

When I Was Young I Believed With All My Heart

כְּשֶׁהָיִיתִי צָעִיר הֶאֱמַנְתִּי בְּכֹל לִבִּי שֶׁאֶת אֲגַם
הַחֹולָה חֲיָבִים לְיַבֵּשׁ, וְכֹל הַצְּפוּרִים הַצְּבֹעוֹנִיּוֹת
בְּרָחוּ מִשָּׁם וְעָכְשׁוּ, אַחַר כְּמַעַט חָצִי מֵאָה,
שׁוֹב מְמַלְאִים אוֹתוֹ מִים, כִּי הִיְתָה טָעוּת. וְאוֹלֵי
כָּל חַיֵּי אֲנִי חֵי בְטָעוּת. וְאֱלֹהֵי יְלָדוּתִי גַם הוּא
טָעוּת, וְהוּא נִקְרָא עַדִּין אֱלֹהִים.
אֲבָל הַטָּעוּת הַשְּׁלֵמָה עוֹשֶׂה חַיִּים שְׁלֵמִים
כְּמוֹ אֲמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה. וְאֵת הַמַּלְיָם "טָעוּת לְעוֹלָם חוֹזֵר"
הַפְּכֵתִי לְזֶמֶר מְרֻגֵעַ, וּמִן הַמַּלְיָם
"כָּל הָאָדָם כּוֹזֵב" עָשִׂיתִי קָצֵב מְחוּל בַּיּוֹם
וְשִׁיר עָרֵשׁ בְּלִילָה. אָמֵן.

When I was young I believed with all my heart that the Hula
swamp had to be drained, but all of the colorful birds
fled and now, after almost half a century,
they are again filling it with water, because it was a mistake. Perhaps
I have lived my whole life in a mistake. The God of my childhood also
is a mistake, yet he is still called God.
But a complete mistake makes for a complete life
the same as complete faith. The words "a mistake lives forever"
I have made into a soothing melody, and the words
"everyone disappoints" I have made into a dance step by day
and a lullaby by night. Amen.

Yehuda Amichai, translated by Rabbi Steven Sager