לידלעך

lidlekh

**songs of love, devotion,
& resistance from the Jewish exile
by Aurora**

What is a song, but a poem with a melody, a sound, to express what is otherwise unutterable? And what is a poem, but an expression of experience, feeling, thought…

In this way, songs carry the memories of our lives. Songs are our treasure chests, our suitcases, our houses, our teachers, our companions. When we sing the words and melodies as others have done before us, it makes time and space irrelevant and connects us in a way that nothing else can.

As Jews, many times our music has been one of the only things that we could carry with us. In the shtetles, the death camps, the strange cites, on the road, our stories, our very lives are carried in the music; a sheltering tabernacle in the vast desert of exile.

In times of great sorrow, and great joy, the music helps remind us to turn to life and to keep the memories alive through the generations.

This small book is an homage to our music heritage, another container to hold our memories, another voice added to the chorus in the wilderness.

Always remember. Keep the music alive.

mit lib,
Aurora
25 Kislev, 5782

Hirsh Glick (April 24, 1922–August (?), 1944)

Hirsh Glick was a Yiddish poet born in Vilna. He was very involved in the artistic community of the Vilna ghetto, as well as in activities of the underground, and participated in the 1942 uprising. In 1943, inspired by news of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Glick wrote his most famous songs, “Zog Ni Keynmol,” which became the anthem of the Jewish partisan movement, and “Shtil Di Nakht.”

In October 1943, when the Vilna ghetto was being liquidated, he managed to escape but was later captured and deported to a concentration camp in Estonia. During his imprisonment there, Glick continued to write poems and songs.

In July 1944, Glick escaped. He was never heard from again and it has been assumed that he was captured and executed by the Germans.

Zog Nit Keymol

Fun Hirsh Glick

Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho–
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: Mir zaynen do!

Fun grinem palmenland biz vaytn land fun shney,
Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey;
Un vu gefaln iz a shprits fun undzer blut,
Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut!

S'vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt,
Un der nekhtn vet farshivindn mint faynt.
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun un dem kaynor–

פּאַרטיזאַנער-הימען

זאָג ניט קיין מאָל, אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,
הימלען בלײַענע פֿאַרשטעלן בלאָע טעג.
קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה,
עס וועט אַ פּויק טאָן אונדזער טראָט: "מיר זײַנען דאָ!"

פֿון גרינעם פּאַלמענלאַנד ביז לאַנד פֿון ווײַסן שניי
מיר קומען אָן מיט אונדזער פּײַן, מיט אונדזער וויי,
און וווּ געפֿאַלן איז אַ שפּריץ פֿון אונדזער בלוט,
שפּראָצן וועט דאָרט אונדזער גבֿורה, אונדזער מוט

עס וועט די מאָרגנזון באַגילדן אונדז דעם הײַנט,
און דער נעכטן וועט פֿאַרשווינדן מיטן פֿײַנד.
נאָר אויב פֿאַרזאַמען וועט די זון אין דעם קאַיאָר,
ווי אַ פּאַראָל זאָל גיין דאָס ליד פֿון דור צו דור!

Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.
Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut un nit mit blay,
S'iz nit keyn lidl fun a foygl oyf der fray.
Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent–
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!

(Repeat first verse.)

דאָס ליד געשריבן איז מיט בלוט און ניט מיט בליַי,
ס'איז ניט קיין לידל פֿון אַ פֿויגל אויף דער פֿריַי
דאָס האָט אַ פֿאָלק צעווישן פֿאַלנדיקע ווענט
דאָס ליד געזונגען מיט נאַגאַנעס אין די הענט.

Never Say

Written by Hirsh Glick

Never say you've come to the end of the way,
Through leaden skies blot out the light of the day,
The hour we all long for will surely appear–
Our Steps will thunder with the words: We are here!

From lands of palm trees to far-off lands of snow,
We come with anguish, we come with grief, with pain and woe;
And where our blood flowed right before our eyes,
There our power'll bloom, our courage will arise.
The glow of morning sun will gild a bright today,
Night's darkness vanish, like the enemy cast away.
But if we perish before this dawn's begun–
This song's a message passed to daughter and to son.

In blood this song was written, and not with pen or quill,
Not from a songbird freely flying as he will.
Sung by a people crushed by falling walls–
Sung with guns in hand, by those whom freedom calls.

Vitka Kempner (March 14, 1920–February 15, 2012)

Vitka was a Jewish partisan leader and part of the Fareynikte Partizaner Organizatsye (FPO), operating from the Vilna Ghetto. She was active in the armed resistance against Nazi brutality and, with her comrades, managed to smuggle weapons and information in and out of the ghetto.

In 1942, before the partisans had begun to hide out in the forests, Vitka Kempner and Itzik Matskevich waited in the woods for a Nazi caravan passing by, which was full of ammunition. Famously, Kempner damaged the enemy convoy with a single shot. The heroic event is celebrated and commemorated in Hirsh Glick's song, "Shtil di Nakht."

Later, after the Nazis liquidated the Vilna ghetto, Kempner, along with her husband Abba Kovner, leader of the FPO after Itzik Wittenberg, and comrade Roska Korczak, formed the resistance group, the Avengers, which sought to continue to attack, murder, and sabotage SS officers.

Shtil di Nakht—Partizaner Lied

fun Hirsh Glick

Shtil di nakht iz
Oysgeshternt

Un der frost hot shtark
gebrent

Tsi gedenkstu vi ikh hob
dikh gelernt

haltn a shpayer in di
hent?

A moyd, a peltsl un a
beret,

שטיל די נאַכט—פּאַרטיזאַנער ליד

שטיל די נאַכט איז
אויסגעשטערנט

און דער פֿראָסט האָט
שטאַרק געברענט

צי געדענקסטו ווי איך
האָב דיך געלערנט

האַלטן אַ שפּייַער אין די
הענט

אַ מויד אַ פּעלצל און אַ
בערעט

Un halt in hant fest a
nagan.

און האַלט אין האַנט פֿעסט
אַ נאַגאַן

A moyd mit a
sametenem ponim

אַ מויך מיט אַ
סאַמעטענעם פּנים

Hit op dem soynes
karavan.

היט אָפּ דעם שׂונאס
קאַראַוואַן

Getsilt, geshosn un
getrofn

געצילט געשאָסן און
געטראָפֿן

Hot ir kleyninker pistoyl,

האָט איר קלײנינקער פּיסטויל

An oyto a fulinkn mit
vofn

אַן אויטאָ אַ פֿולינקן מיט
וואָפֿן

Farhaltn hot zi mit eyn
koyl.

Fartog fun vald
aroysgekrokhn,

Mit shneygirlandn oyf di
hor,

gemutikt fun kleyninkn
nitsokhn

far undzer nayem frayen
dor.

פֿאַרהאלטן האָט זי מיט
איין קויל

פֿאָרטאָג פֿון וואַלד
אַרויסגעקראָכן

מיט שנייגירלאַנדן אויף די
האָר

געמוטיקט פֿון קליינינקן
נצחון

פֿאַר אונדזער נייַעם
פֿרייַען דור

Quiet is the Night—Partisan Song

By Hirsh Glick

Quietly the night is filled with stars
And the frost burned.
Do you remember how I taught you
How to hold a revolver in your hands?

A girl, a little fur coat and beret
And she holds tight a Nagan
pistol in her hand
A girl with a face of velvet
Watches for the enemy's caravan.

Aimed, shot and met the target
Her little pistol did,
A car, nice and full with weapons,
She stopped it with one bullet.

Before daylight, she crawled out of
the woods
With snow-garlands in her hair,
Cheered on by the small dear victory
For our new, free generation.

Shmerke Kaczerginski (October 28, 1908- April 23, 1954)

Shmerke Kaczerginski was a poet and partisan fighter, born in Vilna and, later, very active in the cultural life of the Vilna ghetto. He wrote many songs in the ghetto, which he hoped would comfort and encourage the inhabitants of the ghetto and help them cope with the constant oppression and uncertainty of their lives. As part of his active resistance against the Nazis, Kaczerginski, along with Avrom Sutskever and others, formed the 'Paper Brigade', a group which smuggled Jewish cultural artifacts, that had been plundered by the Nazis, into the ghetto.

After the unsuccessful partisan uprising of September, 1943, Kaczerginski left the ghetto and spent the rest of the war in the forest with the partisans and later participated in the liberation of Vilna.

He was an avid chronicler of the Jewish experience during and around the time of WWII; he collected and saved books, songs, and testimonies, and compiled them into various books in later years. He believed in preserving and commemorating the artifacts and stories that showed the grave injustice the Jews faced at the hands of the Nazis, as well as the creativity and strength of the Jewish people in the face of genocide.

In 1950, Shmerke Kaczerginski settled with his family in Buenos Aires. He often traveled to do speaking tours where he lectured about the experience of the ghetto and about partisan resistance. It was on a trip home from such an engagement that he was killed when his plane crashed in the foothills of the Argentine Andes.

His songs and chronicle work have added immensely to the spirit of resistance as well as to the previous artifacts that remain from that time.

Barikadn

fun Shmerke Kaczerginski

tates, mames, kinderlekh,
boyen barikadn,
oyf di gasn geyen arum
arbeter-otryadn.

s'iz der tate fri fun shtub avek
oyf der fabrik,
vet er shoyn in shtibele nit
kumen haynt tsurik.

s'veysn gut di kinderlekh, der
tate vet nit kumen,
s'iz der tate haynt in gas mit
zayn biks farnumen.

באַריקאַדן

טאטעס מאַמעס קינדערלעך בויען
באַריקאַדן
אויף די גאַסן גייען אַרום
אַרבעטער־אָטריאַדן

ס'איז דער טאטע פֿרי פֿון שטוב
אַוועק אויף דער פֿאַבריק
וועט ער שוין אין שטיבעלע
ניט קומען הײַנט צוריק

סיווייסן גוט די קינדערלעך
דער טאטע וועט ניט קומען
ס'איז דער טאַטע הײַנט אין גאַס
מיט זײַן ביקס פֿאַרנומען

s'iz di mame oykh avek in gas
farkoyfn epl,
shteyen in kikh faryosemte di
teler mitn tepl.

s'vet nit zayn keyn vetshere
zogt khanele di yatn, —
vayl di mame iz avek tsuhelfn
dem tatn...

Plutsling: trakh a pule iz
Arayn in kleynem shtibl,
Farbaygefloygn khanele,
Gemakht in vant a gribl.

ס'איז די מאַמע אויך אַוועק
אין גאַס פֿאַרקויפֿן עפּל
שטייען אין קיך פֿאַריתומטע
די טעלער מיטן טעפּל

ס'וועט ניט זײַן קיין וועטשערע
זאָגט חנהלע די יאַטן
ווײַל די מאַמע איז אַוועק
צוהעלפֿן דעם טאַטן

פּלוצלינג טראַך אַ פּולע איז
אַרײַן אין קליינעם שטיבל
פאַרבייגעפלויגן חנהלען
געמאַכט אין וואַנט אַ גריבל

Oyb azoy zogt khanele
Kinder kumt mit mir
Motye nem di groyse karb
Meyerke di tir

Di shuflodn fun kamod
Mit an alte pas
A barikadn shteln mir
Af in mitn gas

Di barikadn oyfgeshtelt
In shtibl nishto keyner
Loyfn politse farbay
Di kinder varfn shteyner

אויב אַזוי זאָגט חנהלע
קינדער קומט מיט מיר
מאַטיע נעם די גרויסע קאַרב
מייערקע די טיר

די שופלאָדן פון קאַמאָד
מיט אַן אַלטע פּאָס
אַ באַריקאַדן שטעלן מיר
אויף אין מיטן גאַס

די באַריקאַדן אויפגעשטעלט
אין שטיבל נישטא קיינער
לויפן פּאָליציי פאַרבי
די קינדער וואָרפן שטיינער

Vos mir ven mir vetchere
Es dunern harmatn
Di kinderlekh fun shtibele
Helfn mamen-tatn

Tates, mames, kinderlekh
Boym barikadn
Af di gasn geyn arum
arbeyter-atriadn

וואָס מיר ווען מיר וועטשערע
עס דונערן האָרמאַטן
די קינדערלעך פון שטיבעלע
העלפן מאַמען טאַטן

טאטעס מאַמעס קינדערלעך
בוים באַריקאַדן
אויף די גאסן גיין אַרום
אַרבייטער אַטריאָדן

Barricades

By Shmerke Kaczerginski

Fathers, mothers, children,
Raising barricades,
Workers' battalions taking to
The streets.

Father left home early, to the
factory gone,
Won't be coming home to us
Any time too soon.

The kids know well the reason
Why father won't return,
He's taken to the streets today
And brought along his gun.

Mother too is in the street, off
to sell some apples,
Leaving orphaned in the
Kitchen all the pots and dishes.

There won't be supper,
Says Khanle to the boys
Because Mama has gone
To help Daddy.

Suddenly- BANG! A bullet
enters the little house,
Flying past Khanele,
It buries itself in the wall.

If so, says Khanele,
children, come with me!
Motye, take the big basket,
Meyerke, the door.

The dresser drawers
And an old barrel,
We put up a barricade
In the middle of the street.

The barricades are up,
No one is in their homes,
Police run past,
The children throw stones.

Who cares about supper,
Cannons are thundering,
The children of the house
Are helping their parents.

Fathers, mothers, Children
Are building the barricades
In the streets are coming and
Going workers cohorts.

Rikle Glezer (Dec. 17th, 1924-Jan. 12th, 2010)

Rikle was a young poet in the Vilna ghetto. In 1941, when she was 18, Glezer wrote S'iz geven a zumertog, which was set to the melody of a popular Yiddish theater song from the inter-war years called Papirosn (Cigarettes), composed by Herman Yablokoff.

Shortly after writing this song, Glezer was put on a train destined for a death camp. However, she escaped from the train and joined the partisans in the woods.

Of the 60,000 Jews of Vilna alive in 1939, Rikle Glezer was one of about 3,000 who survived to see the liberation of Vilna.

S’iz geven a zumertog

Fun Rikle Glezer

S’iz geven a zumertog
Vi Shtendik zunik-sheyn,
Un di natur hot dan gehat
In zikh azoyfil kheyn,
Es hobn feygelekh gezungen,
Freylekh zikh arumgeshprungen,
In ghetto hot men undz geheysn geyn.

Akh shtelt zikh
for vos s’iz fun undz gevorn!
Farshtanen hobn mir: s’iz alts farloyrn.

ס'איז געווען אַ זומערטאָג

פון ריקלע גלעזער

ס'איז געווען אַ זומערטאָג,
ווי שטענדיק זוניק-שיין.
און די נאַטור האָט דאָן געהאָט
אין זיך אזוי פיל הן.
עס האָבן פייגעלעך געזונגען,
פרייעלך זיך ארומגעשפרונגען.
אין געטאָ האָט מען אונדז געהייסן גיין.

אך שטעלט זיך!
פֿאַר וואָס ס'איז פון אונדז געוואָרן
אך שטעלט זיך פֿאַר וואָס ס'איז פון אונדז געוואָרן

Nisht geholfn undzer betn,
Az s’zol emitser undz retn–
Farlozn hobn mir dokh undzer heym.
Getsoygn hot der veg zikh lang.
S’iz shver geven tsu geyn.
Mir dukht, az kukndik oyf undz
Tseveynt volt zikh a shteyn.
Gegangen zaynen skeynim, kinder,
Vi tsu der akeyde rinder,
Mentshns blut geflosn iz in gas.

Itst zayn ale mir farshparte,
Farpaynikte, fun lebn opgenarte.
Ver on a tatn, on a mamen,
Zeltn ver es iz tsuzamen.
Der soyne hot dergreykht zayn groysn tsil.

נישט געהאלפן אונדזער בעטן
אז ס'זאל עמיצער אונדז רעדן—
פאַרלאָזן האָבן מיר דאָך אונדזער היים.
געצויגן האָט דער וועג זיך לאַנג,
ס'איז שווער געווען צו גיין.
מיר דוכט אַז קוקענדיק אויף אונדז
צעוויינט וואָלט זיך אַ שטיין.
געגאנגען זייַנען זקנים, קינדער,
ווי צו דער עקידה רינדער.
מענטשנס בלוט געפלאָסן איז אין גאַס.

איצט זייַנען אַלע מיר פאַרשפּאַרטע.
פאַרפּיניקטע, פון לעבן אָפּגענאַרטע.
ווער אָן אַ טאַטען. אָן אַ מאַמען,
זעלטן ווער עס איז צוזאַמען.
דער שונא האָט דערגרייכט זיין גרויסן ציל.

Gevezn zaynen mir tsufil–
Bafolyn hot der har
Tsu brengen yidn fun arum
Un shisn oyf Ponar.
Pust zaynen gevorn shtiber,
Ober ful derfar di griber.
Der soyne hot dergreykht zayn groysn tsil.

Oyf Ponar itst zet men oyf di vegn
Zakhn, hitlen durkhgenetst fun regn,
Dos zaynen zakhn fun korbones,
Fun di heylike neshomes,
Di erd hot zey oyf eybik tsugedekt.

Un itst iz vider zunik-sheyn,
Shmekt prakhtful alts arum,
Un mir zaynen farpaynikte

געוועזן זײַנען מיר צופיל—
באפוילן האָט דער האַר
צו ברענגען יידן פון אַרום
און שיסן אויף פּאָנאַר.
פוסט זײַנען געוואָרן שטיבער,
אָבער פיל דערפאַר די גריבער,
דער שונא האָט דערגרייכט זײַן גרויסן ציל.

אויף פּאָנאַר איצט זעט מען אויף די וועגן
זאכן, היטלען דורכגענעצט פון רעגן,
דאָס זײַנען זאַכן פון קרבנות
פון די הייליקע נשמהות.
די ערד האָט זיי אויף אייביק צוגעדעקט.

,און איצט איז ווי דער זוניקשיין,
,שמעקט פּראַכטפול אַלץ ארום,
און מיר זײַנען פאַרפּײַניקטע

Un laydn ale shtum.
Opgeshnitn fun der velt,
Mit hoykhe moyern farshtelt,
A shtral fun hofnung dervekt zikh koym

און לייַדן אַלע שטום.
אָפּגעשניטן פון דער וועלט,
מיט הויכע מויערן פאַרשטעלט,
אַ שטראַל פון האָפענונג דערוועקט זיך קוים.

It was on a summer's day By Rikle Glezer

It was a summer's day,
Sunny and lovely as always,
And nature then
Had so much charm.
Birds sang,
Hopped around cheerfully.
We were ordered to go
   into the ghetto.

Oh, just imagine what
   happened to us!
We understood: everything was lost.
Of no use were our pleas
That someone should save us–
We still left our home.

The road stretched far.
It was difficult to walk.
I think that, looking at us,
A stone would have burst out crying.
Old people and children went
Like cattle to be sacrificed,
Human blood flowed in the street.

Now we are all caged in,
Tortured, deceived by life.
Some without fathers, without mothers,
Seldom are they together.
The enemy has achieved his great goal.

There were too many of us–
The mast ordered
That Jews from the area be brought
And shot at Ponar.
Houses became empty,
But graves therefore filled up.
The enemy has achieved his great goal.

At Ponar on can now see on the roads
Things, rain-soaked hats,
These things belonged to the victims,
To the holy souls.
The earth has covered them forever.

And now it's sunny and lovely
  once again,
Everything around smells wonderful,
And we are tortured
And all suffer silently.
Cut off from the world,
Blocked by high walls,
A ray of hope barely stirs.

Hier stehst Du
schweigend
doch
wenn Du DIch wendest
schweige nicht

Here you stand
silent
yet
when you turn away
do not keep silent

–Inscription on a memorial monument erected in the former Jewish cemetery in Berlin that was destroyed by the Nazis.

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