

Under Alien Skies by Yossel Birstein

At the factory

Translated by Floris Kalman

I murmur to myself
timeworn everyday words
until they pass into silence -
and silence too is just a game.

Looking around I see
from every separate thing
a muteness flowing out
and weeping, in its own tongue.

Bending down I say
to the iron head of the machine:
I too am a thing, nothing more...
of a different kind, I know.

The silvery dust covers me too,
the walls surround me as well,
through the pane a luminous ray
stretches out to me a warm hand

Caresses my dust-covered head
at the iron head of the machine -
I too am a thing, nothing more...
of a different kind, I know.