

**Roy Chicky ARAD**  
**Poems**

**The Owl /**

Out of the golden sand,  
it slaughters falcons,  
turns cobras pale,  
the rock owl.

I've seen it all,  
I haven't seen anything yet--  
the rock owl.

Everywhere  
ads for R.C Cola.

    Around my earlobes  
        Israeli rap on loudspeakers

--the rock owl.

Igniting the desert wind,  
    pure on a dark sand dune,  
        the owl,  
and on the dune a man in colorful American trousers.  
Here!  
Right here!

(ten years earlier)  
Skies blue as panties.  
It's the middle of the desert.  
On this spot the Negev Mall will be arise,  
bones looted theodolite,  
    whose rage is crystal and  
        arrows metal,  
clangs toward  
the owl born of panic.

And the Beer Sheva city coalition.  
The owl and I!  
The owl and I!

Wielding the sword  
 in his wounded arm,  
 the owl  
   son of Anat  
     of earth, of the crescent.  
       the owl.

Beer Sheva of the early Nineties,  
 and the former desert,  
 slowly spreading its wings,  
 bronzed and mortared,  
 and quietly revealing his sword.  
 What sense for me now  
   owl and love?

And then the mall,  
   three stories, octagonal with fluted skin, and a floor of restaurants  
 yellowed with dust,  
   standing five and a hundred cubits  
     clad in chill marble.

And the folks with their swords,  
   next to picantic-china  
   across from I.M.P.  
     The Fox-Man store is next to a pile of orange clothing,  
  
       and the Fox-Man salesgirl,  
       a pretty gumchewer aged one score less two  
       her face pitted, chewed, blue-green, gleaming with  
 fire,  
   her heart chewed  
   with lust and passion.

(On her chest a freckled shirt that will never be stylish, whatever may come to pass)

And in the volume of the mall  
 shouts the owl with zeal  
   with a torch-cry

I am immortal  
 I am the King Kong of the desert,  
 I am the Godzilla of the Negev  
     The Golem of the Negev Mall.

His grandfather?  
 Baal.  
 His grandmother?  
 A Canadian real estate developer of Jewish origin,

massing and buying,  
 racing with their dumb shopping bags  
 down the neon corridors,  
 in the formiKK passage.  
 And the local paper's photo flashes,  
 And then the guard, brave and proud  
 (He already fought in Afghanistan, a Lau missile powdered his  
     nose),  
     he draws his gun,  
         Looks at the Fox-Man Girl, the foxy human girl.  
 And the owl, there's the cool and quiet flint,  
 weary, his eyes are dry today,  
 the beat of his wings is aureate,  
 his feathers are pure Keralite,  
 he smiles.  
 Raise the fire and consume the mall and its daughters,  
 conflagrate the merchandise of Fox-Man,  
 the wild bull of Burger Ranch.

I've seen it all,  
 I haven't seen anything yet--  
     the rock owl.

    Who will re-inter the rock owl, the fire owl?  
     What transgression made I on this dread world?

-  
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Mall nation by the owl accursed.  
 A human being by the owl accursed.  
 An owl by his smile accursed.

*Translated from the Hebrew by Pesach Slabosky.*

"The Owl" participated in Michal Helfman's work in the Venice Art Biennale 2003.

**Oh, The North /**

Translated from the

I envy those whose heart is broken

I envy those on strike  
Failed suicide attempters  
Waiting in emergency rooms  
For the nurse, in a cast  
Kings who have turned into gardeners  
Stolen hubcaps outside butcher shops

I envy the strip of asteroids  
The worm finding a crumb in the feces of a forgotten Reality TV star  
The whistle of a construction worker frozen in an office building  
The hidden body piercing of a female guard at the Kiryah Base  
A letter fallen off of the name of a two-star hotel in a coastal town  
The suited piano tuner whose wife was murdered by a lover  
When I showed up he was just walking slowly out of a café in a peripheral town  
I envy Ronny Segman  
For knowing how to bounce coins off his bellybutton, and for his war to be nude at the beach  
Once, he hid behind a trash can  
And when police officers came closer, he threw the can at them and ran to freedom

I envy pretty grandmothers  
Those who fight against all odds and lose  
Let other people envy the winners  
I envy beach chairs, in case I haven't already mentioned  
I don't envy the man with the fanny pack charging money  
For the use of the chairs  
I don't envy the driving poet  
Whoever is hosting this party—I certainly don't envy them  
I don't envy the wife of a millionaire who keeps working like everyone else, saying a polite thank you  
To her service providers  
I don't envy the child with the handkerchief and his fabric silences  
Did I mention I envy beach chairs?  
They're happy happy happy, open in the sun, but  
In the evening they are piled up on top of each other  
For Russian couples with vodka red bulls to climb on. They were talking but now it's quiet. The girl is sixteen years old, shaved, and the guy slips his hand under her t-shirt. I envy them both.  
T-shirts are a topic for a different poem.

I envy the refugee who sneaks across the border  
A unionized worker retiring to be with his grandchildren  
Jokesters, I envy them so,  
They have to remember all the jokes and never give away the ending.

I envy the nice accountant who likes a specific size of paper  
There's no reason to envy those who come first, and even less so the seconds. Those who come  
last are also in dire straits. I envy those who come third.  
Divorced women  
Young religious people  
Women who have undergone breast augmentation surgery  
Shimshon from the Yemenite Vineyard who sings along to the tape  
Any man wearing a nightshirt  
The pretty girl is gone  
I was sitting just a few tables away from her  
And I am watching her walking away  
I envy you the reader  
The poem is almost over  
If you just close your eyes, it'll disappear  
And you'll see a towel on a plastic chair  
In a wooden room  
And the dripping faucet of a cheap vacation  
Up north. Oh, the north.  
Oh, the north.

**The Large Lake /**

Swimming alone in the large lake

Swimming on my stomach in the large lake  
 Swimming on my back in the large lake  
 On my side swimming in the large lake  
 Why does no one join me in the large lake?  
 There is no fence around the large lake  
 I wade in the large lake  
 I dive into the large lake  
 The way to fuck the system: the large lake  
 Join me in the large lake  
 Why am I alone in the large lake?  
 Nothing is stopping you from coming to the large lake  
 For instance, you, the reader  
 Do not say 'I'm only the reader'  
 Pull down your pants, cast aside your brassiere  
 Come right now to  
 The large lake  
 Swim deep into the large lake  
 Swim fast into the large lake  
 Swim on your belly in the large lake  
 Swim on your backside in the large lake!  
 Come here now.

There used to be many in the large lake  
 I'm the only one who dips in the large lake  
 One can drown in the large lake  
 but one can also die by using too much Shake 'n Bake  
 So come come come to the large lake  
 We'll float float float in the large lake  
 There is no water here, only sound  
 We'll rub up inside the large lake  
 Your flesh will bump against in the large lake  
 Come here now.  
 Why am I alone in the large lake  
 Why am I alone in the large lake  
 Because I am alone in the large lake  
 Yes, I am alone in the large lake  
 I am alone alone alone in the large lake  
 Or sometimes with some friends  
 Why don't you understand that it's the most awesome in the large lake  
 The best deal in the large lake  
 That it's the only place in town without fences, the large lake  
 Not some fickle rapid, the large lake  
 And it isn't really very large, the large lake

It can fit in the trunk of a Peugeot  
    In a coin compartment made of loquat skin  
        In a purple cupcake  
The large lake the large lake the large lake  
Tell me now in the large lake  
Kiss and tell me now in the large lake  
There's room for everybody in the large lake  
There's room for every body in the large lake  
There's room for antibodies in the large lake  
The lar lar lar lar large lake  
The large lakekekekek  
Come to the large lake  
Come to the large lake  
Why do you always go into the large lake after I'm already out of the water?

(Ahziv, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

**Patriot /**

I respect the synoptic map  
And adhere to most rules of electro-magnetics  
Obey the laws of  
Thermodynamics

If I spit at the sky  
I'll get covered in saliva  
If I pee toward the heavens  
I'll be wet with wee-wee.

I bow my head to the different  
Geological periods  
And take my planet on a walk  
Around the sun

I'm the patriot of every country  
That hangs a white flag  
Over the lifeguard's hut

I'm a patriot of every sovereignty  
Where grandmothers  
Hang laundry on the line  
To be dried by the sun  
While listening to the radio



**Against the Strainer /**

1.

This is a vehement condemnation of the strainer  
A protest of its miniscule perforations  
An uprising against its empty desire  
I am principally opposed to the entire concept of a net  
And the handle-ness of the red  
Handle  
And the place in which they come together  
The lukewarm touch at seven p.m.  
You are an upside-down mountain of nothing  
The disgrace of the kitchen

2.

This is hate at first sight  
Who are you? Who, who are you?  
Nothing—metallic hiccuped holes  
Be gone!

I love the spoon  
The gossipy gumption of the straw  
As it bends and flexes  
Flexes and bends  
The four plastic hooks erect to the winds  
In the compass silverware organizer, which turns with a carp-like rattle  
I love the thimble  
God praise the thimble  
Which protects us so well  
At any given hour.

The middle class sews with careful brilliance through it  
 And without showing off, the thimble advances  
 Only to retreat and pounce on the mighty needle

3.

But

Madam strainer

Why do you strain?

What do you strain?

I hate you so

Down

Down

Down with the strainer!

4.

Madam strainer,

Let the world mix together

The rice, the water

The heart and the splendor

Let the sewer sewage.

Protect the feel good as you would your only son.

Be an entertainer,

Miss strainer,

Go out, go out, out onto the smoking lanes

Your tears will do no good,

It's a no brainer,

Strainer,

What we n—

What we n—

What we need right now are candlesticks  
Your fate trickles tonight  
An omen shattered with dawn  
Your name wiped away of all hallways, all hearts  
Crushed over countless counters  
From a myriad freezing catalogue kitchens  
Chambers smelling of abandoned, prophetic cabbage leaves  
Your evil doing will no longer be welcome  
A golden debenture sun will shine over the world  
At first pale and unsteady  
Then assertive and good

*Translated from the Hebrew by Yardenne Greenspan*

**Some recommendations /**

I recommend to my readers not to fall in love  
and to eat herring  
eat herring with onions  
don't fall in love  
women are trouble  
men are mud and heartache  
pickled herring  
won't do anything bad to you  
I recommend Tolstoy's biography by Henri Troyat in two volumes  
to my readers  
read the part in section two where the elderly Tolstoy gets a bike  
and get back to me  
I recommend to my readers  
to sleep in socks  
despite the recession  
because of the recession  
nothing will happen if you sleep in jeans

I recommend eating sweetsops  
Tsachi "party animal", a friend of mine, told me they're very healthy  
even though the last one I bought  
wasn't ripe  
and turned gray in the freezer.  
I guess I did something wrong  
if you are musicians or poets  
I recommend that your next work be  
emotional or danceable  
don't try to be too smart  
or too stupid  
it's better not to try too hard  
it's better not to do anything if you're musicians or poets  
you can learn to do nothing slowly. my advice for success and luck –  
invest in your toilet paper!  
that's the only superstition worth believing in  
listen good my readers! it's better not to do anything. invest your money there!  
Get some great, expensive, high quality toilet paper, even if you're poor  
triple layered, quadruple-layered and even quintuple-layered  
politicians will disappoint you and won't move a finger when you're fired  
they'll send you to your death for a photo in the free tabloid "Israel Today"  
but nice toilet paper will console you

So

I also recommend a trip to Cairo  
and drinking cold Karkade juice there  
in the cheapest café  
I recommend to my readers  
never to buy more than one book and never to agree to take more than one book  
I advise all my readers not  
to sleep with the same person  
day after day  
don't sleep day after day  
with the same partner  
So no one will get used to the idea

I recommend to my readers  
to join at least two labor unions  
I recommend to my readers  
to sit near the window  
and to avoid war in any way possible  
nothing good will come of it  
and also avoid luna-parks. the bother is a real waste.  
I advise my readers  
to make use of construction in the city to watch the cranes at least  
ten minutes a day  
to look at the holes in the ground at the building sites  
to bang your head into the metal fence, even if there is a warning sign  
and to look deep into the stormy shafts at the building sites  
and to love anyway

*Translated from the Hebrew by Lisa Katz*

**The Nectarine /**

I love people so much  
that I love even hatred itself  
as though it were a nectarine.  
I love life so much  
love it so much  
that I love even death itself  
as though it were a nectarine,

but I don't like nectarines.  
I don't have to be enamored of everything  
I'm a simple man, with a slight limp, this past week  
and a bruise on my nose due to an incident with a mailbox.  
I like soft fruits: pomelos, lychees, canned pineapples.  
Grandma's mulberry tree  
the one Moti Kerner and I used to climb  
before he served in the Army  
and went to study computers

*Translated from the Hebrew by Yuval Ben-Ami*

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