

Under Alien Skies by Yossel Birstein

But still I haven't wearied

Translated by Floris Kalman

But still I haven't wearied
of loving the murmur of prayer.
I hide my face in my hands
my thought I hide in the Psalms.

My grandfather's nature in mind
his life upon my shoulders,
I'll get through just like him -
O how happy I am that I know it!

For ages I have been old
aged still more by loneliness.
The sky closes me out
just like my neighbour's door.

*On my neighbour's roof the sun
shines down in an alien tongue.*

Only yesterday or today
I brought out my boyish hope...
my world should be a festival -
every weekday a Sabbath

and all doors open to me.
No more should stones in the street
jump up against me in hatred
turning my own love to stone.

Yes, my love has turned to stone.
I am transfixed by weirdness
as by the cold, blind stare of an owl
with misfortune yet to come.

*On my neighbour's roof the sun
shines down in an alien tongue.*

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