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A Tale of Love and Darkness

By Natalie Portman

Go to sleep.
I'm not tired.
All right.
Let's make up a story.
Shall I start?
Yes.
Once upon a time
there was a village,
abandoned
by its inhabitants...
Even the rats left.
Even the rats left.
The village stood silent
and abandoned, year after year.
Rain pounded the streets,
washing away any human trace.
When the rats cleared,
birds swarmed over the village.
There were so many, they
almost blocked out the sky.
It was night, all day long.
But then,
from one small house...
A little boy opened the door.
He was the only one
left behind.
My mother was 38 when she died.
At my age today,
I could be her father.
Many things have happened
in Jerusalem.
The city was
destroyed, rebuilt,
destroyed and rebuilt again.
Conqueror after conqueror
came, ruled for a while,
left behind some walls,
some towers,
some cracks in the stones,
and then disappeared,
like the morning mist
down the hillslopes.
Jerusalem's a black widow,
who devours her lovers while

they are still inside her.
We're late.
The boy, arieh.
My mother grew up
in the town of rovno,
which was then in Poland,
and is now in Ukraine.
Her childhood there
was made up of words like...
Chandeliers, servants,
mystery,
romantic melancholy...
As anti-semitism spread
through Europe...
My mother
dreamed of Israel...
As the land
of milk and honey,
where pioneers
made the desert bloom...
She imagined the pioneer as
a poet, worker, revolutionary,
born for fields
and battlefields alike,
but also emotional
and intellectual.
After my mother
and her family fled Europe,
back in Poland's
sosenki forest,
where my mother
and her sisters
once loved to pick
mushrooms and berries,
and sleep
in sleeping bags
on the riverbank
beneath the stars.
Germans, Lithuanians,
and Ukrainians,
opened fire
with machine guns,
and killed 23,000 Jews
in two days.

They killed almost everyone
my mother had ever known.
A million kiddies...
A million kiddies...
They killed a million kids
like you!
Jerusalem, 1945,
under the British mandate
good day, ma'am.
May I please have Tel Aviv 648?
Please wait a minute, sir.
Mr. nashashibi is on the way.
Of course I'll wait,
but people are waiting
on the other end too.
It's too early, arieh.
It will take time
to get a connection.
What if they connect us
right way,
and nobody is there yet?
Hello? Tsvi?
Speaking.
It's arieh, from Jerusalem.
Yes, arieh. Hello.
This is tsvi. How are you?
Everything is fine here.
We're calling
from the pharmacy.
Ask my sister how she is.
How's it going in Tel Aviv?
Everything's fine.
Nothing special.
Life.
No news is good news.
There's no news here either.
We'll write and set a time
for the next call.
Take care of yourselves.
Be well.
You too.
They weren't actually sure
if they'd talk again or not.
There could be riots,

or a pogrom.
The British could betray us.
The curfew will start soon.
Hello.
Good evening.
Good evening.
Close the windows!
Close the doors, please.
They're all gone now.
It's like rovno
was just a dream.
It's here.
A new book,
hot off the press.
My first book.
The novella
in Hebrew literature.
It's like having a new baby.
I'll invite your parents.
"To my brother
and teacher, David,
whom I lost
in the darkness."
Who said your uncle
would be
the only important
academic in the family?
Well, it's only
my first publication.
And not the last.
The borscht is good.
Not bad...
Almost tasty.
But even gentile servants
in Jewish homes
knew that borscht should be
sour and just slightly sweet--
never sweet and slightly sour.
Like the poles who always add
sugar, with no rhyme or reason.
They even ruin horseradish
by adding jam to it.
Let's raise a toast
in honor of the new book.

Lehayim.

Congratulations.

If you have to choose
between telling a lie
or insulting someone,
choose to be generous.

I'm allowed to lie?

Sometimes... yes.

It's better to be sensitive
than to be honest.

Come, hold the peg.

We'll make

our own little kibbutz,
and by our own efforts, "bring
forth bread from the earth."

Forward!

You know, the word

"kadima" means forward.

But...

The word actually derives
from the word "kedem,"

which refers to

"ancient times." Ahh!

Ah!

So the Hebrew speaker actually
looks forward to the past.

Interesting, isn't it?

Yes.

Are you hurt?

Arieh?

Can you recognize me
under all this sweat?

Watch this.

Ha!

That's it!

My father once told me,

"Amos, consider

the etymological link
between the words...

Earth, man,

blood, red, silence."

You write a new novel

every six months,

and right away, all the pretty

girls grab you off the shelf
and take you
straight to bed.
At least my books
have some fun.
If you're trying to get girls,
maybe you should write
romance novels.
All I'm saying is,
don't rush.
Ask your sisters.
Your life is only your own
for a very short time--
from the time you leave home
to your first pregnancy.
Even when your child grows up,
you don't get your life back.
You go from being a mother
to a grandmother.
But everybody says
that children
are the best thing
that can happen to you.
Who's everybody?
Remember what happened
to our neighbor?
Ira?
Steletsky's wife.
Yes, the alcoholic husband,
who ran
our father's flour mill.
He would bet on her
at cards, and lose her,
each time for one night,
until finally she left him
for the coachman's son.
Anton!
From this hut...
She could see her children
playing in the distance.
Then one day, she decided
to go see her daughter.
As she approached,
her daughter

called her a whore...
And refused to speak to her.
Kira!
That night, ira gathered
whatever strength she had left,
went into the little hut
with a can of petrol...
And lit a match.
Our children don't realize
how much they can hurt us.
I just can't
understand why...
Why no one warned you?
What did you expect?
A warning in fine print?
That you're only food?
That you're what the chick
eats to grow strong?
No one warns us,
because every mother
thinks she's the only one
who feels that way--
and every mother cries
into her pillow, alone at night.
Except for our mother,
who just curses us.
"Tarzan the invincible"
stay out of trouble.
Just be a good boy, okay?
Okay.
My parents' friends,
staszek and mala rudnicki,
had no children of their own,
so sometimes my parents
would let them borrow me.
My father said
that the Hebrew word
for childlessness
is related
to the word for darkness,
and that the word for darkness
is related to forgetting.
Lack of memory.
Lack of children.

Lack of light.
My mother would
go off on her own.
To where,
I could only imagine.
When visiting an arab home,
it's especially important
to remember your manners.
Children are expected to stay
out of adult conversations.
Only if spoken to directly,
may you answer briefly
and very politely.
If refreshments are served,
don't choose something that
might make crumbs or grip.
If they still insist
you have something,
just refuse, but delicately,
like a gentleman--
even if you can't resist
the sight of sweets.
We were only invited
because your uncle staszek
took care
of al-halwani's son.
If, on this occasion,
in such tense times,
we behave like animals,
not only will it be
sheer insolence,
it could cause enormous
damage to the future
of our two peoples.
Jacket? Jacket?
Ah! Ah, my friend,
come, come, come.
Welcome, welcome,
welcome.
Pleased to meet you,
madam.
Hello.
Please, everybody, I would
like you to meet my friend,

the great Mr. stav.
Mr. stav helped to clear
my son Edward,
from that unfortunate incident
at the beginning of the summer.
Thank you for coming.
Please, come here.
Maybe the youngster
would like to go and
play in the garden?
Please.
Please, madam.
I want to show you...
Good morning, miss.
My name is Amos. And you?
My name is Aisha.
This is my brother, awwad.
Your father...
Your honored father
suggested...
That I come here
to play with you.
He's not my father.
He's my mother's uncle.
I don't live here.
I live in talbieh.
How do you
know Hebrew?
I've been studying piano
in rehavia for three years now.
It's a beautiful language,
and rehavia is beautiful too,
so well-kept and quiet.
Talbieh is also
well-kept and quiet.
Would you mind if
we talked for a bit?
Aren't we talking
already?
There's enough room in
this country for both peoples.
We just need to learn
to live together in peace
and mutual respect.

I have a big brother
in London.
He's studying
to be a lawyer.
What do you want to study
when you grow up?
What about you?
You'll be a lawyer too,
based on how you speak.
What makes you think that?
I'm going to write a book.
Really?
What kind of book?
Poems.
Poems?
Yes. In French
and English.
I also write in arabic, but
i never show it to anyone.
Is there
nice Hebrew poetry?
Of course!
Levin kipnis, Rachel.
Vladimir jabotinsky,
tcheminchowsky...
"A generation of gods
walks the land...
"A generation
drunk on life!
"Estranged from
a sick people.
And the tribe of sufferers."
Can you also climb trees?
Rest a minute,
just a minute.
Rest a minute,
just a minute.
This is the father of Amos.
May I please speak
with Mr. al-halwani?
Well, could you please
tell him how very truly sorry
we are about what happened?
We are anxious for

the health of the dear child.
We'll pay any of the child's
medical expenses,
of course, in full.
And we sincerely wish to effect
a meeting at an early date
to clarify and try
to right the wrong.
Once there were two monks...
Who imposed all sorts of
restrictions on themselves.
Among other things,
they resolve to cross
all of India on foot.
They also took a vow
of complete silence.
Even in their sleep,
they would not speak
a single word throughout
their years of travel.
But once...
While they were walking
along the bank of a river,
they heard a drowning woman
crying for help.
Without a word, the younger
monk jumped into the water.
He bore the woman
on his back
and laid her on the ground.
The two monks continued
their journey in silence.
Six months later,
the younger monk
suddenly asked,
"tell me...
Do you think
i sinned when I carried
that woman on my back?"
His friend answered

with a question:

"What? Are you still
carrying her on your back?"

Amos, when I was a student,
i loved to read here
among the flowers.
And one day, after class,
she met your future father here.
Do you remember what I told you
about the word "flower"?
Flower is a combination of
the words "bull" and "scent."
"Bull" has the same root
as "fertility,"
and "scent" lures the insects
that fertilize the plant.
He took advantage of
my weakness for words.
What could I do? All
the boys were courting her!
I had to make myself
stand out.
That's what happened.
Remembering is like trying
to restore an old building
with the stones
from its ruins.
And the stones have memory.
May I please have some apc?
I have a headache
that won't go away.
I don't believe them.
I don't believe anyone anymore.
It's a big conspiracy.
What do you think?
That our boys will
fight for you,
that they risk their
young lives for you,
when you say
it's all a conspiracy?
Yes, because it is
all one big conspiracy!
It's like theater!
Ben-gurion secretly
agreed to sell Jerusalem
to king Abdullah

so that he can keep
his kibbutzim.
They don't care if they
slaughter and burn us all.
What's wrong with you?
How can you say that?
A million kids...
If there is a war--
when there is a war--
we will win.
Our state is standing
right at the gate.
It's not standing.
There is no gate.
There is an abyss.
Not in front of the child.
Mm.
Nothing grew!
Come here.
You know...
That if you open up
someone's head and
take out his brain...
You see that our brains are
nothing but cauliflower--
a cauliflower this size.
What a miracle it is that
this small cauliflower
can hold the sky
and the land,
the sun and
all the stars.
It can hold Plato's ideas,
and Beethoven's music,
and Chekhov's plays,
all the dinosaurs
and the whales...
And the hopes
and the passions and
mistakes and fantasies...
And that's it.
Amos!
Come play with us!
I can't. My grandma

is coming today.
Kids! What are you doing?
You've abandoned me.
I have no life here.
You spit on me,
your own mother--
the only person
who will take care of you!
Just look at you.
How can you stand it?
This place is disgusting!
Oh. I'm not good enough
for you to answer?
I should have
left you in rovno!
I would have been
better off!
Fanitchka!
Fania!
Amos, where's your mother?
Fania?
You won't believe it!
My book is sold out!
All five of them!
He said he'd order more.
He already did, by phone.
Five more! He says this
is just the beginning!
Let's go to the Edison
and see a film.
Zarchi will
watch you, okay?
For us.
You can find hell
and paradise in every room.
A little meanness,
and people are
hell to each other.
A little compassion,
a little generosity,
and people find
paradise in each other.
Congratulations again.
I still can't believe it.

Give my love to garbo.
Amos, behave yourself.
Want a book?
Tchernichowsky.
It seems that your Patience
has helped our plants.
Why don't you go
see for yourself?
When my family moved to
the house on dubinska street,
we inherited some tenants
from the previous owners.
A Polish officer named jan
lived in the front room.
Every Friday, my mother
would send one of us
with a tray of hot biscuits,
straight from the oven,
to wish him a good sabbath
on behalf of the entire family.
Sabbat shalom.
He would stroke my head...
Call me cyganka,
a gypsy.
And promise he would
wait for me
and marry me when I grew up.
But, one day...
A Sunday morning
before the sun came up...
The colonel decided
to try out his pistol.
He fired two bullets
through the closed window
into the garden.
By chance, he hit a pigeon
which was found wounded
in the garden the next day.
Then he fired one shot
at a bottle on the table...
Two more at the chandelier...
And then...
Once, I found a note
in a crack in a desk drawer.

It was written
in a woman's handwriting.
"To my precious
little wolf cub.
"In all my life I've
never met a better, more
generous man than you.
I am not worthy to kiss
the soles of your shoes."
There were two
spelling mistakes.
It was signed with an n,
and she sketched lips below it.
Nobody knows anything
about anyone...
Not even
the person you marry,
and not even
about ourselves.
We know nothing.
But if we sometimes imagine
that we do know something,
that's even worse.
It's better to live
without knowing
than to live in error.
November 29, 1947
tonight...
At lake success, near New York,
the general assembly of
the un will vote on what?
Adopting the unscop proposal.
And what's the proposal?
To create two states
out of the British mandate:
One Jewish, and one arab.
Who opposes it?
The Muslim bloc and Britain.
And why?
They want an arab state
under British protection.
Like Egypt,
transjordan and Iraq.
Well done!

You know, the name
lake success...
Is the opposite
of the sea of tears,
with symbolized the fate of
our people for the poet bialik.
It's interesting.
Interesting.
Norway -- yes.
Pakistan --
no.
Panama --
yes.
Paraguay --
yes.
Could you please
help me?
Philippines --
yes.
Poland --
yes.
Saudi Arabia --
no.
Siam-- absent.
Sweden --
yes.
Syria --
no.
Turkey --
no.
Ukraine --
yes.
South Africa --
yes.
Soviet union --
yes.
United Kingdom --
abstained.
United States --
yes.
Uruguay --
yes.
Venezuela --
yes.

Yemen --

no.

Yugoslavia --

abstained.

The resolution

of the ad hoc committee

for palestine

was adopted by 33 votes--

13 against, 10 abstained.

The Jewish nation lives!

The Jewish nation lives!

Unbelievable.

Unbelievable.

Everything

is about to change.

I told you it would.

We brought peace unto you!

You can't imagine what

the gentile boys did to me

in my school in vilna.

Then, when my father,

your grandfather, came

to the school to complain,

they attacked him too.

They threw him

to the ground,

and removed his pants

in the middle of the yard.

All the children laughed.

And the teachers watched

and were silent.

Some of them also laughed.

Bullies may well

bully you someday

in the street

or at school.

They may do it just because

you're a bit like me.

But from now on,

now that we have

our own state,

you will never be bullied

just because you are a Jew.

Never again.

A few hours later,
at seven in the morning,
while we were all asleep,
shots were fired on
Jewish vehicles in Jerusalem,
which turned into riots
across the country.
My code name
is garibaldi.
I'll be instructing
you how to help
in our patriotic
wartime efforts.
You will help...
You will search all
the storage yards and sheds
for empty bags
to fill with sand,
and empty bottles
to make "cocktails"
that will be very tasty
for the enemy.
You also will
gather edible Greens
from empty fields,
to help relieve
the hunger in Jerusalem.
And we'll also serve
as look-outs...
To observe any movements
by the brits.
Now go!
How beautiful.
Wash them off
and I'll cook them
right now.
You must be hungry
after all your food foraging.
Put some water in this.
Fanitchka?
I joined the national guard.
Don't you have anything
to say about that?
What do you want me to say?

Congratulations.
You're very brave.
The war infiltrated our home.
Life became
rations, sandbags,
mourning.
In the lives of individuals,
and in the lives of nations,
the worst conflicts erupt
between two persecuted people.
Only in the imagination
do the persecuted
unite in solidarity
to fight together against
their ruthless oppressor.
In reality,
two children of
the same abusive father
will not necessarily
become allies.
Often, each sees
in his brother
their father's
threatening ways.
Europe abused the arabs,
humiliating them
with colonialism...
And the same Europe persecuted
and annihilated the Jews.
But the arabs see us
as an arrogant new branch
of European colonialism
and exploitation,
and we do not see arabs
as brothers in adversity,
but rather, as anti-semites,
Nazis in disguise.
...after 30 years
of the British mandate...
The new state was born
with David Ben-gurion's
declaration in Tel Aviv
just hours earlier.
For weeks, our

basement apartment was turned
into a kind of bomb shelter
for the residents
of the apartments above us.
You're pulling. It hurts!
What is this?
Crumbs everywhere!
You can't make
such a mess here!
A hundred Jews were burned alive
yesterday near sheikh Jarrah.
They were in a convoy
going up to the hospital
and university.
A hundred people!
Doctors, nurses, students.
-Why didn't we save them?
-The British wouldn't let us.
Who can even stomach
this chicken,
when horrors like that
happen right in front of us?
The children haven't
eaten meat in two months.
Here you go, ma'am.
Who's next?
When her friend died,
when real tragedy
landed outside the pages
of my mother's novels,
the suffering
wasn't romantic at all.
There's an armistice
agreement with Egypt.
Next will be transjordan,
and then Syria and Lebanon.
When the British left,
the green line was drawn
around Israel.
Our neighbors moved back
to their own homes,
euphoric and optimistic,
and left us along
to ourselves.

The improbable creation
of the new state of Israel
extinguished thousands
of years of Jewish longing
for a homeland of its own.
Maybe my mother felt the loss
of this passion, this dream,
because suddenly she stopped
telling her stories.
What do my eyes see?
A boy, about three, standing
in the middle of the street,
and a military vehicle
rushing toward him.
I mustered all my strength.
I yelled to him.
"Boy! Boy!"
It seemed
my shout reached him,
because he quickly
jumped aside.
Who knows? Maybe
his mother left him alone,
or maybe she's poor
and can't support him--
and can't stand
to see him starve,
or maybe he's an orphan.
Yes, there are children
like that in our world too.
Give me your sandwich!
Give me your sandwich!
Our blood will not
be spilled in vain!
Abandoned property
I'll be back
in fifteen minutes.
Can I go with you?
I need to be
alone for a bit.
You can be alone too.
I'll be back soon.
Maybe you can
finally tell me.

What is it about you that
makes me love you so much?
More than anything...
More than anything,
i love your innocence.
I've never encountered
anything like it.
Even after you live out
your entire life,
and have all kinds
of experiences,
your innocence
will never abandon you.
I think you'll grow up
to be a man...
Who is open and enthusiastic
like your father,
but you'll also be a man who's
quiet and closed and full...
Like a well
in a deserted village.
You can be both.
I felt a terrible dread
as if on the distant horizon,
a vague disaster
was taking shape.
My mother started having
frequent headaches.
Her migraines
gave her insomnia.
The doctor prescribed
sleeping pills and sedatives...
But nothing helped.
Please don't be
angry with me, Amos.
It's a little hard
for me right now.
You see how much I'm trying
to make things right.
Thank you, Amos.
I know I can rely
on you completely.
-Good night.
-Good night.

Papa?

Sleep... sleep.

I'm so lucky.

I'm so lucky.

It's 7:

are the headlines.

This year too, there is
an urgent need to find homes
for innocent children
with foster families
across the country.

Last year alone,
50,000 children were
placed in homes.

Despite this achievement, there
are still 20,000 children,
who will have to spend
the winter months in tents.

10,000 children ages 5-12,
need temporary housing
this winter
across the country.

The roots for children
project appeals to
every home in Israel
to host a child
from the camps...

She's punishing herself.

Just to punish me.

I have done.

I have done.

I have been doing.

I have been doing.

I should have done.

I should have done.

I should have been doing.

Go...

Go play a little outside.

But be careful.

There are

all sorts out there.

Not all women are as kind
and honest as you are.

You can come home
whenever you like.
Do you need anything?
Amos is here.
My father and I told people
that she had the flu
or a particular
sensitivity to sunlight,
or that she gets
very tired.
We didn't tell anyone
what we both knew.
The only one who knew
was my mother's best friend.
Amos.
You're a ray of sunshine,
you know?
Your mother says that
you're her light.
You're such a clever,
sensitive child.
You know,
i have a feeling...
That when you grow up
you will be a writer.
I won't be a writer.
I'm not sensitive!
I'll be a farmer
or a dog-poisoner with
a syringe full of poison.
Have a good day.
You too...
Do you know what
happened when Tarzan met
the cowboys and Indians?
What happened?
Tarzan watched
from a tree as the cowboys
and Indians fought below.
A cowboy caught a snake
by the throat
and poured its venom
into the Indian's mouth!
So the Indian grabbed

a thorny cactus
and stabbed...
The cowboy in his blue eyes.
Tarzan watched from above
and thought
about what to do.
And then what?
I'll tell you tomorrow.
The story was great.
Where did you hear it?
Hey-- isn't
that your dad?
Where?
Ah!
Amos... you're being
very good.
Your mother has
a terrible headache.
Keep your voice down.
And no running
around, okay?
Get the door.
- Do you need anything?
- No, thank you.
Then why don't you lie down?
I'm fine
like this, thank you.
Do you see a doctor?
I don't need a doctor.
Mother, leave her alone.
Don't interfere, arieh.
She's being so dramatic,
as if she deserves the moon.
So what? Moods.
Melancholia.
It just shows that her
heart is still young.
As if she's the only one
having a hard time here!
That the rest of us
are living in luxury!
Behold, I call heaven and earth
today to bear witness
that I have set before you

life and death,
the blessing and the curse.
Therefore choose life,
so that you and your
descendants may live.
Did you finish your homework?
Fania?
How did you sleep?
Well, I finally
slept well.
The new pills
must be working.
I had so many dreams.
One was about someone I hadn't
thought about in years.
In rovno, there was
a rich fur trader
who even got
orders from Paris,
because he had a rare type
of fur, the silver fox.
Furs that sparkled like
frost in the moonlight.
But one day...
The merchant became
a strict vegetarian.
He left his home and built
a small cabin in the woods,
because he felt sorry
for the thousands of foxes
hunters had killed for his furs.
And then
he disappeared completely.
When my sisters and i
wanted to scare each other,
the three of us lay
on the carpet in the dark.
And took turns telling...
How the man who was
once a rich furrier
now roams naked
through the forest.
Maybe he has rabies?
Maybe he howls

bloodcurdling cries?
But anyone who meets the fox-man
in the forest at night...
His hair instantly
turns white in terror.
Excuse me. What is
that supposed to be?
An allegory?
An old-wives' tale?
Sorry.
Don't be late for
school or work, boys.
What's the matter with you?
What's your problem?
I'm sorry.
It's all my fault.
Today I decided to invite
the two men in my life
to lunch at a restaurant.
Does dad know?
We'll surprise him.
Let's go to his office
and drag him out
like a moth from a book.
Come.
Today, you'll be my cavalier.
What's a cavalier?
A cavalier is a knight.
Cheval is French for horse,
and chevalier is
a knight on horseback.
Thank you.
Arieh.
Excuse me for a minute.
What happened?
Are my parents all right?
Your parents?
Is everyone all right?
Yes, everyone is fine.
We're surprising you.
We're taking you
out to lunch.
Sure. Why not?
Today I'm hosting,

and I'd love
if you ordered the most
expensive items on the menu.
Are you ready?
Yes.
Vegetable soup
and chicken with
mashed potatoes, please.
The same
for me, please.
Fania?
Fania?
Just some white rice, please.
And a cup of black coffee.
Thank you.
Fania?
Fania? Fanitchka?
Mummy, are you all right?
She needs total rest.
I'll take care of it.
Thank you, doctor.
These are the new pills.
They'll help you sleep.
Have some more water.
I don't know how to help you.
I'm not your responsibility.
Fania, I don't know
how to help you.
Maybe I'll take you
to Tel Aviv
to be with your sisters
and get some fresh air.
Yes, fresh air.
It's not reparations. They can't
keep what they stole from us.
And we need the money
to absorb the survivors.
What are
you talking about?
It's blood money.
We can't sell them forgiveness.
A few days in Tel Aviv
and you'll be good as new.
No wonder you're miserable.

You live in Jerusalem.
We're going to pamper you.
All you have to do is rest.
Fania, maybe
you'll try some cake?
I'm not hungry.
You're not
eating at all.
You sound like mother.
The change of scenery
will do her good.
She's from Jerusalem.
She doesn't even know
what a beach is.
Summer here
would be too much.
It's true.
That night,
the ayalon river
overflowed the banks
and flooded part of Tel Aviv.
My mother grew up
in an ethereal culture
of misted beauty
whose wings
were finally dashed
on the harsh Jerusalem stone,
hot and dusty.
Twenty years after completing
her studies in rovno,
that romantic schoolgirl
was confronted by daily life,
the heat waves,
poverty, and violence,
diapers, migraines,
ration lines, marriage.
The promise of her childhood
was trampled underfoot
and ridiculed by the monotony
of life itself.
Perhaps when life failed to
fill the promises of her youth,
my mother began
to envision death

as a protective,
soothing lover.
My version of her story
would have ended differently.
But it was her story to tell.
Is your father home?
There's a call from Tel Aviv.
It's urgent, please!
A few years after
my mother's death,
I left my father
and all of Jerusalem,
changed my name,
and went to
kibbutz hulda on my own.
My mother's dream,
milk and honey,
make the desert bloom,
pioneer.
Hello.
Amos?
Hello!
You're taller than me!
Can you hand me
my suitcase, please?
Thank you.
Though I forced myself to
learn how to drive a tractor...
Lay irrigation hoses,
hit the target
with a Czech rifle,
I still did not manage
to transform myself.
No one was taken
in by my suntan.
They all knew perfectly well,
and I knew it myself,
that even when
my skin was bronzed,
I would still be pale
on the inside.
This is
my school now.
The only way to keep

a dream whole,
hopeful and
not disappointing,
is to never try
to live it out.
A fulfilled dream
is a disappointing dream.
This disappointment
is in the nature of dreams.
Mother