

To Belong Less to the Aggressor

*Shem* means name, *Shmuel* the name  
embossed glittergold  
on the vault cover  
lowered onto the coffin.

My tongue ululates  
between palate and teeth  
between eulogy and kaddish.



Grief sleepwalks,  
lispings *yisgadal v'yiskadasb*  
toward Jerusalem. Toward Jerusalem  
the scrolls turn like clockwork.

Through splayed roots  
the river's fingers figure anthems:  
we say *sh'ma* and *v'avavta*  
toward Jerusalem, *aleinu*  
with a bow.  
We linger.

The nightmare looms.



Portion follows portion  
toward *a dispersion*  
*in all kingdoms*.

*Disperse*, the order  
before the recorder hits asphalt.



*Dia* "apart," *sperain* "to sow."

My mother's rabbi  
says, *Israel isn't always right*.

I let my father tell me  
    about the male prophets,  
tell me God has  
    a masculine pronoun, tell me  
    manna in the desert is feminine.



Lamentations figures Jerusalem  
as an abandoned woman  
    not beautiful, but visible.

In the Old City  
    outside the Arab Gate  
I spoke in my second tongue  
to belong less to the aggressor.



*Dia* “apart,”  
*sperein* “to scatter,” like ashes.

The historian tells me, *I am calling*  
*my senators*. We are all shouting  
STOP  
    into the wind.