

## **Under Alien Skies by Yossel Birstein**

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### **A letter in my hand**

*Translated by Beni Gothajner*

There in the shed of the kind neighbour  
my fourteen year old sister  
writes a letter.

Her hair

is covered with our mother's scarf.

The faint light through the cracks  
makes her cry.

Hunger pains torment her.

Her thin body shivers.

On her knee,

her thin hand –

brother in a distant land.

The year is so.. is so.

Of them all – just she is left.

The letter that she has written

she places in the good neighbour's hand –  
brother in a distant land.

My sister is no more

but through the narrow cracks, the light  
still looks around

in that good neighbour's shed  
for the image of my sister.