



Putting Away the Goatkid: Anda Pinkerfeld-Amir's Poetry of Solidarity and Activism

Wendy Zierler

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*This source sheet was prepared for **A Day of Learning for Our Hostages** on September 30, 2024, a day of learning together as a community to honor the shloshim of the six hostages murdered in August, show solidarity with the hostages still in captivity, and call on the Israeli government and the international community to prioritize their return.*

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1. "Under the Wardrobe" (1935)

Under the wardrobe	מתחת לארון
Night hides and seeks	הלילה מתחבא ;
Mornings he comes inside	בבוקר הוא נכנס,
Evenings, out he sneaks.	בערב הוא יוצא.
With a plank I'll hide him	בקרש אסתירנו
Seal every crack away	והסדקים אסתם –
There won't be any night left;	ולא יהיה עוד לילה ;
There will always just be day.	תמיד יהיה רק יום.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nXG9orZAYM&t=15s>

2. "Stars, My Stars" (1935)

Stars, my beloved stars,	כוכבים, כוכבי
Come to me from afar.	אלי בואו, חבבי.
Star by star, will I thread,	אחרז אתכם כוכב כוכב,
On a cord of gold or red;	על חוט שני או חוט זהב :
A necklace for sister, or for me,	מחרזת לי, לאחותי,
For my clown or my dolly;	ללצני, לבפתי ;
For Avner, my friend so warm	לחברי, ושמו אבנר,
For him a wreath of stars I'll form	מכוכבים אקלע לו זר.
Stars, my beloved stars,	כוכבים, כוכבי,
Come to me from afar.	אלי בואו, חבבי!

3. "You Know What I'm Going to Do?" (1962)

You know what I'm going to do, alright,

On this particular Seder Night?

I'll hide the Haggadah kid away;

The cat will not know which way

The kid stole, and won't devour him whole:

Instead he'll declare: the kid isn't there!

And that cat– the dog won't eat,

Neither stick, nor fiery heat

Neither water, nor charging bull

For I myself, that kid I'll pull,

And hide him in a secret place,

No bad will come, no, not a trace

הַתְּדַעוּ מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה

בְּלֵיל-שֵׁל-סֵדֶר זֶה?

אֶסְתִּיר הַגְּדִי שֶׁל הַהַגְּדָה ;

וְהַחֲתוּל כָּלֵל לֹא יֵדַע

הַיְכֹן הַגְּדִי וְלֹא יֵאכְלֵנוּ :

יָבוֹא, יֹאמֵר : הַגְּדִי אֵינְנוּ!

וְלֹא יִקַּם אוֹתוֹ הַכֶּלֶב,

וְלֹא מִקֵּל, לֹא אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלֶת,

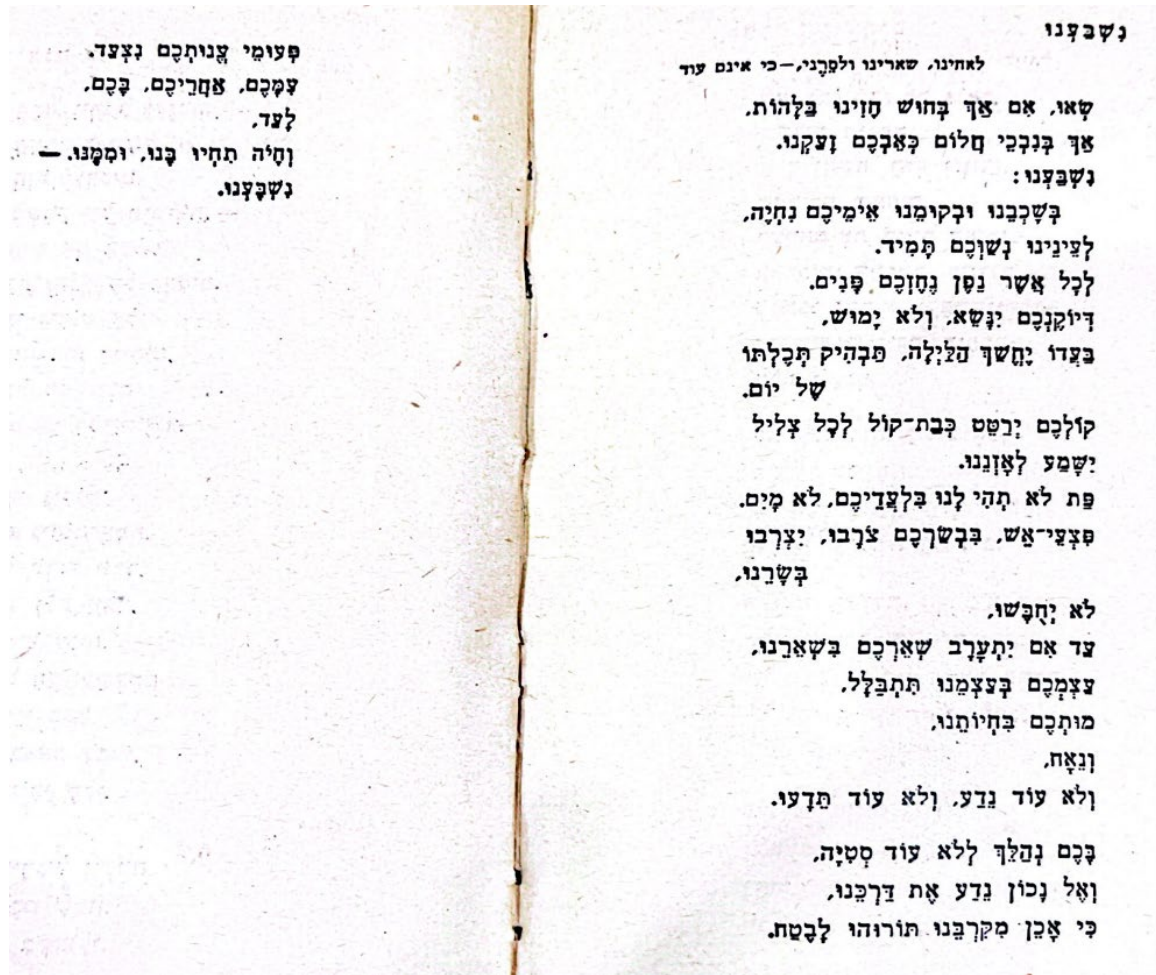
לֹא מַיִם, וְלֹא שׂוֹר נֹגֵחַ.

כִּי אֶת הַגְּדִי אֲנִי אֶקַּח,

אֶסְתִּיר אוֹתוֹ בְּתוֹךְ מַחְבֹּא,

וְכָל רָעָה לֹא עוֹד תָּבוֹא.

4. "This We Swear" (1949)



Take hold of this¹: if we had but a scarce sense of terror
 If we screamed out your pain only in the hidden recesses of dreams
 This we swear:

In our lying down and in our getting up² we shall live your horrors,
 We shall set them before our eyes always³
 Everywhere we turn we shall envision your faces,

¹ Literally, prophesy, or take up a prophetic theme, as in Numbers 24:20, where Balaam sees Amalek and takes up his prophetic theme: וַיִּרְא אֶת-עַמְלֵק וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר:

² Cf. Deut 6:7: וְשִׁנְנֶתֶם לְבָבְיָדְכֶם וְדַבַּרְתֶּם בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּכֶם בְּבֵיתְכֶם וּבְלִקְחֶתֶם בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּכֶם וּבְקוּמְכֶם: Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up.

³ See Psalm 16:8: שִׁיִּיתִי ה' לְנֶגְדֵי תְמִיד: I have set the LORD before me always.

Your image will be lifted up and will not fade⁴
For its sake night will darken, day's blue
will shine.

Your voices will tremble like an echo with every
Sound our ears hear.

No bread will be had without you, no water,
The wounds of fire that scorched your flesh, will scorch
Our flesh,

They will not be bandaged
Until we mix your kin⁵ with ours
Your essence with ours combined,
Your deaths with our living,
Stitched together in woe,⁶
Until we know no more, you know no more.

Within you we shall stride without deviation,
Without doubt we shall know our path
For indeed, you will show us from within the way to safety.
We shall walk in the footsteps of your suffering,
With you, behind you, within you
Forever.
Verily shall you live within and from us—
This we swear.

⁴ Literally, will not cease. Cf. Joshua 1:8: לְאַיְמוֹשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ הַיּוֹמָה וְהַלַּיְלָה בּוֹ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה
Let not this Book of the Teaching cease from your lips, but recite it day and night,

⁵ See Numbers 27:11: וְאִם אֵין אֲחִים לְאָבִיו וְנָתַתְּם אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְשֵׁאֲרָיו הַקְּרִיב אֵלָיו
If his father had no brothers, you shall assign his property to his nearest relative in his own clan.”

⁶ This seems to play on the verb לאחות, meaning to sew back to together, and אָח as an expression of sorrow,
like “Oy!”

5. "Bereaved Mother" (1949)

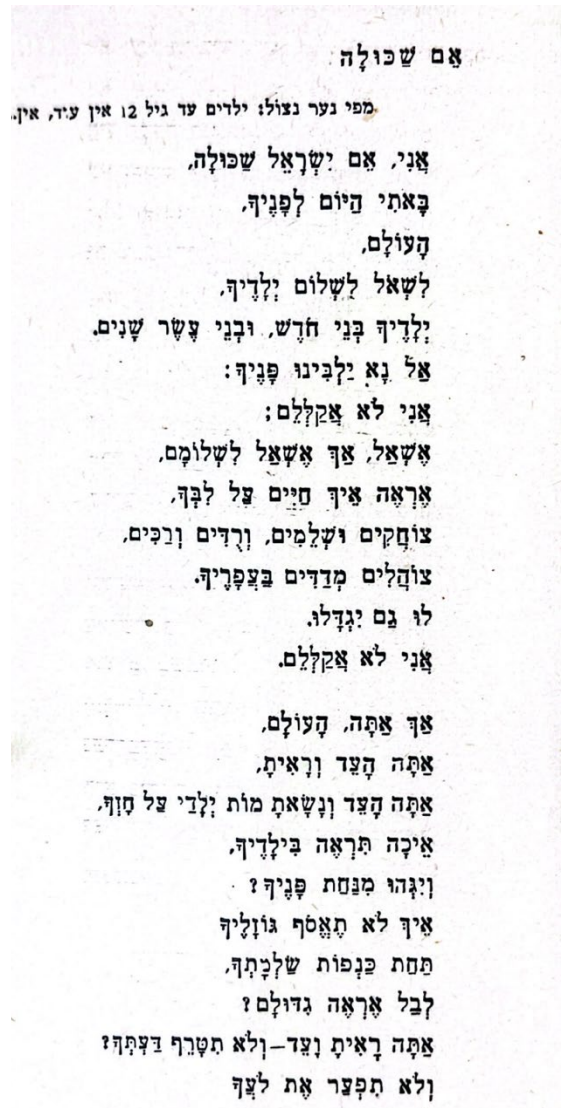
From a boy survivor: boys under age 12,
there aren't any more, none...

I am a bereaved Mother of Israel,
I come before you today,
World,
To pray for the well-being of your children,⁷
Your month-old children, and your ten year-olds.
Don't go all pale:
I shan't curse them;
I'm praying, merely praying for their well-being,
I see how they live in your heart,
They laugh and they're whole, pink and soft,
Rejoicing, crawling after you,
If only they grow up
I shan't curse them.

But you, World,
You witnessed and saw,
You witnessed and bore the death of my children
upon your chest,
How can you look upon your children
Glowing from your pleased expression?
How do you not gather your chicks
Under the wings of your dress
So that I don't see them grow?
You saw and witnessed –and didn't lose your
mind?
Your throat didn't gape open
Like Moloch to swallow your children?

⁷ There are two ways to translate this expression, לשאול לשלום ילדיך, either as "to inquire after the well-being of your children," or as I have above, "to pray for the well-being of your children." I opted for the latter choice in keeping with Psalm 122, וְשָׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁלִי אֲהַבֶּיךָ: Pray for the well-being of Jerusalem/ May those who love you be at peace.

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You, the silent world,
I shan't curse your children.
I shall not curse them –
For I have been a mother.

בְּמַלְךָ יְלֵדֶיךָ לְבָלֵעַ ?

אַתָּה. הָעוֹלָם הַשׁוֹקֵט.

אֲנִי לֹא אֶקְלֵל יְלֵדֶיךָ.

— אֲנִי לֹא אֶקְלֵלֵם —

כִּי הֵייתִי אִמָּה.