

Morris Rosenfeld's Attempts to Become an English Poet

EZEKIEL LIFSCHUTZ

Morris Rosenfeld, the famous Yiddish poet, devoted much of his creative life to the task of becoming an English poet.¹

It all began in September, 1897, when an anonymous notice praising Rosenfeld's soon to be published *Lieder-Bukh* appeared in the liberal weekly, *The Nation*. Leo Wiener, who had written the notice, was then an instructor and later a professor of Slavic languages at Harvard University. He praised the "remarkable book of songs . . . about to appear in the Judeo-German [Yiddish] language from the pen of Morris Rosenfeld" which "should prove an honor for the Jewish literature" and open "a new path for this literature . . . which leads to glory and universal recognition."² Wiener's was probably the first notice of a book of Yiddish poetry ever published in an American periodical.

Professor Wiener's interest in Rosenfeld was more than academic. Solomon Wiener, his father, knew Rosenfeld's poetry through the

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¹ For additional data about Rosenfeld, see Leo Wiener, *History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1899), pp. 124-30, 324-32; A. A. Roback, *Story of Yiddish Literature* (New York, 1940), pp. 173-82; Sol Liptzin, *Flowering of Yiddish Literature* (New York, 1963), pp. 141-43; *Jewish Encyclopedia*, X, 475; *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, IX, 213-14; *American Jewish Year Book: 1904-1905*, p. 172; and Zalman Reizen, *Leksikon fun der Yidisher Literatur un Filologye* (Vilna, 1929), IV, 142-67 (Yiddish). Also of interest is Leon Goldenthal, *Toil and Triumph: A Novel Based on the Life of Morris Rosenfeld* (New York, 1960), which is actually not a novel, but a kind of rambling biography *cum* reminiscences, by one of Rosenfeld's sons-in-law. Finally, readers may wish to consult *Morris Rosenfeld's Letters*, with an introduction and notes by E. Lipschutz (Buenos Aires, 1955); this Yiddish work includes Rosenfeld's autobiography, pp. 25-28. Rosenfeld's Yiddish poems were translated into English not only by Leo Wiener, but also by Helena Frank, Rose Pastor-Stokes, Alice Stone Blackwell, Aaron Kramer, Paul Newman, Philip Raskin, L. Trommer, and others.

² *Nation*, September 9, 1897.

Yiddish press and from the poet's own recitations at workers' meetings and in coffeehouses frequented by young immigrants. Often Rosenfeld sold printed sheets of his poetry at such readings, or set his words to popular tunes from the Yiddish theater and encouraged his audiences to sing them with him. It was inevitable that Solomon Wiener, who had lived on New York's East Side since 1882, would be present at some of Rosenfeld's recitations. The elder Wiener, a *maskil* (or "modernist" intellectual) and Hebrew scholar and, like most *maskilim*, a great admirer of German culture, spoke only German with young Leo. Like most of the intelligentsia of his day, Solomon scorned Yiddish and yet paradoxically took a great interest in Yiddish poetry and in Jewish customs, traditions, and folklore.

In 1878, four years before his emigration to the United States from Russia, Solomon Wiener had published in the German-language *St. Petersburg Zeitung* a series of articles entitled "Von der Wiege bis zum Grabe" ("From the Cradle to the Grave") — sketches of Jewish life in Lithuania and Poland. His profound attachment to Jewish life probably led to his acquaintance with Morris Rosenfeld and also inspired his son's interest in Rosenfeld's work.

Inheriting from his father an appreciation of the Yiddish language and literature, Leo Wiener contributed articles on these subjects to scholarly American, German, and Russian periodicals.³ Rosenfeld's *Lieder-Bukh* convinced him that the "tailor-poet" from the East Side deserved both a wider audience and a greater recognition than he could achieve in the circumscribed environment of the Yiddish-speaking world. To help Rosenfeld reach these goals, Leo Wiener offered to make prose translations of some of Rosenfeld's poems for a book containing these translations alongside the transliterated texts of the poems. This venture would serve to introduce Rosenfeld to the English-speaking world. Rosenfeld seized the opportunity with such vigor and devoted himself to the task with such enthusiasm that for a time his wife was forced to become the family breadwinner. The Polish-born poet was then thirty-five years old and had been writing poetry for twenty-one years. He had begun at the age

³ Jacob Shatzky, "Leo Wiener," *Yivo Bleter*, March-April, 1940, pp. 247-56 (Yiddish).

of fourteen, and his first work had appeared in Yiddish when he was twenty-four.

In addition to a long struggle for artistic recognition, Rosenfeld's life was filled with other difficulties. First married at eighteen, he had been divorced six months later. In 1882, after remarrying and becoming a father, he settled in the United States, but six months later left for Holland, where he made a brief attempt to master the trade of diamond-cutting. From there he returned to Poland, only to learn that his father had set out for London. Following him there, Rosenfeld became his apprentice, brought his own family to London, and worked as a tailor for three years until his departure for New York in 1886. This time he stayed in America.

A few months after his arrival in New York, Rosenfeld saw his work in print for the first time. His poem "The Year 1886" appeared in *Di New Yorker Yiddishe Folktsaytung* that year on December 27. The poem, a lament for the passing year, sounded more like an editorial in a radical journal than like a poem. In the eleven years after Rosenfeld's second emigration to the United States and prior to his friendship with Leo Wiener, the poet produced three small booklets: *Di Gloke*,⁴ issued in 1888 and containing twenty-eight poems; *Di Blumenkette*, which appeared in 1890 and contained seventeen poems; and, in 1893, the sixteen poems of *Poesien un Lieder*. Rosenfeld also published single copies of his poems, which he recited and sang at workers' meetings and in coffeehouses.

Before Wiener took an interest in him, Rosenfeld was a minor poet whose work had had no impact at all upon the Yiddish literary world outside the United States and only a limited effect even in America. Small wonder, then, that the prospect of being translated into English elated him. His acceptance by an English-speaking public would make possible a brighter future, particularly his deliverance from the burden of poverty and his release from the sweatshop where he earned his meager living. Impulsive by nature, a man to make rash decisions and renege on solemn promises,

⁴ Rosenfeld was so dissatisfied with this first collection of his poems that he subsequently destroyed each copy he could lay his hands on. See the autobiographical notes to Berthold Feiwel's German translation of his work: *Lieder des Ghetto* (Berlin, 1902 [?]), p. 4.

Rosenfeld nonetheless single-mindedly pursued the goal of literary acceptance in the English-speaking world.

Rosenfeld's education was meager. He had no secular schooling and even little Jewish education, although he claimed to have been a *yeshiva bokhur* (a yeshiva student) for a time. When the notice in *The Nation* appeared, Leo Wiener had already begun working on his translation of Rosenfeld's poems. The venture, of course, necessitated a constant exchange of letters between the poet and his translator. Rosenfeld wrote forty-eight letters to Wiener between July, 1897, and October, 1898, when the book containing the translated poems together with the transliterated originals finally appeared in Boston under the title *Songs from the Ghetto*.⁵ In one of his earliest letters to Wiener, Rosenfeld bemoaned the fact that Yiddish "has no future in this country, and within twenty-five years from now [September, 1897] even the best works in this language will be only literary curiosities." He lamented, "Woe to those who are unable to utter their thoughts and feelings in a living tongue."

In another letter, dated March 4, 1898, Rosenfeld confidently asserted that "in a year from now I shall write English poems."⁶ At the time, he could barely write a grammatically correct English sentence. Yet his prophecy came true, and within a year Rosenfeld wrote one of his finest English poems, "I Know Not Why":

I know not why
 I lift my eyes against the sky.
 The clouds are weeping; so am I;
 I lift my eyes again on high,
 The sun is smiling; so am I;
 Why do I smile? Why do I weep?
 I do not know; it lies too deep.

I hear the winds of autumn sigh,
 They break my heart, they make me cry;
 I hear the birds of lovely spring,
 My hopes revive, I help them sing;
 Why do I sing? Why do I cry?
 It lies so deep — I know not why.

⁵ *Rosenfeld's Letters*, pp. 34-105.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

When this poem was written, the tailor Morris Rosenfeld had already become the literary sensation of the day. Newspapers like *The Boston Transcript*, *The World*, the *New York Daily Herald*, *The Tribune*, and the *Hearst Journal* devoted much space to this East Side phenomenon. *The New York Journal* published a full page of Rosenfeld's poetry in the original Yiddish, alongside an English translation, together with sketches of Rosenfeld and his family in their "top floor flat."⁷ The poem "I Know Not Why" was immediately printed by the *New York Daily Herald*, together with the accompanying music, and later found its way into an anthology, as well as into Hutchins Hapgood's *The Spirit of the Ghetto*.⁸

The publication of *Songs from the Ghetto* received favorable notice from important literary magazines like *The Bookman*, *The Book Buyer*, *The Critic*, *The Dial*, and *Literature*, among others.⁹ William Dean Howells declared in *The Saturday Evening Post* that "Mr. Rosenfeld is always plain in his writing and through his simplicity he becomes greater and more subtle."¹⁰ It is important to remember that all these laudatory reviews were based on Wiener's prose translations — which were a far cry from the original Yiddish poems — and also that the reviewers knew no Yiddish.

Rosenfeld's admirer, Professor Edwin R. Seligman, scion of the well-known banking family, got in touch with a number of influential men in the Jewish community to set up a fund which would free Rosenfeld from the sweatshop. Some of those who responded to the professor's appeal were the Seligman brothers, Jacob H. Schiff, the Sulzbergers, Felix Adler, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and Professor Richard J. H. Gottheil. Jacob H. Schiff alone contributed six hundred dollars to the fund, and Rosenfeld was enabled, if only for

⁷ "Real Poet Found in an East Side Sweat-Shop by a Harvard Professor," *New York Journal*, March 27, 1898; *Rosenfeld's Letters*, pp. 53, 56, 59.

⁸ *New York Daily Herald*, June 11, 1899; Hutchins Hapgood, *Spirit of the Ghetto* (New York, 1909), p. 106; Edmund Clarence Stedman, ed., *American Anthology* (Cambridge, Mass., 1900).

⁹ *Bookman*, March, 1899; *Book Buyer*, February, 1899; *Critic*, March, 1900; *Dial*, June 16, 1899; *Literature*, February 10, 1899.

¹⁰ *Saturday Evening Post*, February 4, 1899.

a short time, to support himself as a candy store owner and newspaper distributor.¹¹

All the while, Rosenfeld was becoming a familiar figure in influential Jewish circles. He was invited to give readings at Temple Emanu-El in New York, at the Mikveh Israel Synagogue in Philadelphia, and at Temple Sinai in Chicago,¹² as well as in leading Jewish clubs and wealthy Jewish homes. His sponsors saw in these readings, and symbolically, in Rosenfeld himself, a spiritual antidote to the prevailing attitude of the American press and influential politicians that the East European Jewish immigration constituted an unwelcome "invasion" by "barbarians."¹³

Rosenfeld also enjoyed great popularity among non-Jewish liberals, especially those connected with the local settlement houses which had arisen to aid immigrants. Mary M. Kingsbury, who later married the convert Vladimir G. Simkhovitch, was one of the leading settlement workers in the United States and a founder of the College Settlement on New York's Lower East Side. Requesting Rosenfeld to give a reading of his poems, she assured him that "we are very eager to have you and to have at the same time some friends who would be especially interested to hear you."¹⁴ He was also invited by Jane Addams to Hull House in Chicago.¹⁵

¹¹ In a letter to Dr. Jacob Shatzky on April 29, 1931, Professor Seligman wrote: "I knew Rosenfeld and helped support him at one time. I also gave him an opportunity to read selections from his poems to a number of friends at my home with a view of interesting some of them in him. This object was, I think, accomplished" (Rosenfeld Collection, Yivo). See also *Rosenfeld's Letters*, pp. 46 (note 3), 59-60, 68, 72, 77-78.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 68. In a letter to Leo Wiener on March 29, 1898, Rosenfeld informed his translator that he had had a recital at Temple Emanu-El on March 17, and that "Mrs. Cyrus L. Sulzberger, the president of the Council of Jewish Women" had introduced him. The *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, of April 25, printed a glowing report of Rosenfeld's recital at Mikveh Israel the night before. In a letter to Adolph Kraus, of the B'nai B'rith, on April 4, 1919, Rosenfeld wrote: "I gave a reading once in Chicago in the Sinai Temple. . . . I also read my poems in Chicago University. . . . Miss Jane Addams invited me once to read at the Hull House" (Rosenfeld Collection, Yivo).

¹³ See E. Lipschutz, "The First Russian Mass-Emigration and the American Jews," *Yivo Bleter*, December, 1932, p. 312 (Yiddish); Z. Szajkowski, "The Attitude of American Jews to East European Jewish Immigration (1881-1893)," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, XL (1950-1951), 221-80.

¹⁴ Goldenthal, p. 103.

¹⁵ See note 12, *supra*.

In Rosenfeld's enthusiastic report to Leo Wiener on the evening in the College Settlement, the poet noted that among his listeners had been "Mr. William D. Howells, one of the best novelists, Professor Edwin R. Seligman of Columbia University . . . and Professor [William J.] Ashley of Harvard University."¹⁶ About a month later, Professor Seligman arranged readings under his own roof and at the home of Felix Adler.¹⁷ Rosenfeld also gave readings at Harvard University, the University of Chicago, Wellesley and Radcliffe Colleges, the Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and other institutions of higher learning.¹⁸ Liberal Gentile intellectuals like Hutchins Hapgood knew that the charges against the immigrant Jews were unfounded. Hapgood, indeed, offered the strongest objections to the anti-immigrant prejudice in his *Spirit of the Ghetto*, which appeared at the same time that Rosenfeld's star was rising in the American firmament.

Unfortunately, the tailor-poet learned soon enough that the publication of *Songs from the Ghetto* was to bring him much more publicity than money. The "plain earthly dollars" which he craved were not forthcoming, and he complained in his letters to Wiener, "What do the publishers have against me? I could tear them apart. Why don't they send me a statement? They hold me back from buying a business." Wiener, it appears, never answered. The book was never a financial success, Rosenfeld's publishers relinquished their rights, and another publisher had to be found to prepare another edition — all of which made Rosenfeld realize that his "dreams obviously got the better of him."¹⁹ He gave up thoughts of financial success and set to work again.

If Rosenfeld did not become wealthy, he did become world-famous. His poems were translated into English, German, Hungarian, Polish, Czech, Croatian, and Roumanian. Individual poems appeared in French, Russian, Hebrew, Japanese, and many other languages. Rosenfeld grew in poetic stature and was eventually recognized as one of the greatest Yiddish poets of his time, with

¹⁶ The recital took place on Saturday, February 5, 1898: *Rosenfeld's Letters*, p. 57.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59. See also note 12, *supra*.

¹⁸ *American Jewish Year Book: 1904-1905*, p. 172.

¹⁹ See the letter of June 2, 1899, in *Rosenfeld's Letters*, p. 98.

poems appearing in the most distinguished American and European Yiddish dailies and periodicals. Finally, he became a regular contributor to the *Jewish Daily Forward*, the largest of American Yiddish dailies. At last his fame brought him financial rewards as well. A now comfortable income rescued him from his top-floor tenement and from the sweatshop in which he had worked. In 1908, he made a triumphant trip to Austria and Germany, where he was warmly welcomed by Jewish youth familiar with his poems in the German translation by Berthold Feiwel.

Despite two serious setbacks, Rosenfeld managed to reach the pinnacle of his success in the first decade of the twentieth century. His only son — a fifteen-year-old boy — died in 1904, and Rosenfeld himself suffered from both eye disease and paralysis, which incapacitated him for varying periods of time. In his literally darkest days, Rosenfeld composed poems by dictating them, rather than writing them out. His European journey, taken at the advice of both doctors and friends, gave him a brighter outlook and a more buoyant spirit.

During all these years, Rosenfeld did not confine himself to the Yiddish poems which he published continually in the Yiddish daily press, in magazines, and in book form both here and abroad. Hoping one day to secure a place on the English-speaking literary scene, he wrote also English poems, but never abandoned Yiddish poetry. Yiddish, as he made clear in the English poem "I Sing and Sing," retained its centrality for him:

I sing and sing Yiddish,
My nation's exile tongue.
To my oppressed people
I dedicate my song.

Am known to Yiddish masses,
They read me and they know
I sing their bitter misery,
Their anguish and their woe.

Am well paid by the millions
By brave man and woman fair
Have their blessings and good wishes,
Am a multi-millionaire.²⁰

²⁰ From the Rosenfeld Collection, Yivo.

At about the time of America's entry into World War I, Rosenfeld first attempted to publish a volume of the English poems he had been composing for nearly twenty years. Selecting about a hundred poems which he had originally written in English or translated from Yiddish, he asked the publishing house of Charles Scribner's Sons if it would be interested in such a volume. The publishers replied on July 27, 1917, that they would "be pleased to examine the manuscript which you kindly commend to our attention and report to you concerning its availability for our purposes as soon as may be possible."²¹ Their "report" obviously turned out to be negative, because a few months later the novelist and journalist Elias Tobenkin was urged by some of Rosenfeld's friends to find another publisher for the book of English poems which Rosenfeld called *Songs of a Pilgrim*. Tobenkin communicated with the Frederick A. Stokes Company and secured its agreement to publish Rosenfeld's poems. Clearly, however, it had second thoughts after receiving its "reader's" report.

The "reader," a certain Miss Streeter, reported to the publisher that "about half of the hundred poems achieve a degree of perfection in artistic expression. The others are often so crude as to be pathetically absurd. . . . It is possible that the best poems are those which the poet composed in English and the others the result of translating his own work." Notwithstanding Miss Streeter's objections, she found that "these poems have a simplicity, a beauty and a universality, suggestive of folk poetry." In her opinion, they represented "something new in American poetry; they are wonderfully genuine and simple, and they mean something which may touch and win the public." She noted also that "the work represents a gift of the immigrant to America and one would like to accept it gratefully without hesitating for commercial reasons." Stokes, however, did hesitate "for commercial reasons" and suggested, in view of rising costs of publication, "that a book like this might better wait until the war is over."²²

Rosenfeld seems to have misunderstood the entire matter. Imagin-

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

ing that the publisher did not want to publish a small book of poems after the "reader" had rejected some of them, he declared himself ready to supplement the already selected ones with an additional seventy-six new poems. Not even one line of these poems, he was sure, would be found "objectionable."²³ But the publisher remained unconvinced.

Rosenfeld and his friends, Israel Joseph Zevin, of the *Yiddishes Tageblatt* ("Jewish Daily News"), and Elias Tobenkin, were eager to find a publisher and were even ready to "promise support"²⁴ to a willing one, but they decided to take Stokes's advice and wait for the end of the war. Rosenfeld was so certain that his poems would sooner or later be published that he had meanwhile engaged Solomon T. H. Hurwitz, editor of *The Jewish Forum*, to prepare a "Foreword." Hurwitz had it ready in June, 1919.²⁵

It was about this time that Rosenfeld addressed a letter to the president of the B'nai B'rith, Adolph Kraus. As a member of the order, he implored Kraus "to send out a personal letter with your signature to all English-speaking lodges of our famous order, recommending therein that they subscribe to my book, which I am sure will be an honor to them and a credit to all the Jews in America." If the B'nai B'rith would issue such a call to its members, Rosenfeld promised to dedicate his book which "a prominent American publishing company intends to publish . . . to our great and humanitarian order."²⁶

About the middle of 1920, the publishing house of Thomas Selzer agreed to publish an even larger edition of Rosenfeld's *Songs of a Pilgrim*, but the plan was never consummated because of Rosenfeld's pride. Selzer wanted an American poet to read and revise Rosenfeld's poems and told him so. Although Rosenfeld initially consented, he

²³ From a letter to Elias Tobenkin, January 25, 1918 (Yivo).

²⁴ The Frederick A. Stokes Company, in a letter to Elias Tobenkin of May 22, 1918, mentioned that it could not then undertake the publication of Rosenfeld's poems "even with such promise of support as is made by Mr. Zevin" (Rosenfeld Collection, Yivo).

²⁵ The prepared typewritten manuscript of *Songs of a Pilgrim* also contains the "Foreword."

²⁶ Letter to Adolph Kraus: See note 12, *supra*.

changed his mind when he discovered that the publisher had chosen the young poet Louis Untermeyer. In a letter to Selzer, Rosenfeld said angrily that "your worthy desire that I should see Untermeyer, I must refuse. We belong to two different schools of poetry. I belong to the old, classical school and he is a disciple of the new schools that are called decadents. If I should take his advice, I would have to spoil all my work."²⁷

As Tobenkin told the present writer some ten years ago, in 1958 or thereabouts, he returned to the United States in 1921, following an extended journalistic tour of Russia and Poland, to be advised by Rosenfeld that the poet had found another publisher for his English poems. A few months before his death in 1923, Rosenfeld told his friend Rose Batchelis-Shomer: "Rose, pretty soon you will see a book of English poems of mine. As a good friend of mine you will be proud of me."²⁸ The poems never appeared in print, however. After Rosenfeld's death, his widow wanted to publish some of her husband's English poems, but was persuaded to seek the advice of Israel Zangwill. According to the information that the present writer received from Kalman Marmor, literary historian, journalist, and friend of long-standing of the Rosenfeld family, Zangwill advised Mrs. Rosenfeld to abandon her plan. Rosenfeld's English poetry, Zangwill said, would not add to his stature as a poet and might even detract from it.²⁹ No further attempt was made to publish Rosenfeld's English poems. A few hundred of them, all typewritten, now form part of the Morris Rosenfeld collection in the Archives of the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research.

²⁷ Morris Rosenfeld's copy of this letter in the Yivo Collection is dated March 17, 1921.

²⁸ Rose Batchelis-Shomer, *Morris Rosenfeld as I Knew Him* (New York, 1948), p. 12 (Yiddish).

²⁹ Zangwill, it seems, either changed his mind or did not completely discount the possibility of someone's publishing Rosenfeld's English poems. In a letter to Earle H. Harris, one of Rosenfeld's sons-in-law, on January 16, 1925, he said that "it was only from some publisher in the [United] States that it might hope to find a welcome, e. g., The Bloch Publishing Company." In mentioning the name of a Jewish publishing company, Zangwill probably meant to underline his feeling that the poems would have only a limited appeal.

A Selection of Hitherto Unpublished English Poems

by Morris Rosenfeld

A LEAF OF GRASS

The pen is trembling in my fingers;
 I fear to write an English line,
 I dare not walk the paths divine,
 The starry paths of English singers.

But still, "sing on, you are not liable,
 Sing on, sing on," I hear a voice,
 "Select sweet English as your choice,
 Make Shakespeare your poetic Bible."

My courage grew, my heart is stronger,
 I sing in English without fear,
 Its muse is good to me and dear.
 My soul is new, my feelings younger.

I care not if the critic lingers,
 To fix my place; I wish to pass
 Not more than a humble leaf of grass
 In the garden of the English singers.

WE ARE PLAYING

We see the children play.
 We do the same each day.
 We jump, we run, we race,
 We make a noise, we chase.
 We hurt each other too.
 We hate, we love, we woo.
 We come back home from play
 Without a word to say.

A SONG OF SPRING

I slaved in dreary sweat-shops long,
 For bad and selfish men,
 I sold my health but not my song,
 Yea, freedom had my pen.

When broken home I came at night
 The muse comforted me,
 She gave me hope, she gave me light,
 My heart, my soul was free.

My song was love but never hate,
 Of sunshine did I sing.
 Yea, cold and bitter was my fate,
 But still I sang of spring.

IN THE FIELD

When in the fields I walk
 I hear the brooklets talk.
 I know not what they say,
 But I presume they pray,
 My soul starts God to woo,
 I kneel down and pray too.

THE PILGRIM

I am a Pilgrim. To the holy shrine
 Of the English literature's my way.
 My heart, my soul and all the feelings mine
 Are yearning there to come and sing and pray.

I wish my trembling knee there to bend down,
 Where Milton knelt during his life-long night,
 I wish to put one more gem in the crown
 That's glittering in perpetual light.

TWO TREES

Said the willow tree with great pride,
To an apple tree close by its side:
"Disfigured creature, gaze at me.
Lo! behold my graceful symmetry.
You are bent and twisted and small,
But I am strong and straight and tall."

Said the apple tree, "I will not dispute,
But let me remind you that I bear fruit."

PERFECTION

I always bear in mind
That there is hard to find
Perfection on this globe.
We each one try to robe
Our faults. We should appear
Most honest and sincere.
I have my simple word:
Most perfect is the Lord.

NOT LASTING

Each river has its waves,
Each settlement its graves,
Each mortal has his sigh,
Each greeting its "good-bye,"
The brightest day its night,
It is not always light
'Tcomes and goes, comes and goes
But constant are our woes.

SLUMS

I walk through the lost and forlorn slums,
The places which are living graves,
The homes of the modern slaves,
Where misery marches and scoffs and drums,
Where life is in a dismal mood,
Where children are crying for food,
Where mothers are pale and fathers are weak,
Where a smile is stranger and babies are sick,
Where days are as terrible as death,
And hope lies a corpse without breath.
I look at that and up to Him,
God! is this but a hellish dream?

BREAD

Cause of all toil and struggle and haste
That makes us blast the hills and cope with waste,
That sends man in the mines, in the sea to dive,
In the arms of death for a living to drive,
That unites people and wakes their human rights
And organizes all their bitter fights.
Bread, that grows here and there over the main,
And is still so hard to obtain.

THE POET'S DREAM

I once saw the Lord in my dream,
Consuming flame was His face,
The angels flew trembling 'round Him,
The heaven was full of His grace.

The moon to His left; to His right
The sun in an ocean of fire,

He sat on a throne full of light,
And at His feet lay love's empire.

The season, I think, was Spring,
With sweet music the air was drunk.
I hushed, for I dared not sing,
My soul in itself was sunk.

"Thy wish," said a voice, "don't think long."
I felt deep in my heart a stroke.
And not thinking long I said: "song,"
And singing a song I awoke.

MY SURPRISE

I once had a great surprise.
I saw all the dead arise.
The old and the young got up
In their shrouds. I stood on top
Of a mast on a large ship
Prepared for a distant trip.

They rose in the air on high
And to the waves with a cry
They called: "How long will you roar?
We'll never close the great door
That lets you out with your might
In wild turbulence day and night.

"We were waves like you. We rushed,
But at last we were all hushed.
We left the sea and we sleep.
The water as ever is deep.
We gave up our tumultuous race
And other waves took our place.

"Are you, pray, always the same
That play this rough, noisy game,

SONGS FROM THE GHETTO

MORRIS ROSENFELD

With Prose Translation, Glossary, and Introduction,
By LEO WIENER, Instructor in the Slavic
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Songs from the Ghetto
More publicity than money

Or are you the heir of those
 That once foamed, roared, rose,
 And you still jump up on high,
 As to swallow up the sky?"
 Here I must finish my tale
 For my ship begins to sail.

SATISFIED

Baby carriages with babies in street,
 Where sunshine and mild smiles together meet.
 The sun is shining with joy from above,
 The babies smile to the light with love.
 And God looks down on earth from His high seat
 And blesses His work and murmurs, "How sweet!"

With deep regret we report the death of

JESSE SHWAYDER

of Denver, Colorado, on July 24, 1970.

Mr. Shwayder, said the *Rocky Mount News* of July 25, 1970, was a "deeply religious man" and "necessarily a humanitarian. . . . He did much unto others, ever mentioning to friends and acquaintances that his philanthropy was repayment of a debt he owed his Maker and his fellow men for the joy and the satisfaction that his life had been from birth . . ."