

### 3. Helpern Leivick

#### No. 6. "Forever"

The world takes me around with arms long and prickly,  
and throws me in pyres that burn all the day.  
I burn and I burn but the fires don't consume me-  
I pick myself up, stride again on my way.

In fact'ries that I stride through, I fall 'neath the giant  
wheels.

With courage, I blow up the steam pipes today.  
I lay myself down as a brand new foundation-s-  
I pick myself up, stride again on my way.

Just see: now I'm a horse, in harness of leather;  
my raging young rider is whipping away.  
. I slice through the ground like a sharp-bladed farm plow-  
I pick myself up, stride again on my way.

I sow all of my poems-I sow them like grain seeds;  
they sprout and they grow just like grain stalks today.  
But I still lie here like a twisted old bramble--  
I pick myself up, stride again on my way.

I live here in a dungeon, blow open the cell-door;  
above me the freed men are joyful today.  
They leave me here bleeding, alone in the doorway--  
I pick myself up, stride again on my way.

My clothes bloodily soaked, and dragging my weary limbs, .  
with purified love I am coming this day.  
I come to a house and collapse on the doorstep-s-  
I pick myself up, stride again on my way.

(Translation by Barnett Zumoff.)

#### No. 7. -

#### No. 8. "How did he get here? (from the cycle "Spinoza", No. 2).

How did he get into this sickroom,  
the philosopher from Amsterdam?

I look at him - there's no uncertainty.  
It's he, it's he.  
The full lips. The long nose.  
The whole head as though under glass.  
His sick chest heaves, straining,  
racked, racked by fits of coughing.  
Three hundred years - as though one minute.  
A drop of blood dots his lip.  
Three hundred years of moonlight fall  
on his head and pillow. Fall.  
Holy one, I touch your sleeve.  
Wake up. Rise up. Recognize me.

(Translation by Ruth Whitman.)

No. 9. -

No. 10. "Two times two is four." (from the cycle "Spinoza", No. 11).

My body's passion-hide  
is stripped away. My pure  
soul, what does she do?  
She counts, she counts.  
Two times two is - four,  
I times I is - you,  
you times you is - me,  
death times death is - rest.  
My head is in the east,  
my feet are in the west;  
drive quicker, don't get lost -  
near times near is - far.  
Tap the door. - Knock, knock. -  
It's open, come right in, -  
kindle the last look, -  
death times death is - being.

(Translation by Ruth Whitman.)