

Under Alien Skies by Yossel Birstein

Signs

Translated by Jon Levitow (2008)

Who knows if I see rightly
human sorrow, the woe of another,
my own journey from one day to the other,
my troubles, my own way?
Who can say?

In Jewish books I sound out songs
of supplication, sign by sign,
a B, an A,
who can say?

Who knows if I see rightly
my home and everything I call mine,
or whether things in secret think
of ways to be unkind?
Who knows?

The accusations in my poem
Follow me step by step,
a B, an A,
who can say?