

Papirossen (Cigarettes) – Herman Yablokoff

Yiddish

A kalte nakht a nepldike finster umetum,
shteyt a yingele fartroyert un kukt zikh arum.
Fun regn shitst im nor a vant,
a koshikl halt er in hant,
un zayne oygn betn yedn shtum.

Ikh hob shoyn nit keyn koyekh mer
arumtsugeyn in gaz, hungerig un
opgerizn fun dem regn naz.
Ikh shlep arum zikh fun baginen,
keyner git nisht tsu fardinen,
ale lakhn, makhn fun mir shpaz.

Kupitye koyft she, koyft she papirosn,
trukene fun regn nisht fargozn.
Koyft she bilik benemones,
koyft un hot oyf mir rakhmones,
ratevet fun hunger mikh atsind..
Kupitye koyft she shvebelakh antikn,
dermit verd ir a yosiml derkvikn.
Umzizt mayn shrayen un mayn loyfn,
keyner vil bay mir nit koyfn,
oysgeyn vel ikh muzn vi a hunt.

Ikh hob gehat a shvesterl, a kind fun der natur,
mit mir tsusamen zikh geshlept hot zi a gants yor.
Mit ir geven iz mir fil gringer, laykhter vern flegt
der hunger, ven ikh fleg a kuk ton nor oyf ir.
Mit amol gevorn iz zi shvakh un zeyer krank,
oyf mayne hent iz zi geshtorbn oyf a gazn-bank.
Un az ikh hob zi farloyrn, hob ikh alts ongevoyrn,
zol der toyt shoyn kumen oykh tsu mir.

Translation

A cold night, a misty darkness swirls about
A boy stands and sadly looks around
Only a wall protects him from the rain
He holds a little tray in his hand
And his eye prays silently to each one that passes.
Already I have no more strength to move around the street
Hungry and bedraggled from the soaking rain
I drag myself around from the day's beginning
Nobody wants my service, they all laugh and make fun of me

Pile up and buy, do you want to buy cigarettes?
Dry, those that the rain forgot to wet. Buy them cheap, believe me,
Buy and have pity on me. Save me from starvation
Pile up and buy the best matches
And luck will be always with you
Forgive my futile shouting and my rambling on
Nobody will buy anything from me
In the end I'll finish up like a dog.

I had a little sister
A child of nature
We were always together
And we travelled around for a whole year
She made me feel on top of the world,
Her laughter would fly away the hunger
And when we were happy
My only thoughts were for her.
Then there came a time when she became weak and very ill.
She died in my arms on a street bench
And since I lost her, I have lost everything
May death come already soon to me.