

Under Alien Skies by Yossel Birstein

When the nation weeps in tragedy

Translated by Floris Kalman

You opened wide your heart
to let in others' sorrows –
this gentle song would come
bringing you a blessing.

But even blessings today
are full of bad tidings
when the nation weeps in tragedy
lovely Sabbath songs weep along.

And the tiniest letter
in a thin and humble booklet
pours its tears into the full cup
with the great holy books.

What means such lamenting?
As yet it is unnamed
surely it will reach somewhere
surely it will ...

Turn the pages one by one
you can hear the call of solace...
the world is wandering too, forlorn
somewhere among the stars.