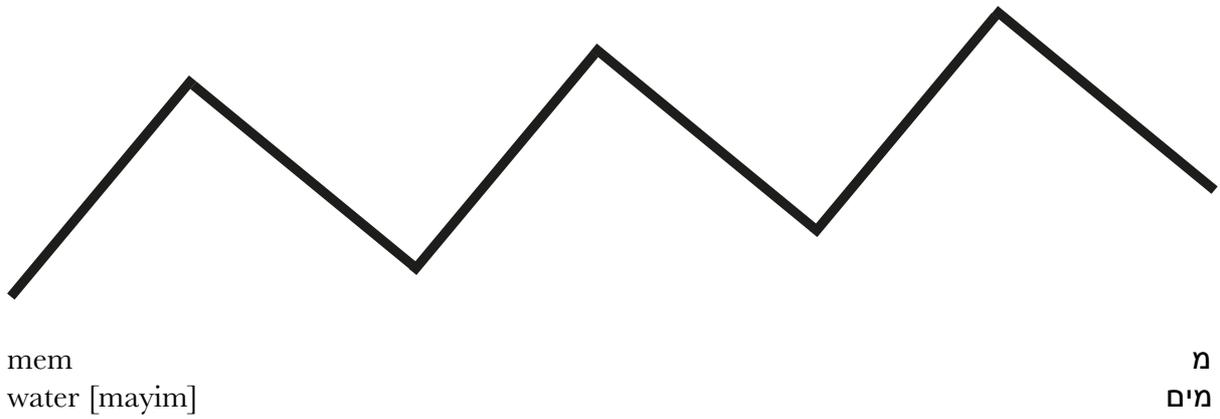


# Myriam, from *A Book of Visions*

(after Muriel Rukeyser, 'Women and Emblems')



[1]

a field of women giving birth under apple trees  
(push away the light, in open air)  
preparing in between contractions  
they sew sinew across skin, across wood

the midwives stand watch

rotten lake of the desert  
(sick nets fish here now)  
mucus and torn body have been ground into soil  
and the milk is black

afterbirth in the sun  
(lineated small heaps, a scattered grid on the field)  
there is blood on the bone  
my tongue on mortar

*Lean to the left*

*Drink the first cup of wine*

*Relax*

*Your elbow on grass*

[2]

a language transmitted through lullabies  
(we are the last ones here in the field)  
the muscular backs of our mothers hold the dough  
they start running  
and as we leave we make preparations to dance

*you should be hungry now*  
*yes, this is right*  
*make a feast in 12 minutes*  
*(set the timer)*  
*pick up the second cup of wine*  
*throw the cup in the sink*

[3]

the door is open  
(how beautiful the mountains)  
the door is closed  
water spills over wood  
hands fall over flesh

*run for 12 minutes  
cross the water, destroy the pipe  
now drink the third cup of wine  
when it is difficult  
lick the letters for honey  
and a reminder of sweetness*

## The Burrow

we travel through material  
(follow the track)  
our bodies glide into earth  
and we sink under (into) soil

thousands of wedding rings  
meat hooks and bullet cases  
then there is a door  
(and the door is open)

our veil is covered in mud  
we are trying see through it  
but the flies are making it difficult  
and the velcro stitching  
(on the back of the dress)  
has ripped  
(a metal taste in our mouths)

we have forgotten our name  
this new one keeps slipping  
into the fold of our mouths  
secreting a wax

we can't find the papers

u  
(shh)

the genizah from the bins go to their resting place  
(in the caves)  
a procession of damaged words  
collected in sacks

the dead slide through tunnels to access the burrows  
broken symbols, errors and miscommunications  
they carry their blood in these sacks  
and anything that has gathered in their bodies  
(across time)

## A Slippery Place [glitsh]

(Written in English, Yiddish and Old English and after Rechnitz by Elfriede Jelinek)

No I didn't know that it was a frog, it is not a frog. the frog was a small symbol of something else, no I don't know what it was a symbol of, it is in the history books, or an encyclopaedia, the diagram shows the frog and the frog has a large tongue or tone, yes the tongue has a talisman, what's that? The tongue has become swollen? No it can't have, it is not in the diagram, it must be that other objects around the tongue are shrinking, did you ask the tongue? Don't be ridiculous the frog won't talk, it has a CHUH in its throat, I am afraid it can only tell the time and squint but it won't be able to speak, sorry I mean eat, sorry I mean wink, no - VVVVVVVVVVVVLIKHTLHHHHHH

### סירדת מימסוח ונחנאו רגירט לגעמ ונחנא

show me the evidence, shear the evidence, smeoru cross evidence, there must be a bug in the circuit, or in the tsh, what were we doing? We were talking about the evidence, no I can't find any, there only seems to be piles of something, huge heaps of bugs, what's that? The bugs are the evidence? No, the bugs bagroben greben grep GREP, sorry I lost my footing, I seem to have feallan fallen, farfolen into this pile of evidence, here isn't a light is there? Or a candle? The candle can not be made public in an emergency, is there another leocht anywhere? There is all this oil, can we burn the oil? Make a fyr and frailech in it, in the eorþ, yes, I have been told to guard the soil, we should take pictures of it, and label it, and wait for the others, but there seems to be bones buried here, bagroben hér under the bugs, they buried the bugs, no they buried the beyn's, these baan's, the BAAAAAAAAAAAAAN's, where is the candle? Mark the heaps and chronicle the event, yes it was a singular event, yes a really bloody awful event, cnotted into history, into the frog's tongue, into its throat, into its language, the language is swollen, they said a frēond was eating their tongues, we should wait, yes we should wait for time to rewire itself, or for the soil to be buried, or for the eorþ to be covered, for it to turn ald, go get the shovel and use the oil, pour the oil into sockets, into skin, hide the history, or tut the history, it hasn't mutated yet or tsh, did you mean snow? or שטילג, or SHHHHHHHHH, remember we labelled the event so it is probably ok, we can clap now, yes start clapping, keep clapping, yes, look what we did, we are wise now woruldn't do it again geong, vaisit the heap to keep up the show, cover the eorþ, clap for the eorþ, rub the eorþ on like a dress, now we don't think about the blood, apart from that awful one cnotted into history, so awful, wouldn't do it again, yes the bones were awful, put on the necklace, run into the feold, we are so sorry, such awful bones, yes we are sorry, well done, well done

## Parable of the Beginning, from *Our Names Were Oil*

When we forgot, we didn't know what it was exactly that we had forgotten nor when it had departed. We were left with a feeling and we let it sit with us for so long that the loss gently became secondary

And we were able to hide the feeling in the backs of our legs but eventually the containment became overwhelming and so the loss began to drip out

And we started to dream collectively

The same images were being shared in our sleep. Sometimes we dreamed of papers and suitcases, other times of oil and light

Do you remember when the dreams began?

And there was the Symbol which shifted. Sometimes it would look like a mirror, sometimes like a door or a hole, and other times like a cross on a map

And it felt like the Symbol was trying to communicate with us. But we didn't understand what it needed to say. The context and its purpose had been lost over time. We began to think of it as a discharge

It was a side effect of the leaking, something that we should hide or cover. But it would keep demanding our attention and the more we stared, the more we came to understand it as language

And the language was material as well as spirit

And you will remember how some of us began digging. We were trying to find a point of origin but we didn't know what it was we were looking for. And the more the earth passed through our fingers the more lost we became

And some of us felt the urge to visit abandoned buildings and strange stones, places that had become overrun with plants and marked walls and we stood in their corridors and we cried for hours but we did not know why

Those who had been digging long enough began to find forgotten clothes and photographs, of people in white dresses and black hats and groups of people in the cities from before

And they found papers

And on the papers was the Symbol in all its forms

And they found a field of bodies, or maybe lines

When we could dig no further, we occupied the space between  
the spirit and the flesh as a way to hold on to one another

We evolved the ability to pass between worlds and walk within walls.  
Here time ran away and we started to draw a map. We began to build  
our kingdoms in the mud

## Translation

Graze against my feet and brush against my skin

Let the mirror split apart



*And the flowers extend away from the columns*

*And creep out over the page, across the desk*

*And cover my hands and cut into my body*

*And I feel the vines under my skin*

I wanted to have a magical connection to the shapes  
as if I could see them and understand  
because the language was in my body  
and because the oil was in the air

but the culture leaks  
degrading over time  
and the silence of it moves  
and is slowly washing away  
and is escaping the rest of me

floating

out

/r

/r

[or]

/r

/r

[or]

/r

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