

10. Avrom Sutzkever

No. 21. Poetry

The last dark violet
plum on the tree,
delicate and tender as the pupil of an eye,
blots out in the dewy night
all love, visions, trembling,
and at the morningstar the dew
becomes airier-
that's poetry. Touch it without
letting it show the print of your fingers.

No. 22. "The Banks of a River."

From a high mountain I see how the banks of a river
shimmer. In the distance
near the horizon they darken and wrangle,
then light up silvergreen and violet,
then darken again. I look down
into the river where my face's tinder is quenched
and my body shines clear, transparent,
and I say to the east, west, north, south:

Look and see
how beneath chocked leaves and houses
in cold riverwriting my name is written.

Broadcast it all over the world.
Amen.

1938

(Translation by Ruth Whitman.)

No. 23. -