

**DER NAYER SHER**

(The New *Sher*)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein

Hey you, klezmer, pick up your fiddle,  
play your music,  
and we'll dance the new *sher*.<sup>1</sup>

*hey du klezmer, nem dem fidl,  
shpil dos naye lidl,  
tantsn vet men dem nayem sher.*

We'll spin around in a *karahod*,<sup>2</sup>  
and our hearts will rejoice,  
whenever the new *sher* is danced.

*in a karahod men dreyt zikh,  
un dos harts derfreyt zikh,  
nor ven men tantst dem nayem sher.*

Higher, higher, Grandpa Elya leaps  
straight up to the ceiling.  
He wants to enjoy life fully.

*hekher, hekher, biz di stelye,  
shpringt der zeyde, elye.  
es vilt zikh lebn im vos mer.*

And Grandma Sosye beams with joy.  
Our enemies can go to hell,  
for we're going to dance the new *sher*.

*un di bobbe, sosye kvelt fun nakhes,  
sonim af tselokhes,  
tantsn vet men dem nayem sher.*

*Nu*, see, just see how everyone is happy,  
how they spin,  
and how they tap their feet.

*nu, zet, nor zet vi yeder freyt zikh  
un vi men dreyt zikh,  
un men tupet mit di fis.*

The heart is breaking  
but still begs to dance,  
for when we dance, life becomes so sweet.

*dos harts tsegeyt  
nor tantsn bet zikh  
vayl ven men tantst vert, dan dos lebn azoy zis.*

Now we are all happy.  
We will no longer be sad.  
Because soon the bride will be seated,  
and then we will dance the new *sher*.

*freylekh zayn atsind darfn mir ale;  
troyerik zayn dos vet men shoyt nit mer,  
vayl bazetsn vet men bald di kale,  
un tantsn vet men gor dem nayem sher.*

What good will all the worrying do for you,  
when your heart is heavy?  
Better hope, brother, that by tomorrow  
we will all dance the new *sher* together!

*vos toygn ale dayges, ale zorgn,  
afn hartsn ven es iz dir shver?  
beser, brider, hofn az biz morgn  
veln ale in eynem tantsn dem nayem sher!*

---

<sup>1</sup> A lively party or celebration dance

<sup>2</sup> A type of a circle dance

**OYGN**

(Eyes)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein    Lyrics: Molly Picon  
from *eyns un a rekhts*, or *One in a Million*

It's a dark night, and I sit and think that  
my life is worthless.  
It's empty and hollow, my aspiration for naught.  
There's no luck in my cards...

*s'iz a finstere nakht un ikh zits mir un trakht  
mayn lebn hot gornisht keyn vert.  
s'iz leydik un pust, mayn shtrebn umzist;  
keyn mazl iz mir nisht bashert.*

But suddenly a ray of light, a bright source:  
I caught sight of two eyes.  
I soon felt that my heart was lost,  
but I was happy.

*nor plutsem a shtral, a likhtiker kval:  
tsvey oygn hob ikh derzen.  
ikh hob bald derfild, mayn harts iz farshpilt,  
nor ikh bin tsufridn geven.*

Eyes ...  
for your dark eyes ...  
before them the bright sun  
bows down.

*oygn ...  
far dayne shvartse oygn ...  
far zey shteyt ayngeloygn  
di likhtike zun.*

Eyes ...  
for your dark eyes ...  
they pulled my heart to you, and I  
became enslaved for life,  
captured and amazed....  
And I will aspire  
to fulfill all their desires.

*oygn ...  
far dayne shvartse oygn ...  
zey hobn tsugetsoygn mayn harts,  
un ikh bin farshkluft gevorn af mayn gants lebn,  
fargaft gevorn ...  
un ikh vel shtrebn  
ales zey tsu gebn.*

Eyes ...  
for your dark eyes ...  
the world will no longer have any worth  
without your dark eyes.

*oygn...  
far dayne shvartse oygn...  
di velt vet mer nisht toygn  
on dayne shvartse oygn.*

**IKH VIL ES HERN NOKH A MOL**

(I Want to Hear It Again)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein    Lyrics: Isidore Lillian and Jacob Jacobs  
from *ikh bin farlibt* (*I'm in Love*)

**Victor:**

The world has many  
books and novels,  
in which we read of great romances.  
My love, you may be sure  
that none of these books can describe  
how strongly I feel about you.

**Luba:**

Do you mean what you say?  
Or are you just saying it?  
I want be sure about it,  
for I am a woman,  
sworn to you forever.

**Victor:**

And once again you ask me  
to tell you  
that I love you.

**Both:**

I want to hear it again from you.  
Say again that you are in love with me.  
It rings in my ears  
like the Song of Songs.  
I will never tire of hearing it.  
My heart dances in me  
from joy and happiness  
when I hear  
the sweet words from you.  
When you say those four words,<sup>3</sup>  
it fills me with joy.  
Yes, I want to hear it again from you!

**Victor:**

*es zaynen af der velt faranen  
fil bikher romanen,  
fun groyse libes dortn leyenen mir.  
lyube mayne megstu zayn zikher,  
az di ale bikher kenen nisht farshraybn  
dos vos ikh fil tsu dir.*

**Luba:**

*meynstu vos du zogst  
tsi redstu glat azoy.  
ikh vil in dem zayn zikher  
vayl ikh bin a froy.  
geshvoyrn dir on tsol.*

**Victor:**

*un du fregst nokh a mol,  
ikh zol dir zogn  
az ikh hob dikh lib.*

**beyde:**

*ikh vil es hern nokh a mol fun dir,  
zog nokh a mol, du bist farlibt in mir.  
es klingt in mayne oyern,  
vi dos shir-hashirim lid,  
tsu hern dos vel ikh nit vern mid.  
es tantst in mir dos harts  
fun glik un freyd,  
ven ikh her fun dir  
di zise reyd,  
ven du zogst di verter fir,  
fil glik farshaft es mir,  
yo, kh'vil es hern nokh a mol fun dir.*

---

<sup>3</sup> *ikh hob dikh lib* (I love you).

**IKH ZING**

(For You I Sing)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein    Lyrics: Molly Picon  
from the film *Mamele*

King Solomon sang to his Shulamit  
a love song.  
And just like Solomon then, my love,  
I bring my song now to you.

*shloyme hameylekh hot tsu zayn shulamis  
gezungen a libes-shir,  
un punkt vi shloyme dan, gelibte mayne,  
brenge ikh mayn lid itst tsu dir.*

I sing my Song of Songs for you.  
With love I adorn it,  
only for you, soul of mine, do  
I sing my dreams—

*ikh zing far dir mayn shir hashirim,  
mit libe ikh batsir im,  
far dir nor neshome mayn  
ikh zing, far dir mayne khaloymes—*

My love for you is like a dream—  
Only for you, my comfort,  
when I'm about to die from longing  
for you, my beloved.

*mayn libe vi a troym iz  
fun dir nor nekhome mayn,  
ven ikh gey oys fun benken,  
nokh dir, gelibte mayn.*

And when I still think  
that you will once again be mine,  
I sing my song from the heart,  
my Song of Songs again.  
Beloved, for you I sing.

*un ven ikh halt in eyn denken,  
az du vest nokh a mol mayne zayn,  
ikh zing fun hartsn mayne lider,  
mayn shir hashirim vider.  
gelibte, far dir ikh zing.*

**ABI GEZUNT**

(So Long As You're Healthy)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein    Lyrics: Molly Picon  
from the film *Mamele*

A bit of sun, a bit of rain,  
a peaceful place to lay your head ...  
so long as you're healthy, you can be happy.

*a bisl zun, a bisl regn,  
a ruik ort dem kop tsu legn,  
abi gezunt, ken men gliklekh zayn.*

A shoe, a sock, an outfit without patches,  
three or four measly coins in your pocket ...  
so long as you're healthy, you can be happy.

*a shukh, a zok, a kleyd on lates,  
in keshene a dray, fir zlotes,  
abi gezunt, ken men gliklekh zayn.*

The air is free, equal for all;  
the sun shines for everyone,  
whether rich or poor.

*di luft iz fray far yedn glaykh,  
di zun zi shaynt far yedn eynem,  
orem oder raykh.*

A little rejoicing, a little laughter,  
some schnapps with a friend once in a while ...  
so long as you're healthy, you can be happy.

*a bisl freyd, a bisl lakhn,  
a mol mit fraynd a shnepsl makhn,  
abi gezunt ken men gliklekh zayn.*

Some look for riches,  
some look for power,  
to conquer the whole world.  
Some think that all happiness  
depends only on money.

*eyner zukht ashires,  
eyner zukht gevures,  
aynnemen di gantse velt.  
eyner meynt dos gantse glik  
hengt nor op in gelt.*

Let them all search,  
let them all scrounge.  
But I think to myself that  
I have no use for such things,  
since happiness is waiting at my doorstep.

*zoln ale zukhn,  
zoln ale krikhn,  
nor ikh trakht bay mir,  
ikh darf dos af kapores,  
vayl dos glik shteyt bay mayn tir.*

**ZOG ES MIR NOKH A MOL**

(Tell Me Again)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein    Lyrics: Jacob Jacobs  
from *der berditshever khusn* (*The Bridegroom from Berditchev*)

If I would only be fit  
to find favor in your eyes,  
the whole world would already be mine.  
I would sing "Hatikvah" [Become a Zionist]<sup>4</sup>  
and would even go to the *mikvah*<sup>5</sup> [be religious],  
just so you will be together with me.

*ven ikh zol zikh nor oystoygn,  
gefinen kheyne in dayne oygn  
volt di gantse velt geven shoyne mayn.  
ikh volt gezungen di "hatikvo,"  
zikh ge'toyvt in der mikve,  
abi du zolst mit mir in eynem zayn.*

I would cut a deal  
to become a slave to your father,  
like Jacob was to Laban.  
I would suffer all kinds of terror  
and would even milk the cows,  
so long as I would always be able to see you.

*ikh volt gemakht a mase-matn,  
a knekht gevorn bay dayn tatn,  
vi yankev iz bay lovnen geven.  
ikh volt gelitn ale eymes,  
un gemolkn di beheymes,  
abi ikh zol dir shtendik kenen zen.*

Tell me again,  
oh, tell me again,  
for I'd like to hear  
those beautiful words from you.  
Tell it to me again,  
oh, tell it to me again,  
for your words bring me joy  
and give me constant encouragement.

*zog es mir nokh a mol,  
oy, zog es mir nokh a mol,  
vayl ikh bin gern tsu hern  
di sheyne verter fun dir.  
zog es mir nokh a mol,  
oy, zog es mir nokh a mol,  
vayl dayne reydn brengt freydn  
un git mir mut on a shier.*

My heart is overflowing  
with such great joy  
of having lived to hear  
such words from you.  
Tell it to me again,  
oh, tell me again.  
Oh, my heart, my dear,  
Tell it to me again.

*mayn harts es vakst in mir  
atsinder fun groys freyd  
az ikh hob derlebt tsu hern  
fun dir azelkhe reydn—  
zog es mir nokh a mol,  
oy, zog es mir nokh a mol,  
oy, nekhomele, nekhomele,  
zog es mir nokh a mol.*

<sup>4</sup> The anthem of the Zionist movement (and now of the State of Israel).

<sup>5</sup> A ritual bath of purification.

**DI GRINE KUZINE**

(The Greenhorn Cousin)

Composer: Abe Schwartz    Lyrics: Jacob Leiserowitz/Hyman Prizant(?)

My cousin from the old country came over here.  
She was beautiful as gold, the "greenhorn."<sup>6</sup>  
Her cheeks were rosy like blood oranges;  
her feet were just begging to dance.

*es iz tsu mir gekumen a kuzine,  
sheyn vi gold iz zi geven, di grine.  
di bekelekh vi royte pomerantsn,  
fiselekh, vos betn zikh tsum tantsn.*

She skipped instead of walking;  
she sang instead of speaking.  
Happy and merry was her demeanor.  
Such was my cousin.

*nit gegangen iz zi, nor geshprungen;  
nit geredt hot zi, nor gezungen.  
freylekh, lustik iz geven ir mine.  
ot azoy geven iz mayn kuzine.*

I went to the lady next door,  
who has a little millinery store.  
I got my greenhorn cousin a job there—  
so long live the Golden Land!<sup>7</sup>

*ikh bin arayn tsu mayn "nekst-dorke,"  
vos zi hot a "milineri-storke."  
a job gekrogn hob ikh far mayn kuzine—  
az lebn zol di goldene medine!*

Many years have since past.  
My cousin has turned into a wreck.  
She slaved away for many years<sup>8</sup>  
until nothing was left of her.

*avek zaynen fun demolt on shoyrn yorn,  
fun mayn kuzine iz a tel gevorn.  
paydays yorn lang hot zi geklibn,  
biz fun ir aleyrn iz nisht geblibn.*

Under her blue, beautiful eyes  
black bags have appeared.  
The cheeks, those ruddy oranges,  
have aged and lost their greenhorn glow.

*unter ire bloye sheyne oygn  
shvartse pasn hobn zikh fartsoygn.  
di bekelekh, di royte pomerantsn,  
hobn zikh shoyrn oysgegrint in gantsn.*

Nowadays, when I meet my cousin  
and I ask her, "How are you, greenhorn?"  
She answers me with a crooked expression:  
"Columbus's land can go to hell!"

*haynt, az ikh bagegn mayn kuzine,  
un ikh freg zi: "vos zhe makhstu, grine?"  
entfert zi mir mit a krume mine:  
"az brenen zol kolombuses medine!"*

<sup>6</sup> Greenhorn—a common denotation for a new, un-Americanized immigrant.

<sup>7</sup> The Golden Land—a common affectionate reference to America as a land of opportunity.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, "She collected paydays for many years."

**VOS GEVEN IZ GEVEN UN NITO**  
(What Was, Was, and Is No More)  
David Meyerowitz

Permit me  
to unburden my heart.  
Whether I talk sense  
or whether I speak from pain,  
I suffer from a disease,  
which is not called an illness.  
They call it old age.  
It gnaws and it yearns.

*derloybt lozt zikh dinen,  
oysredn mayn harts.  
tsi red ikh fun zinen,  
tsi red ikh fun shmerts,  
ikh layd fun a krankayt,  
vos heyst nit keyn krenk.  
men ruft es on elter,—  
es nogt un es benkt.*

For what was, was, and is no more.  
That year, that hour has already passed.  
How quickly youthful joy flies away  
and cannot be recaptured.  
For what was, was, and is no more....  
The faculties become weak,  
the hair turns gray....  
One can mend himself, hide under nice clothing,  
make himself up;  
but he fools no one but himself,  
for what was, was, and is no more....

*vayl vos geven iz geven un nishto.  
shoyn avek yene yor, yene sho.  
vi shnel farflit der yinger glik,  
un men ken es nisht khapn mer tsurik.  
vayl vos geven iz geven un nishto ...  
di kraftn vern shvakh,  
di hor vert gro ...  
men neyt zikh, men kleydt zikh,  
men makht zikh sheyn; men nart ober keynem  
nor – zikh aley, n,  
vayl vos geven iz geven un nishto ...*

When I chance to pass by a school,  
I weep tears,  
and I think of yesteryear:  
How the young little mind  
Doesn't understand its happiness,  
and when one comes to his senses,  
it is already too late.

*ven ikh gey umgern a mol farbay a school,  
gis ikh mit trenn  
un trakht fun a mol:  
vi der yungitshke moyekhl  
zayn glik nisht farshteyt,  
un kumt men tsum seykhil  
iz dan shoyn tsu shpet.*



**OY, MAME, BIN IKH FARLIBT**

(Oh, Mama, I'm in Love)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein

When he plays a beautiful and heartfelt  
Jewish melody on his fiddle,  
oh, Mama, everything feels so good.

*ven er tseshpilt zikh af zayn fidl  
a sheyn, hartsik, yidish lidl,  
oy, mame, vert mir gut on a shier.*

Then, with his gorgeous dark eyes,  
he seduced me.  
Oh, Mama, I'm so happy.

*mit zayne sheyne, shvartse oygn  
hot er dan mir tsugetsoygn,  
oy, mame, voyl un gut iz mir.*

And when he says, "Hey there, girl,  
you are so lovely and delicate,"  
and when his playing creeps into my heart,  
I want to dance,  
I want to sing.  
Oh dear, I am starting to prance.  
I can no longer live without him.

*un ven er zogt, "hey, du, meyd,  
bist dokh azoy lib un eydl,"  
un zayn shpiln krikht in hartsn arayn,  
vilt zikh tantsn,  
vilt zikh zingen.  
oy gvald, ikh ver tsushpringen.  
on im, oy, ken ikh nit mer zayn:*

Oh, Mama, I'm in love....  
Oh, Mama, I'm in love....  
A young klezmer, my devoted mama,  
is the only thing on my mind.  
I cry and laugh and don't know, Mama,  
what's going on with me.

*oy, mame, bin ikh farlibt ...  
oy, mame, bin ikh farlibt ...  
a klezmer yingl, mame getraye,  
ligt mir nor in zin,  
ikh veyn un lakh un veys nisht, mame,  
af velkher velt ikh bin.*

Oh, Mama, I'm in love....  
Oh, Mama, I'm in love....  
I want to hug the whole world  
and squeeze it close to me.  
Oh, Mama, I'm in love....

*oy, mame, bin ikh farlibt ...  
oy, mame, bin ikh farlibt ...  
kh'volt di gantse velt arumgenumen,  
un tsugedrikt tsu zikh, oy!  
oy, mame, bin ikh farlibt ...*

**ZOG, ZOG, ZOG ES MIR**

(Tell Me, Say It to Me)

Composer: Ilia Trilling    Lyrics: Chaim Tauber  
from *goldele dem bekere* (*Goldele, the Baker's Daughter*)

In the glade, by the stream, a young man walked.  
He spied a maiden there.  
She enchanted him and immediately captured his heart.  
She was as beautiful as an angel.

*in veldl baym taykhl iz a bokher gegangen.  
hot er dort a meydl derzen.  
zi hot im farkisheft, zayn harts bald gefangen.  
vi a malakh geven iz zi sheyn.*

She saw him there between the branches.  
Her heart began to beat rapidly.  
They were both shy, and just silently stared at one another—  
until he beseeched her:

*derzen hot zi im dort tsvishn di tsveygn.  
ir harts heybt on klapp on shier.  
zey shemen zikh beyde, un kukn un shvaygn  
biz er nemt zikh betn bay ir:*

"Tell me, tell me, say it to me,  
I want to hear from you already  
those four beautiful little words;<sup>9</sup>  
and answer me now.

*"zog, zog, zog es mir,  
ikh vil es hern shoyrn fun dir.  
di kleyne, sheyne verter fir;  
un an entfere mir shneler gib.*

"Tell me, say it to me right now,  
oh, say it and revive me.  
Please, why should it bother you.  
Tell me already, 'I love you.'  
With you it's a brilliant paradise;  
without you, my life is dark.  
And should we, heaven forbid, be parted,  
it would tear my heart out.

*"zog, zog, zog es gikh,  
oy zog, un zay mekhaye mikh.  
nu zog, vos ken es arn dikh?  
zog shoyrn, zog, 'ikh hob dikh lib.'  
mit dir iz likhtik a gan-eydn,  
on dir mayn lebn iz shvarts  
un vet men undz, kholile, sheydn,  
rayst men aroys mayn harts.*

"Oh, tell me, tell me, say it to me,  
I want to hear from you now  
those four beautiful little words;  
say it already, say, 'I love you.'"

*"oy, zog, zog, zog es mir,  
ikh vil es hern shoyrn fun dir.  
di kleyne, sheyne verter fir;  
zog shoyrn, zog, 'ikh hob dikh lib.'"*

---

<sup>9</sup> *ikh hob dikh lib* (I love you).

**DER DISHVASHER**

(The Dishwasher)

Composer: Herman Yablokoff

In a restaurant I saw  
an old man standing in the kitchen;  
there's commotion swirling around him; he says not a word.  
He stands and washes the dishes there,  
and with much feeling  
he sings softly to himself:

"I wash with my weak hands.  
I wash and wash, for a few pennies,  
from early till late for a stale piece of bread.  
I wash and wish for my own death.

"Once I was somebody.  
I had a home, I was rich.  
My father was good to me.  
Now I am old; no one has any use for me.  
And in the tumult  
I stand and wash.

"I have four children, all well educated.  
My sons- and daughters-in-law toss me out.  
My daughter argues with me that I should go to my son.  
He just screams: 'There's nothing I can do.'  
And in the tumult  
I stand and wash...."

*in a restoran—hob ikh gezen  
an altn man—in kitchen shteyn,  
arum im rasht—er red keyn vort.  
er shteyt un vasht—di dishes dort.  
un mit gefil  
brumt er shtil:*

*"ikh vash mit mayne shvakhe hent.  
ikh vash un vash, fardin ikh a por cent,  
fun fri biz shpet far a trukn shtikl broyt.  
ikh vash un bet af zikh aleyen dem toyt.*

*"a mol geven—mit mentshn glaykh.  
gehat a heym—gevezn raykh,  
geven iz dan—der tate gut.  
itst bin ikh alt—keyner darf mikh nit.  
un in dem rash  
shtey ikh un vash:*

*"kh'hob kinder fir—gebildet groys.  
di eydems, shnir—varfn mikh aroys.  
mayn tokhter fight—ikh zol geyn tsum zun.  
mayn zun er shrayt—ikh ken gornit ton.  
un in dem rash,  
shtey ikh un vash...."*

**DU SHAYNST VI DI ZUN**

(You Shine Like the Sun)

Composer: Ilia Trilling      Lyrics: Isidore Lillian

Day and night I think of you,  
and I am happy when I hear from you.  
Why is there a fire burning in my heart?  
Why are you so dear to me?

*say tog, say nakht, denk ikh un kler fun dir  
un ikh bin gliklekh ven ikh her fun dir.  
farvos brent in mayn harts a fayer?  
farvos bistu mir azoy tayer?*

I love to hear your sweet words,  
for what you say brings me happiness.  
From the day I first caught sight of you,  
I fell in love with you.

*ikh glaykh tsu hern dayne sheyne reyd,  
vayl vos du zogst mir dos farshaft mir freyd.  
dem tog ven ikh hob dikh derzen  
bin ikh farlibt in dir geven.*

Darling dear, tell me, am I this precious to you?  
Do you feel that your destiny is only with me?  
I gave my heart to you  
when you sang to me:

*darling dear, zog, hob ikh dikh di vert?  
filst du az du bist nor mir bashert?  
kh'hob mayn harts gegeben dir  
ven du host gezogt tsu mir:*

"You shine like the sun  
and you glow like the moon.  
Your eyes are like the stars  
that shine from heaven.

*"du shaynst vi di zun—  
un du laykhst vi di levone.  
dayne oygn vi di shtern  
fun dem himl laykhtn zey.*

Without you,  
my life is in peril.  
At the first sight of you,  
my heart jumps for joy.

*un on dir tsu zayn  
iz mayn lebn in sakone.  
ven kh'derze dikh  
git mayn harts zikh a derfrey.*

When you are here, it's day;  
when you are gone, it's night.  
You have brought me  
heaven on earth.

*ven du bist do, iz tog;  
ven du bist nito, iz nakht.  
dem himl af der erd  
hostu mir aropgebrakht.*

You shine like the sun  
and you glow like the moon.  
I truly love you.  
This I swear to you by them [the sun and the moon].

*du shaynst vi di zun,  
un du laykhst vi di levone.  
kh'hob dikh emes lib,  
dos shver ikh dir bay zey."*

**VOS IZ GEVORN FUN MAYN SHTELE?**

(Whatever Became of My *Shtetl*?)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein      Lyrics: Isidore Lillian

When I reminisce about  
how it was when I was a child,  
at home in the *shtetl*,<sup>10</sup> once upon a time, I recall how  
in those beautiful winter nights  
we used to stroll around  
and dream countless dreams.  
Oh, how things were  
so heartfelt, so beautiful then,  
when we used to pass by the synagogue,  
and the cantor's sonorous voice  
resounded so piously,  
so emotively, by the lecturer:

"As when a shepherd takes account of his flock,  
causing his sheep to pass under his staff one by one."<sup>11</sup>

Such a longing for bygone days  
has remained in my heart.

Whatever became of my *shtetl*?  
Whatever became of my old home?  
Oh, what a longing I have for my *shtetl*.  
That is where I spent my youth.  
The alleyway, the little synagogue,  
how heartfelt and how beautiful ...  
The tree, the little dairy—  
Will I ever see them again?  
Oh, whatever became of my *shtetl*?  
Oh, whatever became of the old home?

*ven ikh nem dermonen zikh  
ven ikh bin a kind geven  
in der heyms, in shtetele a mol.  
in di sheyne vinter nekht  
flegn mir shpatsirn geyn  
un kholemen khaloyms on a tsol.  
oy, vi demolt iz geven  
azoy hartsik, azoy sheyn,  
ven mir flegn geyn farbay di shul,  
un dem khazns sheyne shtim  
hot geklungen azoy frum,  
bay dem omed mit groys gefil:*

*"k'vakoras ro'e edro  
ma'avir tsono tahas shivto."*

*aza benkenish fun frier  
geblihn iz in harts bay mir.*

*vos iz gevorn fun mayn shtetele?  
vos iz gevorn fun mayn alte heyms?  
oy, vi es benkt zikh nokh mayn shtetele,  
mayn yugnt hob ikh dokh farbrakht in dem.  
dos gesele, dos shulkhl,  
vi hartsik un vi sheyn...  
dos beymele, dos milkh!—  
vel ikh es ven nokh zen?  
oy, vos iz gevorn fun mayn shtetele?  
oy, vos iz gevorn fun der alter heyms?*

<sup>10</sup> A small market town of 5,000–10,000 people.

<sup>11</sup> From one of the central prayers of the High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), concerning God's judgment of humanity.

**MAZL**

(Good Fortune)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein    Lyrics: Molly Picon  
from the film *Mamele*

**Good fortune, sooner or later you shine on everyone—**

On everyone, but not on me.

Good fortune, you bring happiness to everyone.

Why do you bypass my door?

O, how I long for you every hour.

Life passes by

and there still is no hope.

O, good fortune, sooner or later you shine on everyone—

On everyone, but not on me.

When the night arrives,

I remain awake, sitting and thinking:

Another day has already past,

and the dream that I have dreamt for myself

is gone with the wind once again.

*mazl, es shaynt a mol far yedn—*

*far yedn, nor nisht far mir.*

*mazl, du brengst a yedn freydn;*

*farvos farzamstu mayn tir?*

*oy, vi es tut benk a yede sho.*

*dos lebn fargeyt*

*un keyn hofenung iz alts nishto.*

*oy, mazl es shaynt a mol far yedn,*

*far yedn, nor nisht far mir.*

*ven es kumt on di nakht,*

*blayb ikh zitsn un trakht:*

*nokh a tog iz shoyn vider farbay,*

*un der kholem vos ikh hob gekholemt far zikh*

*iz avek mitn vint af dos nay.*

**IKH BIN A BOARDER BAY MAYN VAYB**

(I'm a Boarder at My Wife's)

Composer: Rubin Doctor

I'm a boarder at my wife's.  
Guys, it's a sweet deal.  
She attends to my every need.  
When I come home, she doesn't ask any questions.  
I am a boarder at my wife's.

*ikh bin a boarder bay mayn vayb,  
oy, mener, iz dos a tayerer job.  
zi atendet mikh mit ales,  
ven ikh kum fregt zi keyn shayles.  
ikh bin a boarder bay mayn vayb.*

I'm single once again,  
single like a young boy.  
I've divorced my wife.

*ikh bin shoyt vider single  
single vi a yingl.  
mit mayn vaybl hob ikh zikh geget.*

I thought about moving out,  
I looked for a room to lodge,  
but my wife persuaded me:

*gedenkt hob ikh tsu "mufn,"  
a room gezukht tsu shlofn  
hot mayn vaybl mikh ibergeredt:*

"Why do you need to look for bargains  
And be cramped in strange rooms,  
And be alone and talk to the walls.  
Stay here just like before.  
Be a boarder now with me."  
So like a boarder, I pay her rent.

*vos darfstu zukhn glikn,  
in fremde rooms zikh shtikn,  
un zayn aleyt un redn tsu di vent,  
blayb do iber punkt vi frier  
zay a boarder yetst bay mir.  
vi a boarder tsol ikh ir di rent.*

I'm a boarder at my wife's.  
It's so nice, so good.  
Guys, it's a sweet deal.  
She attends to my every need.  
When I come home, she doesn't ask any questions.  
I am a boarder at my wife's.

*ikh bin a boarder bay mayn vayb,  
ay voyl, ay gut, ay voyl  
oy, mener, iz dos a tayerer job.  
zi atendet mikh mit ales,  
ven ikh kum fregt zi keyn shayles.  
ikh bin a boarder bay mayn vayb.*

It's a pleasure;  
I can get it all  
as a stranger boarding at my wife's.  
I'm no greenhorn,  
and every day, after dinner,  
I lie down, just to pass the time.

*es iz a fargenign,  
ales ken ikh krign,  
vi a fremdn boarder bay mayn vayb.  
ikh bin gornit keyn griner,  
un yedn tog nokh dinner  
leyg ikh zikh tsu azoy tsum tsayt-fartrayb.*

Oh, earlier she used to curse me  
and make a big hullabaloo,  
Even when there was a stranger boarding in my house.  
But ever since I became a boarder at her place,  
she is so good to me.  
It costs me little, and she loves me.

*oy frier flegt zi mir sheltn  
un iberkern veltn  
gor mit a fremdn boarder in mayn shtub.  
nor zayt ikh bin in board bay ir,  
iz zi azoy gut tsu mir,  
es kost mir bilik un zi hot mikh lib.*

**DER ALTER TSIGAYNER**

(The Old Gypsy)

Composer: Abraham Ellstein    Lyrics: Jacob Jacobs  
from *bublitski* (Little Bagels)

Yonder, on a hill, under the free, open skies—  
far from the noise of the city's tumult,  
stands a little hut all by itself.  
An old Gypsy lives in it.

*dort af a bergele unter dem frayen himl,  
vayt fun dem rashikn shtots geriml,  
shteyt zikh a khatkele aley n af an ort.  
an alter tsigayner voynt dort.*

Yonder sounds such sweet tones,  
that sob in minor,  
when the old Gypsy takes up his fiddle,  
with all his fire and ardor,  
as only a Gypsy can.

*dort hern zikh tener zeyer zise,  
vos veynen in minor,  
ven af zayn fidl fargeyt zikh  
der alter tsigayner,  
mit zayn gantsn fayer un bren,  
nor vi a tsigayner ken.*

A Gypsy melody is so beautiful.  
Once you hear it, you never forget it,  
for it is warm, heartfelt, full of charm.  
A strange power, it fills you with love as well as  
with suffering.  
You hear it but once  
and it gives you no rest.  
The melody enchants you.

*a tsigayner melodie iz azoy sheyn.  
hert ir es, fargest ir es nit, neyn,  
vayl zi iz varem, hartsik, ful mit khey n,  
a modne kraft.  
zi git aykh libe un oykh laydnshaft.  
hert ir es nor eyn mol, git es keyn ru.  
s'farkisheft aykh di melodie.*

When you first hear it,  
it sounds simply naïve,  
and you have no idea of  
how deeply it moves the soul.  
From every side it infuses you  
with passion and joy.  
You want to hold on forever to these—  
to these sounds of the melody.

*ven ir hert es, dakht zikh aykh,  
s'iz prost naiv,  
un ir hot dan gornit keyn bagrif,  
vi es rirt on di neshome tif.  
fun yeder zayt zi filt aykh on  
mit lust un freylekhkayt.  
onhalt n vilt ir eybik ot a di  
di klangen fun di melodie.*

When the Gypsy plays his fiddle,  
it burns the heart.  
The sound of his fiddle  
awakens your soul's desire.  
Your passions are aroused  
when his bow strikes the fiddle's strings.  
It's like floating to heaven,  
all you want is life,  
And life becomes so sweet....  
That is the old Gypsy's song.

*ven der tsigayner shpilt zikh zayn lidl,  
in harts git a bri.  
fun zayn fidl der klang  
dervekt dayn neshomes farlang.  
dayn blut es kokht un es tsit,  
zayn fidl dem boygn er tsit.  
nemt in di himlen shvebn,  
es glust zikh nor tsum lebn  
dos lebn vert dan azoy gut...  
dos iz dem altn tsigayners lid.*