

Seeing Oneself In The Story

אֱלֹהִים כְּמוֹ קוֹסִם שְׁעוֹשֶׂה מַעֲשֵׂי קֹסֶם
בְּתַחבּוּלוֹת רֵאשִׁיתוֹ, שְׂמִפְרִיחַ יוֹנִים מִכִּיסוֹ
וְשׂוֹלֵף שְׂפָנִים מִשְׂרוּוּלָיו וּמְנַסֵּר אִשָּׁה לְשָׁנִים
וּמְבַקֵּעַ יָם-סוּף לְשָׁנִים וְעוֹשֶׂה עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת
וְעֹשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת בְּאֵשׁ וְתַמְרוֹת עֶשֶׂן
וּמְרַחֵף מֵעַל לַמַּיִם וְנֹעֵלֵם בְּקִיר.
וְכֻלָּם רוֹצִים לְתַפֵּשׂ אוֹתוֹ בְּרָגַע שֶׁל טְעוּת
וּלְגַלוֹת אֵיךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה הַכֹּל בְּלִי לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶמֶת,
וְכֻלָּם לֹא רוֹצִים לְדַעַת וּלְגַלוֹת
אֵיךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה הַכֹּל, רוֹצִים לְהֶאֱמִין
כֻּלָּם כְּנֹגֵד כֻּלָּם. כֻּלּוֹם נֹגֵד כֻּלּוֹם.

God is like a magician who does magic tricks
with the wiles of his creation, who conjures doves from his pockets
who pulls rabbits from his sleeves and saws a woman in half
and splits the Red Sea in half and makes ten plagues
and ten commandments with fire and plumes of smoke
and who hovers above the water and disappears into the wall.
And everyone wants to catch him in a mistake
revealing how he does it all without really doing it,
and no one wants to know or to reveal
how he does it all, they want to believe
everyone versus everyone. Nothing to nothing.

Yehuda Amichai
Translated by Rabbi Steven Sager

וּמָה מְשֻׁךְ חַיִּי? אֲנִי כְּמוֹ אֶחָד שֶׁיֵּצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם
וְיָם-סוּף נִבְקַע לְשָׁנִים וְאֲנִי עוֹבֵר בְּתַחבּוּלָה
וְשִׁתִּי חוֹמוֹת מַיִם מִיְמִינִי וּמִשְׂמָאלִי.
מֵאַחֲרַי חֵיל פְּרָעָה וּפָרָשָׁיו וּלְפָנַי הַמִּדְבָּר
וְאוּלַי הָאָרֶץ הַמְּבֻטָּחֶת. זֶה מְשֻׁךְ חַיִּי.

What is the continuity of my life? I am like one who left Egypt
with the Red Sea split in two and I passing through on dry ground
and two walls of water on my right and on my left.
Behind me Pharaoh's force and his chariots and before me the wilderness
and perhaps the promised land. This is the continuity of my life.

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