

## Sha, shtil

Hush, quiet, make no sound  
The Rebbe will be dancing again  
Hush, quiet, make no fuss,  
The Rebbe will dance again soon

And when the Rebbe dances  
The walls dance with him  
And all the Hasidim  
Clap their hands.

And when the Rebbe dances  
The table dances too  
And all the Hassidim trample  
with their feet

And when the Rebbe sings  
The holy nign  
Satan remains  
lying dead on the floor.

## Simple and Plain

Let us sing simple and plain  
Of all that is known, sweet and dear,  
Of old beggars who curse the frost  
And of mothers who bless the fire.

Of poor brides who stand by candlelight  
In front of blind mirrors late at night,  
Each one searches the familiar face  
Who has laughed away their love.

Of fortune tellers who speak in riddles  
And cheat the last pennies away  
From abandoned wives who curse the world  
And leave through backdoors.

Of servants who toil bitter and hard  
And keep aside the best scraps and bits  
For those soldiers who sneak in late at night

So the landlords should not notice.

Let us sing simple and plain  
Of all that is known, sweet and dear  
Of poor mothers who curse the frost  
And of beggars who bless the fire.

Of young girls who in summertime  
Cast bastards in front of strangers' doors  
And tremble in front of uniforms  
Who may put them in jail.

Of street organs that squeak hard  
On Friday mornings, in the yards of the poor  
Of thieves who missed their chance  
And must escape over the roofs.

Of ragmen who search the dump  
Thinking they'll find a treasure  
Of poets who believed in vain  
The stars and went insane.

Let us sing simple and plain  
Of all that is known, sweet and dear  
Of old people who curse the cold  
And of children who bless the fire.

## **The Little Boots**

To sell the little boots  
And ride on small coaches  
Just to be together with you  
Oh I without you  
and you without me  
it's like a knob without a door  
My little cat, my little birdie.

Oh! To eat without a table  
And to sleep without a pillow  
Just to be together with you  
Oh! I without you  
and you without me  
It's like a knob without a door  
My little cat, my little birdie.

## Where have you been?

Where have you been when youth was there  
When life was sugar-sweet?  
Today you are here but my head is gray  
And life...became quite ugly.

Where have you been when money was there  
And the dowry was waiting on the table?  
Today you are here but no money is left  
And life...became quite ugly.

Where have you been when love abounded  
Hearts were burning then like flickering flames  
Today you are here but my head is gray  
And both my hands are trembling already.

Today, if you are already here  
Nu, may it be in a fortunate hour  
Come, let's dance now, hand in hand!

## vaylu

Play me a song  
Play for me, play  
Play it again for me  
Don't get tired of it  
Vaylu...

A mother I left  
Alone at home  
In a room patched  
With sorrow and clay  
Vaylu...

Bundled in night  
And girdled with wind  
I wander now  
On foreign roads  
Vaylu...

Somewhere a star  
Falls down in sparks  
I witness in that star  
The story of my life  
Vaylu...

If to roam and to wander  
Is my fate  
Then let my roads span  
On water and land  
Vaylu...

## Further

The world holds me tight with a grip full of claws  
And takes me to fire and to the crack of doom  
I burn and I burn but I can't be burnt  
I pick myself up again and walk – non-stop

I stride through forges and fall under wheels  
I tear open the steam with rekindled force  
I lie myself down as a base for a new ground  
I pick myself up again and walk – non-stop

Here I'm entangled in a horse's harness  
And above me a wild rider whips away  
Like a sharp plough I dig through the earth  
I pick myself again and walk – non-stop

I see my songs, as one sees kernels,  
They grow, they bloom like corn and grass  
Only I stay like a crooked thorn,  
I pick myself up again and walk – non stop

I live in a cell, I tear open the bars,  
And a freed man steps over me to his freedom  
Me he leaves lying there in blood by the door...  
I pick myself up again and walk – non stop

Don't think the world is a tavern  
And the way to the barrel, with nails and fists,  
A place to drink and eat, while the others  
Are watching from afar with an icy stare

Swallowing their spit, their stomach cramping,  
Oh! Don't think the world is a market of change

The world is no tavern, no market, no wanton,  
All is being measured, all is put on a scale.  
Not one tear, not one drop of blood is spared  
Not a single spark in a single eye is lost  
Tears grow into rivers, rivers into seas,  
Seas become the deluge, sparks become the thunder.  
Oh! Don't think there are no judgment nor judges.

## Away From Home So Many Years

(Itzik Manger)

I've wandered on foreign soil for many years,  
And now home turns up a surprising place.  
With a pair of shoes, a shirt on my back,  
In my hand the stick. How can I be without it?

I won't kiss your dust as any great poet,  
Though my heart too is filled with songs and tears.  
What does it mean, "kissing your dust"? I am your dust.  
And who kisses himself, may I ask you?

I will stand amazed in front of the Galilean blue  
Dressed in my clothes of poverty,  
A wandering prince, who has found his blue,  
And blue becomes now his forever dream.

I don't want to kiss your blue without a reason  
I will stand like a silent figure - eighteen\* -  
What does it mean, kissing your blue? I am your blue.  
And who kisses himself, may I ask you?

I will stand creative in front of your large desert  
And listen to the perpetual camel step,  
That swings on its humps in the sand,  
To Torah and matters, and the old wander song,  
That shivers above the burning red-hot sand,  
Dies down, recollects and never will be gone.  
I will not kiss your sand, no, ten times no.  
What does it mean, kissing your sand? I am your sand.  
And who kisses himself, may I ask you?

## Fever

Yiddish by Menachem (Mendy) Cahan

When I look into your eyes,  
my heart goes - boomboom,  
my thoughts, a rainbow,  
my stomach, a pot on a stove

I've got the fever,  
fever, in the morning,  
fever, till late at night,  
fever, when I'm thinking about you  
fever, when I'm dreaming.

When Jacob saw Rachel,  
he felt a thunder in his heart,  
but at dawn when he awoke beside Leah,  
he for sure felt a rare fever  
fever, a sickness,  
fever, fire and flame,  
fever, smoke is rising,  
may her father catch a fever that burns!

Summer, if you wish to freshen up  
go up your roof, to catch a cool breeze,  
but if you eye's caught by the beautiful Batsheba,  
you may say Psalms, it won't help you at all,  
you've got the fever, you're melting,  
fever, from head to toe,  
fever, oh t'is bitter,  
fever, sugar sweet.

Everybody has a fever,  
that's no news at all,  
fever, t'is an old old story,  
just leaf through your Bible...

adam and eve in paradise  
played with apples and love,  
and when eve just got warmed up a little,  
Holy God just showed them the door  
He caught a fever  
In Exemplis, a fever, fire, flame,  
Fever, oh My!  
and fever, came into this world.

## **I want to play**

To contradict a teacher  
For sure that is not right!  
But you see my teacher says  
That playing is a sin.

If only he would ask me  
My child, tell me what do you want today?  
I would answer swiftly, I want to play!  
I want to play, it's so great!  
I want to play, who does not?  
I want to play it is a fact  
That the world is a big game.

A young girl winks at me  
Where I sit there in the park  
She is winking and I am blinking  
And sparkles all around  
My wife arrives and asks  
What are you doing?

I want to play...

An older woman, a tiny one  
With almost no teeth,  
Comes to me and starts a speech:  
If you would have seen me  
When I was young and bright...  
I ask, Madam, what do you want from me?

I want to play...

## **Put your head on my knees**

(H. Leyvik)

Put your head on my knees,  
It's good to lie that way.  
Children fall asleep on their own,  
Grown ups need be rocked away.

Little ones have their own toys,  
They play whenever they may,

Grown ups play by themselves,  
All the time they must play.

Do not worry, I am here,  
I won't push you away,  
You've cried enough today,  
A grown up's common fate.

You've cried and whined up to a fill,  
I'll rock you now away.  
Put your head on my knees,  
It's good to lie that way.