

Rokhl Korn

Sometimes I want to go up

Sometimes I want to go up  
On tiptoe  
To a strange house  
And feel the walls with my hands –  
What kinds of clay is baked in the bricks,  
What kind of wood is in the door,  
And what kind of god has pitched his tent here,  
To guard it from misfortune and ruin?

What kind of swallow under the roof  
Has build its nest from straw and earth,  
And what kind of angels disguised as men  
Came here as guests?

What holy men came out to meet them,  
Bringing them basins of water  
To wash the dust from their feet,  
The dust of earthly roads?

And what blessing did the leave  
The children – from big to small,  
That it could protect and guard them  
From Belzhets, Maidanek, Treblinka?

From just such a house,  
Fenced in with a painted railing,  
On the middle of trees and blossoming flowerbeds,  
Blue, gold, flame,  
There came out –  
The murderer of my people,  
Of my mother.

I'll let my sorrow grow  
Like Samson's hair long ago,  
And I'll turn the millstone of days  
Around this bloody track.

Until one night  
When I hear over me  
The murderer's drunken laugh,  
I'll tear the door from its hinges  
And I'll rock the building –

Till the night wakes up  
From the shaking coming through every pane,  
Every brick, every nail, every board of the house,  
From the very ground to the roof –  
Although I know, I know, my God,  
That the falling walls  
Will bury only me  
And my sorrow.