

## Di Simferopolski tsvishngas, 8

A royter moyer finfgorndiker. In tsvey reyen dernebm  
shteyen azelkhe nokh nayn. Far Khrushchovn m'hot zey oysgeboyt.  
Hob ikh gelebt dort di ershte kimat fertsn yor fun mayn lebm -  
un davke dort kh'hob gevolt ikh zol trefn mayn toyt.

Vu ikh zol nit geven zayn - fun der shul, fun di ershte kontsertn  
oder fun gest fleg ikh demolt zikh umkern tomid ahin.  
Un di dermonungen vegn dem ort mikh dervaremem, tsertlen,  
un kh'veys, azoy vet zayn shtendik, kol-zman af der velt do ikh bin.

Layblekher hoyf - voser ort af der velt kon zayn tayerer, liber  
(khuts, efsher, Yerusholaim - nor s'iz epes andersh, avade)?  
Koym vos kh'dermon zikh in im - un vi epes a zislekher fiber  
kumt in mayn hartsn un breyngt fun gefiln a gantse kaskade.

Yo, far a fremdn zet oys dort gants umheymlekh, mies afile,  
ober far mir iz dos ort ful mit heymisher sheynkayt un prakht.  
Un ikh hob moyre derzen, az me vet im tseshtern, kholile,  
dem roytn moyer, vu kh'hob mayne kindershe yorn farbrakht.

Neyn, gor nit alts, vos ikh hob dort farzukht, iz tsum nemen in moyl,  
in yenem hoyf fun mayn kindhayt mit hoydes un beymer a sakh.  
Hob ikh dort ibergelitn fil mol aza sines-yisroel,  
az ikh vel es mayn gants lebm gedeynken un zayn af der vakh.

In mayn neshome, kol-zman ikh vel otemen, vet zikh alts tsien  
yene dermonung, vi freylekhe yingelekh fun undzer geske  
hobm gefunen an ayzernem shtekl un lustik geshrien  
hobm tsu mir: "Mirn makhn fun dir a shashlik po-yevreyski!"

Un dokh... nor libshaft ba mir tsu mayn layblekhn hoyf iz geblibm.

## Number 8, Simferopolsky Passage

A red five-story building. In two rows alongside it  
are nine more like it. They were built in Khrushchev's time.  
I spent the first fourteen years of my life there,  
and it was precisely there that I wanted to meet my death.

Wherever I may have been—in school, at my first concerts,  
on a visit to someone—I would always go back there.  
My reminiscences about that place warm me and caress me,  
and I know that it will always be like that as long as I live.

My native courtyard--what place on earth could be dearer to me  
(except, perhaps, Jerusalem, but that, of course, is something different)?  
I have but to remember it -and a sort of sweet fever  
comes to my heart and brings a whole cascade of emotions.

Yes—to a stranger it looks unwelcoming, even ugly,  
but for me that place is full of homey beauty and splendor.  
And I fear that they will destroy it, God forbid,  
the red building where I passed my childhood years\*.

No, by no means was everything I tasted there pleasant,  
in that courtyard of my childhood, with trees and swings.  
Many times I suffered such anti-Semitism  
that I'll remember it all my life and remain on guard.

In my soul, as long as I breathe, the memory will tug at me  
of happy little boys from our little street  
finding an iron rod and shouting merrily to me:  
“We'll make a Jewish shashlik out of you!”

And yet, only love for my native courtyard has remained with me.

Az ikh dermon zikh in im, vert mayn harts ful mit beynkshaft un likht.  
Un ven tsum letstn mol bin ikh geven inem hoyf maynem libm,  
in zikh "Mayn shtetele Belts" dort mit flater gezungen hob ikh.

Kumt er a mol in khaloymes tsu mir, beys ikh shlof oder driml...  
Un af der vor troym ikh oft, az kh'bin alt, kum ahin un derze  
dem roytn moyer, di hoydes, di beymer, dem likhtikn himl -  
un kh'gey besholem avek funem oylem-haze.

When I recall it, my heart gets full of yearning and light.  
And when I was in my beloved courtyard for the last time,  
I quaveringly sang "My Shtetele Belts" to myself there.

It sometimes comes to me in dreams when I am sleeping or dozing off.  
And when I am awake, I often dream that I am old, that I go there and see  
my red building, the swings, the trees, the bright sky -  
and I leave this world peacefully.

\*"Where I passed my childhood years" are words from the famous  
Yiddish song "Mayn shtetele Belts", mentioned a few lines later.