

Rokhl Korn

Morning in the village

The garden conceals the deep secrets of the night  
With shadow-sheets of the first morning gray.  
The first pinkish – red sunrays jump like squirrels  
From tree to tree, from branch to branch,  
Ever closer to the ground, ever closer –  
And drink their fill of its cool dew.

The great fans of smoke on the thatched roofs of cottages  
Inform the blue spring sky  
That Time has ploughed – under yet another night,  
And is going out to meet the sun with its ploughshares  
On the broad fields of the new day.

Somewhere on a doorstep, a young shikse [Non-jewish woman,  
usually an unmarried Christian girl] appears,  
Stretches out her night-warmed body to the day,  
And looks around to see whether  
Her neighbour's son isn't coming with his chestnut horse.  
She places the hard bearer's-yoke on her soft shoulders  
And takes her first, pious steps toward the well.  
The buckets dance and swing on both sides of her,  
To the rhythm of her singing steps,  
And caress her legs through her thin linen dress.  
And when they are lowered into the well on a long rope  
And, with their mouths languid from the night,  
Thirstily scoop up their cool morning drink from the mossy  
bottom,  
Someone laughs with a choked voice from the depths:  
"Glug, glug".  
And sweeps secrets into them  
About which the buckets dream all day  
As they lie in their cobweb-covered corner near the door.