

**Yehudah Halevi**  
**(1075/1086 to 1141)**

**From the Songs to Zion**

My heart in the East  
and I at the farthest West:  
how can I taste what I eat or find it sweet  
while Zion  
is in the cords of Edom and I  
bound by the Arab?  
Beside the dust of Zion  
all the good of Spain is light;  
and a light thing to leave it.  
And if it is now only a land of howling beasts and owls  
was it not so  
when given to our fathers—  
all of it only a heritage of thorns and thistles?  
But they walked in it—  
His name in their hearts, sustenance!—  
as in a park among flowers.  
In the midst of the sea  
when the hills of it slide and sink  
and the wind  
lifts the water like sheaves—  
now a heap of sheaves and then a floor for the threshing—  
and sail and planks shake  
and the hands of the sailors are rags,  
and no place for flight but the sea,  
and the ship is hidden in waves  
like a theft in the thief's hand,  
suddenly the sea is smooth  
and the stars shine on the water.  
Wisdom and knowledge—except to swim—  
have neither fame nor favor here;  
a prisoner of hope, he gave his spirit to the winds,  
and is owned by the sea;  
between him and death—a board.

Zion, do you ask if the captives are at peace—  
the few that are left?  
I cry out like the jackals when I think of their grief;  
but, dreaming of the end of their captivity,  
I am like a harp for your songs.

Translated by Charles Reznikoff

From Charles Reznikoff, *The Poems of Charles Reznikoff, 1918-1975*,  
edited by Seamus Cooney (Boston: David R. Godine, 2005).

Copyright © 2005 by the Estate of Charles Reznikoff.

## Where Will I Find You

Where, Lord, will I find you:  
your place is high and obscured.  
And where  
won't I find you:  
your glory fills the world.

You dwell deep within—  
you've fixed the ends of creation.  
You stand, a tower for the near,  
refuge to those far off.  
You've lain above the Ark, here,  
yet live in the highest heavens.  
Exalted among your hosts,  
although beyond their hymns—  
no heavenly sphere  
could ever contain you,  
let alone a chamber within.

In being borne above them  
on an exalted throne,  
you are closer to them  
than their breath and skin.  
Their mouths bear witness for them,  
that you alone gave them form.  
Your kingdom's burden is theirs;  
who wouldn't fear you?  
And who could fail  
to search for you—  
who sends down food when it is due?

I sought your nearness.  
With all my heart I called you.  
And in my going out to meet you,  
I found you coming toward me,  
as in the wonders of your might  
and holy works I saw you.

Who would say he hasn't seen  
your glory as the heavens'  
hordes declare  
their awe of you  
without a sound being heard?

But could the Lord, in truth,  
dwell in men on earth?  
How would men you made  
from the dust and clay  
fathom your presence there,  
enthroned upon their praise?  
The creatures hovering over  
the world praise your wonders—  
your throne borne high  
above their heads,  
as you bear all forever.

Translated by Peter Cole  
Poetry Magazine, March 2012

**John Donne**  
**(1572-1631)**

**Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward**

Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this,  
The intelligence that moves, devotion is,  
And as the other Spheares, by being growne  
Subject to forraigne motion, lose their owne,  
And being by others hurried every day,  
Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey:  
Pleasure or businesse, so, our Soules admit  
For their first mover, and are whirld by it.  
Hence is't, that I am carryed towards the West  
This day, when my Soules forme bends toward the East.  
There I should see a Sunne, by rising set,  
And by that setting endlesse day beget;  
But that Christ on this Crosse, did rise and fall,  
Sinne had eternally benighted all.  
Yet dare I almost be glad, I do not see  
That spectacle of too much weight for mee.  
Who sees Gods face, that is selfe life, must dye;  
What a death were it then to see God dye?  
It made his owne Lieutenant Nature shrinke,  
It made his footstoole crack, and the Sunne winke.  
Could I behold those hands which span the Poles,  
And tune all spheares at once peirc'd with those holes?  
Could I behold that endlesse height which is  
Zenith to us, and our Antipodes,  
Humbled below us? or that blood which is  
The seat of all our Soules, if not of his,  
Made durt of dust, or that flesh which was worne  
By God, for his apparell, rag'd, and torne?  
If on these things I durst not looke, durst I  
Upon his miserable mother cast mine eye,  
Who was Gods partner here, and furnish'd thus  
Halfe of that Sacrifice, which ransom'd us?  
Though these things, as I ride, be from mine eye,

They'are present yet unto my memory,  
For that looks towards them; and thou look'st towards mee,  
O Saviour, as thou hang'st upon the tree;  
I turne my backe to thee, but to receive  
Corrections, till thy mercies bid thee leave.  
O thinke mee worth thine anger, punish mee,  
Burne off my rusts, and my deformity,  
Restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace,  
That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face.