our dryshod way.

## Shulchan Orech

When I was sick last year  
with the plague  
I was alone  
I must have eaten  
the food I had prepared  
and taken an egg  
and mixed water with salt  
and said, "These are my tears."  
And in my tears I will live,  
in my tears I will live.

## Tzafun

Who is hiding  
behind the door  
just out of frame?

Who was the goddess  
just before we struck  
them all down  
and changed their names  
and their languages?

The squirrel outside is still  
scampering across the fence  
looking for its home  
but she's found it.

## Barech

After I had completed  
the ritual  
and Miriam had guided  
me to offer my breath  
and whole, kind heart  
and I looked up and saw  
something floating in the air  
and I heard the Levites'  
song in the rain on the leaves  
and the horns of the cars  
and I made my prayer.

I stood back and offered You one last song.  
*Hinei zeh ba.* It is coming.  
Blessed are You  
who sustains us with faith.



## Hallel

How to praise you  
for waking me when I was  
sleeping  
for giving me sight when  
I couldn't see  
for giving me words when  
I couldn't speak  
for giving me posture  
when I was beat  
for letting me stand with  
you at the river's edge  
and the black and blue bird  
came right before me  
and my heart opened?  
*Hinei zeh ba.*

## Nirtza

Our time  
is gone  
but we can  
still sing  
a few more songs.

As the guests  
start to leave  
I try to listen  
to the secret in my sleeve.

Miriam, you are watching  
in the brambles and river vines.

The sound of breathing.  
The clinking of cleaning up time.  
And a yearning desire  
is drawn up from the depths.



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