

Under Alien Skies by Yossel Birstein

Lovely daughter of the three gifts (1)

(in memory of Toybele Zukier – who died *Kiddush haShem*) (2)

Translated by Beni Gothajner

They tortured you mercilessly –
lovely daughter of the three gifts.

Sister of my town so sorely tried.
There is a mark of your grace still
on my no-longer boyish brow
and stored somewhere in my self –
a memory of the sleepy ditty
I used to burble on your gentle knee.

Now you have ceased to be.
Your sweet maidenly allures
I read now in a catalogue (3) of tears
where will, perhaps remain concealed
how fearful were your eyes,
as too, your trembling life
that yet did not God's mercy wake –
lovely daughter of the three gifts.

1. (Trans.) “The Three Gifts” was the title of I.L. Peretz’ celebrated tale in which a virgin maintains her modesty while dying *Kiddush haShem*, for the glory of God.
2. The name Toybele means “little dove”.
3. *Pinkes* – the register of residents’ names kept by each Jewish community.