IN GEVEB A JOURNAL OF YIDDISH STUDIES

The Hideaway

by **Avrom Nokhem Stencl,** translation by Jake Schneider

In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies (November 2024)

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The Hideaway

Avrom Nokhem Stencl
translated by Jake Schneider

Introduction: Avrom Nokhem Stencl was born in 1897 to a family of rabbis in the town of Czeladź, in what is now Poland. After a studious adolescence at yeshiva, he embraced a secular life and took an interest in agriculture. In 1919, he fled military conscription, first to the rural Netherlands, and then, in 1921, to Berlin, where he set out to become a poet.[1]

During his fifteen years in the city, Stencl published an astounding nineteen books[2] in Yiddish (mostly of poetry). He became well-connected in the vibrant Yiddish literary scene at that time, but his poverty and adventurous nature led him all over the metropolis, to soup kitchens, homeless shelters, prayer rooms, graveyards, squats, a student union, an art school, even Moabit prison (he lacked residency papers) and outward to the countryside for more farm work. Thus began a long adulthood as an insider-outsider.

In 1936, Stencl escaped Nazi Germany and settled in London's East End, where he soon became a fixture in the local Yiddish cultural scene, hosting a salon every Saturday afternoon[3] and publishing the journal *Loshn un Lebn* for more than four decades, hawking it from his own coat pockets at Jewish gatherings.[4] Just as he was the last Yiddish poet to leave the German capital, he clung loyally to the Yiddish enclave of Whitechapel (his "Jerusalem of Britain") long after most of its Jews had migrated to

[1] *Pinkhes Zaglembie*, ed. J. Rapaport, (Melbourne/Tel Aviv: Hamenora for the Zaglembie Society, 1972), 256.
[2] According to Arndt Beck's unpublished bibliography.
[3] These "literary Saturday afternoons," hosted by the Friends of Yiddish in various venues, lasted more than seven decades until 2011.
[4] All issues of *Loshn un Lebn* have now been digitized and are now available online via SOAS at the University of London. Many of Stencl's papers have also been digitized, available at the SOAS Digital Collections under the keyword "Stencl."

northern boroughs and assimilated to Anglophone culture. He died there penniless in 1983, surrounded by Yiddish books and manuscripts.

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For a hundred years, A.N. Stencl has been hiding in plain sight: admired and promoted by a few loyal readers, friends, and scholars, but overlooked or dismissed outright by most of literary Yiddishland.[5]

While in Berlin, Stencl had no shortage of older, established friends in the Yiddish literary world. Notably, the literary critic Bal-Makhshoves took him under his wing and arranged his first poetic publications. But for all his celebrated acquaintances among the literati at the Romanisches Café and the Sholem Aleichem Club—writers such as Dovid Bergelson, Moyshe Kulbak, Sholem Asch, and Hayim Nahman Bialik—Stencl remained a minor character in that elite, outrageously male scene.[6] These connections did not lift his work into the limelight.

Unlike most in that circle, Stencl forged literary connections with both women and German speakers. The poet Else Lasker-Schüler discovered him from across the café, and the two embarked on a fertile literary friendship.[7] His non-Jewish German teacher and romantic partner, Elisabeth Wöhler, learned Yiddish, became one of his translators, and initiated him into the German literary world, paving the way to his further discovery by Thomas Mann and Arnold Zweig.[8] So it was that his landmark poetry collection *Fisherdorf* (Fishing Village) appeared in translation before the Yiddish original.[9]

[5] For one analysis of Stencl's absence from the canon, see Jeffrey Grossman/Yeyde-Hesh Groysman, "Farvos ignorirn di literatur-historiker A.N. Shtentslen?" [Why do Literary Historians Ignore A.N. Stencl?], *Oksforder Yidish* 1, (1990): 91–105. One basic reason Grossman raises (92) is that London lay outside any of the geographical categories under which Yiddish writers were grouped, as in Charles Madison's 1972 survey *Yiddish Literature: Its Scope and Major Writers*. Stencl literally lived off the map. However, there are indications that the Yiddish literary establishment was aware of ignoring his prolific output. In 1952, Yankev Glatshteyn acknowledged that "Given that Stencl is very rarely mentioned, enumerated, or counted on the occasions when our paltry possessions [in Yiddish literature] are tallied up, it must be added that such an abundance of poems is an immense act of resistence, and it takes a great deal of energy to march ahead with so many poems—in the face of so much silence." The quote can be found in Glatshteyn's essay, "A yidisher dikhter in London," in his *In tokh genumen: Eseyen 1949–1959* (Buenos Aires: Kiem, 1960), 267.

[6] His memoirs also feature Daniel Charney, Shmuel Lewin, Hersh Dovid Nomberg, Avrom Reyzen, Nokhem Shtif, Elias Tsherikover, Rachel Wischnitzer, and numerous others. The almost total male domination of that scene is worth reiterating. Besides Wischnitzer, the other woman writer from the scene who is often mentioned is Rosa Gutman, but she does not even have a cameo in the memoirs. Daniel Charney also lists Golde Patz, who wrote Yiddish stories based on Homer's epics, and a poet named Sore Reznik. Daniel Charney. "Dos yidishe berlin (abisl informatsye)," *Literarishe Bleter*, 13 May 1932, pp. 312–13. I have only encountered poems by Reznik on p. 318 of that issue and in *Berliner Bleter* issue 2, 1932, and would welcome more leads about her.

[7] Heather Valencia, *Else Lasker-Schüler und Abraham Nochem Stenzel. Eine unbekannte Freundschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1995).

[8] Ibid., pp. 10–11.

[9] Stencl's surname was spelled Stenzel in German contexts, and his first name often rendered as Abraham. His middle name has been romanized in all sorts of ways. Translations of his work include: *Mein Fischerdorf*, trans. Etta

Yet Stencl's nascent career in German translation was cut short by the Nazis' rise to power, and he did not achieve similar crossover successes in English. Postwar London was not the same hub of global Yiddish literature that Weimar Berlin had been; besides, his peers across the Atlantic and Mediterranean were less generous readers of his expansive body of work. Yankev Glatshteyn was especially unkind: "A.N. Stencl writes quite a lot, and even if he is not a great picker-and-chooser, in all his abundance there is indeed something worth selecting."[10]

At the end of his life, Stencl found an audience in Dovid Katz, a then up-and-coming Yiddish linguist sixty years his junior, who would soon co-rescue the late poet's papers from his cluttered council flat, archive them at SOAS, and initiate a lecture series at Oxford in his memory.[11]

The decades since Stencl's death have been punctuated by efforts to "reawaken interest in this too little valued poet."[12] In 1995, the scholar Heather Valencia published a monograph about Stencl's friendship with Lasker-Schüler, drawing heavily on his memoirs.[13] She remains the foremost authority on his Berlin period.[14] In the 2000s, *The Mendele Review* published several articles written for a memorial volume that never appeared.[15] He has also been featured in the historian Vivi Lachs's books on Yiddish London.[16] The only published collection of Stencl's poetry in English so far, translated by

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Federn-Kohlhaas (Berlin: Kartell lyrischer Autoren, 1931); *Fischerdorf*, trans. Abraham Suhl, (Berlin: Kartell lyrischer Autoren, 1931); *Ring des Saturn*, trans. Elisabeth Wöhler (Berlin: Rabenspresse, 1932).

[10] See Glatshteyn in note 5 above.

[11] Katz has published an extensive bibliography of materials related to Stencl and his work on his website, *Defending History*. The first lecture in the series, by S. S. Prawer, is available online here.

[12] Leonard Prager, *The Mendele Review* 7 (3), section 1, 30 Mar 2003.

[13] Heather Valencia, *Eine unbekannte Freundschaft.* See note 7. The memoirs are quoted and excerpted in German translation, pp. 84–115.

[14] See her essay "A Yiddish Poet Engages with German Society: A. N. Stencl's Berlin Period" in *Yiddish in Weimar Berlin*: *At the Crossroads of Diaspora Politics and Culture*, ed. Gennady Estraikh and Mikhail Krutikov (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2010), 54–72.

[15] The full quotation by Leonard Prager z"l, already quoted in part: "Yiddish studies are rife with unrealized or partially completed projects. The plan to publish a volume on the Whitechapel poet Avrom-Nokhem Shtentsl [Abraham Nahum Stencl] (1897-1983), for which I undertook chief responsiblity, has for legitimate and less legitimate reasons been blocked for many years. The present issue … is a concerted step to reawaken interest in this too little valued poet and to revive the idea of publishing *Stencl and His Circle* [tentative title] within the next year." Square brackets in original. *The Mendele Review* 7 (3), section 1, 30 Mar 2003. After that issue, with a biographical essay by Dovid Katz, Stencl was also the focus of issue 7 (4) from April 2003 and issue 11 (9) from August 2007, with essays by Heather Valencia and Avraham Greenbaum.

[16] Lachs gives an overview of London's Yiddish literary scene and Stencl's role in it in her introduction, "The Literary Landscape of London's Yiddishtown and the Fight for the Survival of Yiddish, 1930–50," in *London Yiddishtown: East End Jewish Life in Yiddish Sketch and Story*, *1930–1950*, trans. Vivi Lachs (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2021), 171–212. She and Barry Smerin will be releasing new translations of prose by Stencl as part of a forthcoming anthology.

Beruriah Wiegand and Stephen Watts, was released in 2007.[17] These efforts have been crucial contributions toward documenting, preserving, and interpreting Stencl's legacy.

In addition to the work above, extensive scholarship on Stencl has been carried out by writer and artist Rachel Lichtenstein, who has led a cluster of ambitious multidisciplinary Stencl projects, both personal and institutional, across several countries. Lichtenstein's projects have included a radio documentary, a short film, an online "memory map," an international digital archive, and her next book of narrative nonfiction; her past and present projects are further detailed in the sister post to this one.

It was Lichtenstein who first alerted Berlin's contemporary Yiddish community—including myself—to our own long-lost local poet, by approaching Yiddish.Berlin to host her visiting pop-up exhibition on Stencl last April. In the short time since, Berlin Yiddishists have been reading Stencl's work together every Sunday,[18] and have translated poems into German, English, Hebrew, and Polish. Some of these have already appeared in an impromptu zine and several online publications.[19] My translation of the memoirs excerpted here is currently underway, while Horst Bernhardt works on the German translation in parallel; Lena Watson has also been translating parts of Stencl's childhood memoirs of Poland.

Soon Stencl scholars and translators from both Berlin and the UK will be gathering at the Manchester Poetry Library in November for a week of discussion and collaboration. A new "Stencl Studies" is emerging.

* * *

Stencl's memoirs of his formative years in Weimar Berlin, which he serialized in the pages of *Loshn un Lebn*,[20] make gripping reading. They are gritty and rambunctious but also contemplative and lyrical (he was, after all, a poet). As you will see in the excerpt below, he brings his yeshiva education to unlikely surroundings—in this case, a dive bar frequented by working-class Berliners, including sex workers of multiple genders—with startling results, such as his rhapsody to pea soup.

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[17] Abraham Nokum Stencl, *All My Young Years*, trans. Beruriah Wiegand and Stephen Watts (Nottingham, UK: Five Leaves), 2007. A second volume is in preparation.

[18] This Yiddish reading group is coordinated by artist and Yiddish.Berlin co-founder Arndt Beck, who has also researched Stencl's publications from his Berlin period and offered input on an early version of this introduction.

[19] Zine: A.N. Stencl, *Geklibene lider/Selected Poems,* ed. Jake Schneider, trans. Arndt Beck, Horst Bernhardt, Guli Dolev-Hashiloni, Jordan Lee Schnee, and Jake Schneider (Berlin: Yiddish.Berlin, 2023). Schnee has since published several English translations at the *Loch Raven Review* and Dolev-Hashiloni has published Hebrew translations at *Iberzets*. The others remain unpublished and/or works in progress.

[20] The installments can be found in every successive issue from January 1967 (no. 421) to June 1975 (no. 435–3), all digitized and accessible at the link in note 4.

Apart from these texts' literary merits and the joy they are to read, they also constitute a unique historical document. In my wide reading on Berlin's Yiddish history, I have yet to come across any other book-length work of nonfiction that portrays the heady heyday of Yiddish literature in Berlin.[21] In his own words:

> From those fleeing the pogroms in the Ukrainian shtetls, from the famine in the Russian cities, and from the Revolution, a kind of Jewish colony formed itself in the west of Berlin, and the Romanische[s] Café was its parliament. It was buzzing with famous Jewish intellectuals and activists, well known Jewish lawyers from Moscow and Petersburg, Yiddish writers from Kiev and Odessa, with flying party-leaders from the extreme left to the extreme right wing—it buzzed like a beehive.[22]

Yet Stencl was never entirely at home in these circles. He was an insider-outsider, a border crosser, a perpetual observer. Although he frequented the well-heeled west, he continued living in dingier districts such as the Scheunenviertel, Berlin's other Yiddish enclave, where most of this excerpt takes place. Crossing the city on foot, he was the people's flâneur: a poet among wagon drivers and a laborer among poets.

In his memoirs, Stencl often recreates places and experiences by channeling the poems he wrote about them. In June, as a group of Stencl devotees retraced his steps in both London and Berlin,[23] his prose put the poetry back into his beloved streets: "The whole world was such a glorious gallery, every decorated storefront like a hung-up picture—I looked at each person with wide-open eyes; I couldn't look enough!"[24]

This translation was supported by a grant from the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion.

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[21] Written forty years later in often impossible detail, these memoirs doubtless benefited from authorial embellishment. Nonfiction is a relative term. There are many postwar memoirs in various languages describing interwar Jewish, and even Yiddish-speaking, Berlin, but none to my knowledge describe this insular Yiddish literary scene in depth. One autobiographical essay that touches on the scene from a child's perspective is Lev Bergelson, "Memories of My Father: The Early Years (1918–1934)," in *David Bergelson: From Modernism to Socialist Realism*, ed. Joseph Sherman and Gennady Estraikh, (London: Routledge, 2007). For another contemporary description, see Daniel Charney, "Dos yidishe berlin (abisl informatsye)," *Literarishe Bleter*, 13 May 1932, pp. 312-313.

[22] *Loshn un Lebn*, October/November 1968, 24. As translated by Heather Valencia, *Mendele Review* 7 (4), April 2003, n.p. See also chapter 4 of Shachar M. Pinsker, *A Rich Brew: How Cafés Created Modern Jewish Culture*, (New York: NYU Press, 2018).

[23] The results of this project will be published as an interactive "memory map" website including documentary and archival images, audio recordings from the walk, and translated quotes from Stencl's writings associated with each place we visited. The project was initiated by Rachel Lichtenstein. Vivi Lachs researched and led the walk in London and I did the same in Berlin.

[24] From the excerpt below. *Loshn un Lebn*, January 1968, p. 21. Translated by Jake Schneider.

The Hideaway

If you go to a Jewish canteen on Schönhauser Strasse or a café around Hackescher Markt, you are always taking a risk—of a raid for forged ration coupons, dollar bills, émigrés with no papers… The police take their places by the exits; and there's a police van, a Black Maria, idling in a nearby alley.

But here at the Hideaway there's no risk at all. If a cop walked in and started asking questions—what would he ask for, a passport? These are all *doytshn*, born-and-bred Berliners. There's nobody here dealing in "noodles"—that is, dollars—and if you order pea soup with a fatty pig bone, or a nice kosher pig's foot with a side of sauerkraut, you won't need any coupons…

This is where "night owls"[25] meet between one job and the next. This is where people come to warm up from playing the lookout after midnight. This is where a "warm brother"[26] kills time before "she" goes outside to service a "customer" in some dark corner.

And if a patrolman ever does drop in, the regulars—coachmen, wagon drivers, night workers—will give him enough grief that he'll never come back…

Yes, undercover officers do show up here with photographs in their pockets trying to spot a famous safecracker… They may come in with bloodhounds to sniff out a murderer… And yes, the owners will call the police, they'll telephone headquarters over on Alexanderplatz, saying to hurry over *sofort* after a stabbing if there's already a dead man on the floor…

But no, foreigners without passports don't frequent this place, there aren't any Jewish "smooth-talkers" around with noodles and coupons. It's a place for born-and-bred Berliners. For *doytshn*.

Here at the Hideaway, I sit without fear, safe and sound, enveloped in a heavenly pillar[27] of cheap tobacco smoke blended with the water vapor from big tin bowls of piping-hot

[25] In German, *Nachtvogel* ("night bird") was a slang term for a sex worker, typically a woman, who worked at night. For more on the history of sex work in Berlin, see the catalogue of the exhibition *With Legs Wide Open*, Schwules Museum Berlin, 2024, which was curated by a collective of sex workers.

[26] This sex worker's sexuality and gender identity/presentation are ambiguous in the text. The original text uses the German slang term *warmer Bruder*, literally "warm brother," generally applied to "men who loved other men," as defined in Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Vintage, 2014), xi. The use of "she" pronouns, however, suggests a possible transfeminine reading in today's terms. This passing portrayal of queerness in the memoir is blurred by both Stencl's own heterosexuality (by all accounts), and by the fact that this text was published 47 years after it took place, making it difficult to contextualize reliably.

[27] A reference to the "pillar of cloud" that, according to the Torah, guided the Israelites through the desert after the Exodus.

pea soup. And when I see that steaming soup and a red-steamed head bent over the full bowl, and a big, tin spoon hanging off it by a little welded-on chain, and when I see how it darts in and out with a frenzy, and how the wide-open mouth seizes it with such gulps of delight, that "mess of pottage"[28] finally makes sense, and the question of why Esau would sell his birthright for a dish of peas is answered at last…

Here, amidst the sharp odor of beer and the sour fragrance of pea soup, enveloped in and savoring the exotic greasy mist on my lips, with bitter smoke from pipes and cigars scratching my throat, I sit at my end of the table in the deepest depths, withdrawn inside myself as if in a private chamber, and get down to my labors—

My new life is all around me: the dense atmosphere at my fingertips, the gruff hedonistic voices drifting over from the bar where beer is being dispensed out of kegs into tankards, and women who keep arriving at my table with low necklines and a look in their eyes like sad beaten dogs—unbeknownst to them, they have all become images and echoes in my poetry—

The lower you sink, the deeper you get with God; you get on your knees with the most downtrodden and say your prayers… The people have grown dear to me in their forsakenness. This is, I suppose, *Unmittelbarkeit*[29] itself:

> Send me, mother, your little Yiddish prayer,
> Your little tear-drenched Yiddish prayer,
> Send it to me and don't tell father.

When I was leaving Berlin fifteen years later, in 1936, I chose the poem that opens with that verse for the last of my books to be printed in Germany,[30] as the introduction to my cycles of poems about the Baal Shem Tov, Rabbi Nachman, and "good Jews." That poem was written that winter at "my" end of the table in that noisy late-night pub.

The place also took good care of my finances: by then, I was known to be a trusty hand whenever an odd job needed doing, and besides I was already buddies with all the wagon drivers and vegetable haulers who used to come in before the first glimmer of dawn. They'd stop by the night pub to warm themselves up with a fiery drink and a hot pea soup, and would take to shouting at each other in the smoky, steamy mist—

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[28] Genesis 25:29–34. Usually translated as "lentil stew," rather than peas.

[29] This German philosophical term, literally "unmediated-ness" or perhaps "immediacy," appears more than a dozen times in the memoirs and seems to play a central role in Stencl's poetic philosophy. He often invokes it during "authentic," typically very gritty, firsthand experiences that precede a poetic impulse. In the later chapter "Arop fun yarid" (Down from the Fair), a passage about trying to fall asleep in an attic full of snoring squatters leads to this provisional definition: "What does *Unmittelbarkeit* actually mean? Growing accustomed to things; being one with them, bound together, ecstatic with prayer, pacified like a baby [*farzeygt*]; dancing with them in an ecstatic, mystical communion [*dveykes-tants*]." *Loshn un Lebn* 437–38, p. 21.

[30] A.N. Stencl, *Fun der heym* (Berlin: self-published, 1936). The poem appears on the first page.

That was a few weeks after the Jewish Labor Bureau had found me a job at the iron warehouse. Learning the work was tough, but within a few days I had it down pat, and every “hup, hup” of hoisting or unloading went smooth as a psalm. This would all have been fine and good except that we got paid on Fridays and the money barely lasted till Monday—because last week’s fifty marks were now worth fifty pfennigs.

The German workers had inflation figured out. As soon as a husband brought home his pay, the German housewife would spend all the money on shopping for the whole week. By Tuesday, all the measly banknotes left in my wallet weren’t enough to buy lunch.

I already had my little room and, most importantly, an address. On Friday, when I got my wages, I would immediately pay the rent for the whole week. And in those last days, when I couldn’t afford a proper lunch, I did indeed sustain myself on the pea soup at the Hideaway. But I wasn’t actually drawn there by the soup, nor by the atmosphere, which I had adjusted to and come to love. I was driven there by the bugs in my bed and by the whole raucous alley with its “rooms by the hour”—so in my free time and my sleepless nights, I found my refuge at the Hideaway.

Once, before sunrise, there was a fight over one of those empty pea-soup bowls—with the chained-on tin spoon—which had wandered over to a different table, and someone had redeemed it at the bar for the half-mark deposit, prompting some shady night owl to sock a wagon driver in the side before he could deliver his hefty haul of vegetables. No big deal: he could still make it to the market on time, but could he unload all the potato sacks and big bundles of carrots?

After the fight, the pub was half-empty. The night owls and shady characters had made themselves scarce—as if the ground had swallowed them.

Along with the owner, the few remaining wagon drivers were standing around me with their whip handles tucked under their arms. Come what may, they persisted: I would have to accompany that bruised man to the market. There is no harm in skipping work now and then to lend someone a hand. I would find an excuse.

We drank to that, downing one and then another, feasted with all our hearts and souls, and I climbed onto the wagon.

Smelling the field—potatoes still shaggy with dirt, bunches of red carrots with wind-tousled green tops, the tang of kohlrabi in my nose—brought me back to life: a whole village worth of fields was up there on the wagon with me; the city was gone. Whenever the wheels lurched on the cobblestones, my heart danced along. And as we pulled into the immense market hall[31]—colorful flowers, vegetables, commotion—I plunged even deeper into the frenzy of labor.

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[31] Geographically, this market was likely the Ackerhalle, built in 1888 and located at Ackerstrasse 23–26. The cavernous Neo-Renaissance-style building is still standing and has been converted to a supermarket.

Within an hour, I had finished off the job: after the tough work of hoisting heavy iron rods and rails with a "hup, hup," those sacks of potatoes were child's play. One sack would settle itself comfortably onto my back, and I'd walk off with it as if escorting it to the dance floor.

After all his groaning, the driver was delighted! He patted me on the shoulder and took me to the market pub where we drank one after another with some snacks on the side. And he paid me so well it would tide me over a full day and then some.

There was still time for me to report to my job, but with four drinks in my head and the ruckus of the market at daybreak, with a thousand aromas catching my nose, I set off strolling with my hands in my pockets, cheerfully tipsy, a free man. When I reached the Kaiser Friedrich Museum,[32] I walked straight in, and strolling from room to room, I witnessed peoples and countries in their loveliest hues before my wide-open eyes; I wasn't giving it much thought, nor did I know very much, but with each painting my head grew freer and freer. And soon enough a familiar one came into view, a Rembrandt.[33] How strikingly she stood there, hung up for all time with her affectionate arms, with that velvety string plunging from around her shapely neck into her bosom, which seemed straight out of Song of Songs: two breasts like two fawns![34] I couldn't tear myself away from that picture. Together with Stoffels,[35] all of Holland was right there before my eyes[36]: it was six in the morning, I was sitting under a cow, Suzanne, milking her; I could feel the warmth in my fingers; man and beast you deliver, O Lord.[37]

By the time I left the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, it was already afternoon. I popped into Aschinger's[38] for a snack then set off strolling from there. The whole world was such a glorious gallery, every decorated storefront like a hung-up picture—I looked at each person with wide-open eyes; I couldn't look enough!

I turned off Friedrichstrasse onto Oranienburger Strasse, and from there my feet would probably have walked on their own to Lewin's[39] place on Auguststrasse or maybe even sooner to the Bronsteins'.[40] But I felt a little twinge in my heart: "Gusta"![41] I crossed the

[32] Now the Bode Museum.
[33] Almost certainly *Young Woman at the Open Top Door* (c. 1656/1657), still in Berlin but now at the Gemäldegalerie.
[34] A Hebrew quote from Song of Songs 4:5.
[35] Hendrickje Stoffels, Rembrandt's longtime partner, who posed for the painting.
[36] Stencl lived in the Netherlands and did farm work there for a while before moving to Germany.
[37] Psalms 36:7.
[38] A popular chain of large beer halls, cafés, and eateries catering to working-class Berliners, which is also referenced in Alfred Döblin's classic *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. Stencl probably means the branch at Friedrichstrasse 97.
[39] Shmuel (Samuel) Lewin (1890–1959) was another Berlin Yiddish writer. A street was recently named after him in the Karlshorst neighborhood.
[40] The brothers Mordkhe/Max and Shaye Bronstein, who lived on Auguststrasse. Mordkhe (1896-1992) studied at the Bauhaus and went on to become a distinguished painter under the name Mordecai Ardon.
[41] A romantic interest described earlier in the memoir, whom Stencl met at the Bronsteins's (see previous note).

street and kept walking. I stopped outside the big Oranienburger Synagogue and saw that one floor up there was a reading room where you could read books in German, Hebrew, and Yiddish.[42] Up I went!

There were tall shelves of both religious and worldly books lining all four walls. Open doors led to more rooms filled with books. Jewish men wearing brimmed hats, yarmulkes, or nothing at all on their heads were sitting at little tables, reading, flipping pages. Near a fence-like partition sat a librarian beside a stack of presumably returned books. Among them I spotted a new Yiddish release, the book Shneour[43] had raved about: *In Polish Woods* by Joseph Opatoshu. I requested it, found a seat at a table, launched straight into reading it, and instantly I was at home, oblivious to anyone around me, turning one page and then another. This must have gone on for hours as I made my way deeper and deeper in, as though into a deep, dense forest. A tap on the shoulder roused me with a start. But I could tell it was a friendly tap, not an ambush in the middle of the woods. When I turned around, the librarian, who had looked grumpy handing me the novel in "jargon,"[44] was smiling behind me: "It just struck me standing here that this 'jargon' book is a sacred text for you… Watching you so intensely absorbed in it, I finally grasped the meaning of the proverb 'A person who buys books and lends them to others is a person who is charitable at all times'[45]… You see, everyone has left now; the library is closing. But we're open all day and if you provide your address, you can take books home."

"I have an address!" I realized with joy. I tucked the book under my arm, ready to take it home and told him my address quickly, anxious not to waste his time: "Mulackstrasse 21."

"Young man," he chuckled. "It isn't so simple. That requires a signature from the Chief Librarian, Herr Stern, and if you ask him, Mulackstrasse doesn't quite count as an address and a jargon *leyener*," he said, using the Yiddish word, "is not quite a *reader*"… He cracked another smile and looked at me fondly with a pair of familiar eyes, the eyes of a star Talmud student: "I like you, young man. I've got no right to take the book away from you… You know what? I'll check it out under my own name and lend it to you." He laughed with relish. "If Stern caught wind of this, I'd lose my post… In fact, I'd quite like to chat with you. What's your name, where do you come from, and what does a person like you do? … I take it you're not studying at seminary or university. But anyhow, I don't want to pull you out of your trance. Go off to your Mulackstrasse 21 and carry on reading, then report back tomorrow after ten and I'll attend to all the formalities… When Stern comes across an *Ostjude*, he can be a scoundrel"…

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[42] This was presumably the Jüdische Lesehalle (Jewish Reading Room), established in 1894.

[43] The Yiddish and Hebrew writer Zalman Shneour (1887–1959), who also lived in Berlin at the time.

[44] A derisive designation for Yiddish that casts doubt on its status as a language.

[45] The original Hebrew seems to be a reference to a discussion from Talmud Ketubot 50a about copying and lending sacred books as a form of charity, as expanded upon in Yechiel Michel Epstein's 1884 compendium of halakha, *Arukh Hashulchan, Yoreh De'ah,* section 249.

I didn't go back to my little room on Mulackstrasse. I headed straight to the Hideaway and sat down at my end of the table in the deepest depths, enveloped in the heavenly pillar of smoke, and read and read without stopping.

In the morning, I skipped work again. I still had enough money left from my hour's work the previous day for a pea soup and some "bread of affliction" slathered with margarine, and after handing back the bowl and spoon for the deposit, I could even afford a tankard of beer...

די מאַלינע

אין אַ ייִדיש רעסטאָראַנדל אויף דער שענהויזער־שטראַסע, אין קאַפֿע אויפֿן האַגישן מאַרק איז תּמיד דאָ די געפֿאַר – אָבלאַווע: געפֿעלשטע קופּאָנען, דאָלאַרן, עמיגראַנטן אָן פּעסער... פּאָליציאַנטן שטייען בײַ די אַרויסגאַנג־טירן; און דרויסן אין אַ הינטערגעסל וואַרט שוין די „שוואַרצע מערי" – דער פּאָליציי־וואָגן.

דאָ אין דער מאַלינע איז די געפֿאַר נישטאָ. זאָל דאָ אַרײַנקומען אַ „שופּאָ" און פֿרעגן – אויף וואָס זאָל ער פֿרעגן, אויף אַ פּאַס? דאָ זענען אַלע דויטשן, „וואַשעכטע" בערלינער. דאָ האַנדלט מען אויך נישט מיט „לאָקשן" און אויף אַן אַרבעסזופּ מיט אַ פֿעטן חזיר־ביין, אויף אַ כּשר חזיר־פֿיסל מיט זויערקרויט באַדאַרף מען נישט קיין קופּאָנען...

דאָ טרעפֿן זיך „נאַכטפֿייגל" צווישן איין שטיקל אַרבעט און אַ צווייטן. דאָ דערוואַרעמט מען זיך נאָכן שטיין שמירה נאָך האַלבער נאַכט. דאָ וואַרט אָפּ אַ וואַרעמער „ברודער" ביז „זי" פֿאַרטיקט זיך אָפּ מיט אַ „גאַסט" דרויסן אין אַ פֿינצטער ווינקל.

און די שטאַמגעסט, די קוטשערס און די פֿורמאַנעס, די נאַכט־אַרבעטער, זאָל זיך נאָר דאָ באַווײַזן אַ „שופּאָ", וועלן זיי שוין אים נעמען אויף דער האָצקע, אַז ער וועט אַ צענטן פֿאַרזאָגן...

יאָ, דאָ קומען אַרײַן געהיים־אַגענטן מיט פֿאָטאָגראַפֿיעס אין טאַש צו דערקענען אַ באַוווּסטן קאַסע־ברעכער... דאָ קומט מען אַרײַן מיט פּאָליציי־שפּירהינט צו דערשמעקן אַ רוצח... יאָ, דאָ רופֿט מען אָן די פּאָליציי, דאָ טעלעפֿאָנירט מען צום הויפּטאַמט אויף אַלעקסאַנדער־פּלאַץ, אַז פּאָליציי זאָל „זאָפֿאָרט" קומען ווען נאָך אַ מעסער־געשלעג עס ליגט שוין אַ טויטער אויף דער פּאָדלאָגע...

יאָ, דאָ קומען נישט אַרײַן קיין אויסלענדער אָן פּעסער, קיין ייִדישער „שאַכער־מאַכער" מיט לאָקשן און קופּאָנען, דאָ קומען אַרײַן „וואַשעכטע בערלינער" – דויטשן.

דאָ, אין דער מאַלינע, זיץ איך מיר אָן שרעק, אַ געזיכערטער, אײַנגעהילט אין אַן עמוד־הענן פֿון ביליקן טאַבאַקרויך און אין פּאַרע פֿון קאָכעדיקע אַרבעסזופּן, וואָס גייען פֿון גרויסע, בלעכענע שיסלען – אַז מ'זעט אַזאַ דאַמפּנדיקע אַרבעסזופּ און דעם רויט־צעפּאַרעטן קאָפּ געבויגן איבער דער פֿולער שיסל, און דעם גרויסן, בלעכענעם לעפֿל, וואָס הענגט אויף אַ קייטעלע אָנגעקאָוועט אין איר, און ווי ער, דער לעפֿל, לויפֿט מיט אַ ירגזון אַהין און אַהער און ווי דאָס אויפֿגעריסענע מויל כאַפּט אים מיט אַ שלינגענדיקער הנאה, פֿאַרשטייט מען דעם טײַטש פֿון „נזיד עדשים" און ס'ווערט פֿאַרענטפֿערט ווי עשׂו קומט עפּעס צו פֿאַרקויפֿן די בכורה פֿאַר אַ טעלער מיט אַרבעס...

דאָ, אין דעם שאַרפֿן ביר־ריח און דעם זויערן אַרבעסזופּ־גערוך, אַן אײַנגעהילטער אין דעם פֿרעמדן, פֿעטלעכן נעפּל, אויף די ליפּן אים שפּירנדיק און אין דעם ביטערן פֿײַקע־ און ציגאַרן־רויך ביז אין האַלדז אַרײַן קרעלנדיק, זיץ איך מיר לפֿני־ולפֿנים, אינערלעך אין מיר ווי אין אַ חדר־המיוחד בײַ אַן עק טיש און טו מיר מײַן עבֿודה –

דאָס נײַע לעבן פֿאַר מיר דאָ אַרום, די ממש מיט די הענט אָנצוטאַפּן אַטמאָספֿער, די גראָבע געניסערישע קולות, וואָס הערן זיך פֿון דער טאַשעוואַניע, ווו מ'צאַפּט דאָס ביר פֿון פּעסער אין די קופֿליעס אַרײַן, די זיך באַווײַזנדיק, צעכראַסטעטע פֿרויען בײַ מײַן טיש, מיט בליקן פֿון געשלאָגענע, טרויעריקע הינט, זענען געוואָרן אומבאַוווּסט דאָס בילד און דער הילך אין מײַן ליד –

וואָס נידעריקער מען זינקט, אַלץ טיפֿער איז מען מיט גאָט; מ'שטייט אויף די קני מיטן מינדסטן מענטש און מ'איז מתפּלל... די מענטשן זענען מיר נאָנט געוואָרן אין זייער פֿאַרלאָזנקייט – דאָס איז מסתּם די „אוממיטלבאַרקייט".

„שיק מיר, מאַמע, דײַן תּחינהלע,
דײַן טרערן־צעווייקט תּחינהלע,
שיק מיר און זאָג דעם טאַטן נישט.“

דאָס ליד, וואָס הייבט זיך אָן מיט דעם פֿערז, האָב איך פֿופֿצן יאָר שפּעטער – אין יאָר 1936, בײַם פֿאַרלאָזן בערלין, גענומען פֿאַר מײַן לעצטן געדרוקט בוך אין דײַטשלאַנד, פֿאַר אַן הקדמה צו מײַנע בעל־שם־, רבי נחמן־ און „גוטע ייִדן“־פּאָעמעס. דאָס ליד איז געשריבן געוואָרן אין יענעם ווינטער און אין דער רוישיקער נאַכטקנײַפּע בײַ „מײַן“ עק טישל.

אויך בנוגע חיונה בין איך געווען נישקשה פֿאַרזאָרגט; מ'האָט שוין געוווּסט, אַז בײַ געלעגנהייטס־אַרבעט בין איך אַ גוטע האַנט, און אַז איך בין שוין אויסגעקאָכט מיט די אַלע פֿורמאַנעס און גרינצײַג־פֿירער, וואָס קומען אָן נאָך איידער דער באַגינען הייבט אָן צו בלישטשען. זיי כאַפּן זיך אַרײַן דאָ אין דער נאַכטקנײַפּע זיך אַדורכצוּוואַרעמען מיט אַ שאַרפֿן טרונק, מיט אַ הייסער אַרבעסזופּ און זיך אַדורכצושרײַען איינער מיטן אַנדערן אין דעם רויכיקן און דאַמפֿנדיקן נעפּל –

נאָכן באַקומען, פֿאַר אַ פּאָר וואָכן צוריק, פֿונעם ייִדישן אַרבעטסאַמט די באַשעפֿטיקונג אינעם אײַזנסקלאַד – מיך שווער אַרײַנגעאַרבעט, אָבער נאָך אַ פּאָר טאָג איז אַלץ געגאַנגען כּשורה. דער „האָפּ־האָפּ“ בײַם אויפֿהייבן און בײַם אַראָפּלאָדן איז געגאַנגען ווי אַ מיזמור. וואָלט אַלץ געווען וויל און גוט, אָבער אַז ס'איז געקומען פֿרײַטיק צום אויסצאָלן, האָט דאָס געלט געסטײַעט קוים ביז מאָנטיק – ווײַל די אַנדערע וואָך זענען די פֿופֿציק מאַרק קוים ווערט געווען פֿופֿציק פֿעניג.

די דײַטשע אַרבעטער האָבן זיך אַן עצה געגעבן מיט דער אינפֿלאַציע – ווי נאָר דער מאַן האָט אַהיימגעבראַכט דעם לוין, האָט די דײַטשע הויזפֿרוי ס'גאַנצע געלט אויסגעגעבן און אײַנגעקויפֿט אויף אַ גאַנצער וואָך. איך האָב שוין דינסטיק, מיט אַלע מײַנע געבליבענע פּאַפּירלעך, נישט געהאַט צו באַצאָלן אויף אַ מיטאָג.

מײַן צימערל האָב איך שוין געהאַט און דער עיקר אַן אַדרעס. פֿרײַטיק באַקומענדיק אויסגעצאָלט דעם לוין, האָב איך קודם באַצאָלט דאָס דירה־געלט פֿאַר דער גאַנצער וואָך. און די לעצטע טעג, ווען ס'האָט שוין נישט געסטײַעט אויף אַ ריכטיק מיטאָג, האָב איך מיך שוין טאַקע דערנערט מיט די אַרבעסזופּן פֿון דער מאַלינע. אָבער נישט נאָר דאָס און די אַטמאָספֿערע, צו וועלכער כ'האָב מיך צוגעוווינט און ליב באַקומען – נאָר די וואַנצן אין מײַן בעט און דאָס גאַנצע טומלדיקע געסל מיט „שטונדן־קאַטירן“ – – אין די פֿרײַע שעהען און אין די שלאָפֿלאָזע נעכט האָב איך מײַן מקום־מנוחה געפֿונען אין דער מאַלינע.

אין אַ פֿאַרטאָגס נאָך אַ געשלעג, וואָס איז אַרויסגעקומען איבער אַזאַ ליידיקער אַרבעס־שיסל מיט אַן אָנגעקייטלטן, בלעכענעם לעפֿל, וואָס האָט זיך פֿאַרוואַלגערט אויפֿן טיש און מ'האָט צוריקגעקראָגן בײַ דער טאַשעוואַניע אַ האַלבן מאַרק משכּון־געלט, האָט אַ פֿינצטערער נאַכטפֿויגל אונטערגעהאַקט אַ זײַט בײַ אַ פֿורמאַן, פֿון אַ גרויסער לאָדונג גרינס. מילא, צו די האַלעס צוצופֿאָרן וועט ער שוין פּאָספּייען, אָבער די זעק קאַרטאָפֿל און די גרויסע מייערן־בונטן פֿון וואָגן אַראָפּנעמען?

נאָכן געשלעג האָט זיך דער לאָקאַל האַלב אויסגעליידיקט. די נאַכטפֿייגל און די פֿינצטערע פּאַרשוינען האָבן „פֿאַרדופֿטעט“ – ווי אין דער ערד אײַנגעזונקען.

דער בעל־בית און ס'ביסל פֿורמאַנעס מיט די ביציסקעס פֿאַררוקט אין די אָרעמס שטייען אַרום מיר: יעבֿור עלי מה, איך מוז מיט דעם צעשלאָגענעם אין דער האַלע אַרײַן מיטפֿאָרן – מ'קאָן אַ מאָל פֿון אַן אַרבעט אַוועקבלײַבן, אַ מענטש אַ טובֿה צו טאָן. איך וועל שוין געפֿינען אַ תּירוץ.

מ'האָט דערויף אויסגעטרונקען איינס און נאָך איינס און פֿאַרביסן בכל־לבֿבֿך און איך בין אַרויף אויפֿן וואָגן.

דערשפּירנדיק דעם ריח פֿון פֿעלד, פֿון קאַרטאָפֿל מיט דער ערד באַוואַקסן, די רויטע מייערן־בינטן, גרין צעפּלאָשעטע, די קילעריבן מיטן האַרבלעכן גערוך וואָס איז מיר אַרײַן אין נאָז, און איך האָב אויפֿגעלעבט – דאָס גאַנצע דאָרף מיט אַלע פֿעלדער זענען בײַ מיר אויבן געווען אויפֿן וואָגן – די שטאָט איז פֿאַרשוווּנדן, בײַ יעדן שפּרונג פֿון די רעדער אויפֿן שטייניקן ברוק האָט מײַן האַרץ מיטגעטאַנצט. ערשט אַרײַנפֿאָרנדיק אין דער גוואַלדיקער האַלע, די בלומענפֿאַרבן, דאָס גרינס, דער טומל – כ'בין צעטומלט געוואָרן, כ'בין אַרײַן אין אַ אַזאַרט פֿון אַרבעט.

אין איין שעה בין איך געווען אָפּגעפֿאַרטיקט: אַזאַ זאַק קאַרטאָפֿל נאָכן שווערן הייבן די שווערע אײַזנשטאַנגען, די שינעס, מיט אַ „האָפּ־האָפּ“, איז געווען ממש אַ שפּילכל – אַזאַ זאַק קאַרטאָפֿל האָט זיך

אַרײַנגעפּאַסט אין רוקן און מ'איז געגאַנגען מיט אים ווי צו אַ טאַנץ.

דער קרעכצנדיקער האָט אָנגעקוואָלן! געקלאַפּט מיר אין פּלייצע אַרײַן, מיט מיר אין דער „האַלע־קנײַפּע“ פֿאַרטרונקען איינס און נאָך איינס, פֿאַרביסן און מיר באַצאָלט אַזוי פֿיל, אַז ס'איז געווען די־והותר פֿאַר אַ גאַנצן טאָג און נאָך מיט אַ שמיצל אַריבער.

ס'איז נאָך געווען צײַט גענוג צו מײַן אַרבעט, אָבער מיט די פֿיר גלעזלעך אין מײַן קאָפּ און דאָס רוישיקע פֿאַרטאָג־לעבן אין דער האַלע און די טויזנט ריחות, וואָס פֿאַררײַסן מײַן נאָז, און איך האָב גענומען שלענדערן, בגילופֿינדיק, אַ פֿרײַער מענטש מיט די הענט אין די קעשענעס. צוקומענדיק צום קײַזער פֿרידריך־מוזעום, בין איך אַרײַן און אַזוי שלענדערנדיק פֿון זאַל צו זאַל זענען פֿעלקער און מדינות געשטאַנען פֿאַר מײַנע אויפֿגעריסענע אויגן אין זייערע שענסטע קאָלירן – כ'האָב נישט געטראַכט, נישט קיין סך געוווּסט, אָבער דער קאָפּ איז מיר נאָך פֿרײַער געוואָרן מיט יעדן בילד. און אָט איז אַ באַקאַנטער, רעמבראַנדט – ווי בולט זי שטייט אַוועקגעשטעלט אין דער אייביקייט מיט אירע לאַשטשענדיקע גלידער; ווי דאָס סאַמעט־שנירעלע אַרום איר געטאָקטן האַלדז פֿאַלט אַרײַן אַזוי שיר־השירימדיק צווישן אירע בריסטן – שני שדיך כּשני עפֿרים! כ'קאָן מיך גאָר נישט אָפּרײַסן פֿונעם בילד, מיט „די סטאָפֿעלס“ שטייט גאַנץ האָלאַנד מיר פֿאַר די אויגן – ס'איז זעקסע אין דער פֿרי, איך זיץ אונטער אַ קו און מעלק זי, די סוזאַנאַ – כ'שפּיר די וואַרעמקייט אין מײַנע פֿינגער; „אָדם ובהמה תּושיע אַדוני“.

ווען כ'בין אַרויס פֿון קײַזער פֿרידריך־מוזעום, איז שוין געווען נאָך מיטאָג. כ'בין אַרײַן צו אַשינגערן און עפּעס איבערגעביסן און גענומען ווײַטער שלענדערן – ס'איז די גאַנצע וועלט נאָר אַזאַ ווּנדערלעכע גאַלעריע, יעדעס אויסגעצירטע שויפֿענצטער, אַזאַ אויפֿגעהענגט בילד – יעדן מענטש קוק איך אָן מיט אויפֿגעריסענע אויגן; כ'קאָן מיך גאָר נישט זאַט אָנקוקן!

פֿון דער פֿרידריך־שטראַסע האָב איך מיך אַרײַנגעדרייט אין דער אָראַניענבורגער שטראַסע און פֿון דאָרט וואָלטן מיך די פֿיס מסתּם פֿון אַליין אַרויפֿגעפֿירט צו לעווינען אין דער אויגוסט־שטראַסע אָדער אפֿשר נאָך גיכער גאָר צו די בראָנשטיינס. אָבער אין האַרץ האָט מיר עפּעס אַ צוק געטאָן: „גוסטאַ“! אַריבער די גאַס און ווײַטער געגאַנגען. פֿאַר דער גרויסער אָראַניענבורגער שול בין איך שטיין געבליבן און זע, אַז אויבן אויפֿן ערשטן שטאָק איז דאָ אַ לעזע־האַלע, ווּ מ'קאָן לייענען דײַטשע, העברעיִשע און ייִדישע ביכער – איך בין אַרויף!

הויכע שענק מיט ספֿרים און ביכער בײַ אַלע פֿיר ווענט. אָפֿענע טירן אַרײַן צו אַנדערע שטובן פֿולע מיט ביכער. ייִדן אין קאַפּעליושן, אין קאַפּלעך, אין בלויזן קאָפּ זיצן בײַ טישלעך און קוקן און בלעטערן. בײַ דער פֿאַרצוימונג, ווּ דער ביבליאָטעקאַר זיצט, ליגן אויסגעלייגט אַ ריי ביכער, מסתּם צוריקגעברענגטע. צווישן זיי זע איך אַ נײַ בוך. ס'איז דאָס, וועגן וועלכן שניאור האָט אַזוי גרויס גערעדט – „די פּוילישע וועלדער“ פֿון יוסף אָפּאַטאָשו. כ'האָב עס געבעטן און מיך אַנידערגעזעצט בײַ אַ טיש. כ'האָב מיך דערין אַרײַנגעלייענט און בין געווען אין דער היים; קיינעם נישט געזען אַרום. געמישט אַ בלעטל נאָך אַ בלעטל – ס'האָט מסתּם גענומען שעהען און איך בין אַלץ טיפֿער אַרײַן ווי אין אַ טיפֿן, געדיכטן וואַלד. פֿון אַ קלאַפּ אין פּלייצע האָב איך אויפֿגעציטערט. כ'האָב אָבער געפֿילט, אַז דער קלאַפּ איז אַ פֿרײַנדלעכער, נישט פֿון אַן איבערפֿאַל אין מיטן וואַלד. כ'האָב מיך אויסגעדרייט און דער ביבליאָטעקאַר, וואָס האָט אויסגעזען ווי אַ מרוק, בשעת ער האָט מיר געגעבן דעם „זשאַרגאָנישן“ ראָמאַן, איז געשטאַנען הינטער מיר און געשמייכלט: „איך שטיי און טראַכט, אַז אַ ,זשאַרגאָנישער‘ בוך איז אַ פּנים דאָך אַ ספֿר... קוקנדיק אויף אײַך ווי איר זענט פֿאַרטיפֿט דערין מיט אַ תּשוקה, האָב איך ערשט פֿאַרשטאַנען די מימרא ,העושׂה צדקה בכל עת זהו הקונה ספֿרים ומשאיל אותם לאַחרים‘... איר זעט, ס'איז שוין קיינער נישטאָ, די ביבליאָטעק ווערט איצט שוין געשלאָסן. זי איז אָבער אָפֿן אַ גאַנצן טאָג און אויב איר גיט אָן אײַער אַדרעס, קריגט איר ביכער אַהיים.“

„איך האָב אַן אַדרעס“! האָב איך מיך מיט פֿרייד אויפֿגעכאַפּט. גענומען דאָס בוך אונטערן אָרעם מיטאַהיימצונעמען און כּדי נישט צו באַלעמוטשען, אין דער גיך אָנגעגעבן מײַן אַדרעס: „מולאַק־שטראַסע 21“.

„יונגער־מאַן“, האָט ער זיך צעלאַכט, „דאָס איז נאָך נישט אַזוי אײנפֿאַך. דאָס מוז אונטערגעשריבן ווערן פֿון הויפּט־ביבליאָטעקאַר, הער שטערן, און בײַ אים איז מולאַק־שטראַסע נאָך נישט קיין אַדרעס און אַ זשאַרגאָנישער לייענער נאָך נישט קיין לעזער“... ער האָט זיך ווידער צעשמייכלט און מיך ליבלעך אָנגעקוקט מיט אַ פּאָר היימישע תּלמיד־חכם־אויגן: „איר געפֿעלט מיר, יונגער־מאַן, איך האָב קיין רעכט דאָס בוך אײַך אַוועקצונעמען... ווייסט איר וואָס, איך וועל עס פֿאַרשרײַבן אויף מײַן נאָמען און איך וועל עס אײַך באָרגן“. ער צעלאַכט זיך מיט הנאה: „ווען דער שטערן זאָל דאָס וויסן, פֿאַרליר איך דעם פּאָסטן... כ'וואָלט אייגנטלעך מיט אײַך געוואָלט כאַפּן אַ שמועס. מה שמך און פֿון וואַנען איז אַ ייִד און וואָס טוט אַזאַ איינער ווי איר? ... פֿון די

סעמינאַריסטן אָדער די סטודענטלעך זענט איר דאָך נישט... נאָר כ'וויל נישט איבעררײַסן אײַער תּשוקה. גייט אין אײַער מולאַק־שטראַסע 21 און לייענט ווײַטער, און מאָרגן נאָך צען אַ זייגער מעלדט אײַך בײַ מיר און איך וועל שוין אַלע פֿאָרמאַליטעטן דערליידיקן... דער שטערן אַז דער האָט פֿאַר זיך אַן „אָסט־יודע“, קאָן זײַן אַ רשע“...

איך בין נישט געגאַנגען אויף מײַן צימערל, אין דער מולאַק־שטראַסע. איך בין דירעקט אַרײַן אין דער מאַלינע און מיך געזעצט בײַ מײַן עק טיש לפֿני־ולפֿנים אַן אַרומגעהילטער אינעם עמוד־העגן און אָן איבעררײַס געלייענט און געלייענט.

און בין שוין אויך צו מאָרגנס נישט געגאַנגען צו מײַן אַרבעט. אויף אַן אַרבעסזופּ מיט אַ לחמא־עניא מיט מאַרגאַרינע איז נאָך איבערגעבליבן פֿון דער נעכטיקער שעה אַרבעט און פֿאַרן צוריקבאַקומען דאָס משכּון־געלט פֿאַר דער שיסל מיטן לעפֿל איז געווען אַ קופֿל ביר...