



# THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series A: Writings and Addresses. 1947-1991

Box 1, Folder 2, Poetry [typescript manuscript], 1947-1948.



## FRUSTRATE

Dame Society cavorted  
As she clasped joyously  
To her murky breast  
One more convention idiot.

Date, she proclaimed it  
An' the yellow-lock youth  
Re-echoed "Date", weakly  
Submitting to form ignorant.

Honest, God-given lust  
perverted rigidly  
To insipid format  
Under the Good Dame's  
embracing, tattered shawl.

Frustrate, sensed he  
As finger stroked limpid finger  
But suppress he must  
Nature's beckon eternal.

For the Good Dame smirked  
flailing the shawl  
Intoning  
"Date...".

*Dec 1946*

## SOUL-DRIVEN ENIGMA

My heart reached out  
To embrace  
But you were not there  
You - ethereal you - were not.

How long must the soul  
Drenched with sharing thought  
Smart alone, confined  
In tower ivored isolation?

When will I possess thee  
O, Evanescent One?  
When will bosom and mind  
Claim thee wholly, completely.

The sheer, resilient, thought  
Of finite gathering you  
Sustains me, Nourishes  
The driven soul.

But haven't I yet  
Embraced thee?  
- Or  
Have I?

## ANVIL TONES

Peace, called they, and  
Good Will bellowed lustily  
But hollow the sham  
Did din on crushed souls.<sup>0</sup>

The prince prophecy glorious  
On page engraved  
But in disciples' soul  
Sham - lip mockery.

O, how long must  
Circumcised hearts  
Smart under blessures  
Chiseled with Christian love?

Abraham's sires turned  
The cheek over and o'er  
Yet butchered the Pius sword  
To the anvil-ring:  
"Peace, good-will".

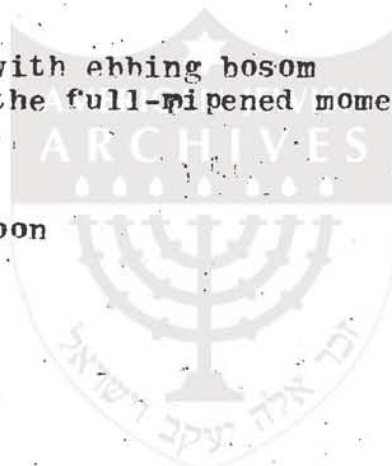
In sepulchrous grave,  
The prince, if he be,  
Muttered: The words are mine  
But thine the hypocrisy.

Serenity on Cliff-side

The milk-moon lavished a  
a kiss sensuous  
upon the lake waters  
and my own.

She  
and I  
together, with ebbing bosom  
sucked of the full-ripened moments  
- our own.

Serene  
the milk-moon  
and we.



Dec. 1946

## ABLAZE

The seas, massive typhooning  
crushed pulverized the fetid dust

the heavens cracked under  
blazing shattering thunderclap

electricity sparked surged  
spewed forth dynamitic fury

the earth was rent, the heavens  
burst, the skies rumbled

cósmos, a seething cauldron  
was enflamed, brewed over

knife glistened, clashed intoxicated  
with bristling, bloodened sword

under spuming sun  
you bared your incandescent skin

you were all the fury  
- past and Future

ROOTED ETERNAL

In my garden' heart  
There blooms a rose  
Stalwart, yet delicate,  
Fine, yet fulsome.

Her roots fasten deep  
In my garden's heart  
And nourish does she  
On freshets of my  
earthen soul.

For nought, foreign winds  
Caress her, for my bosom-loam  
Enmesh the rose-roots  
Embracing them for Eternity.

Jan 3, '47

## SUMMONS

In veiled darkness, have I longed  
For thee  
O Scythe,  
Harbinger of sleeping Death.

In thy soft arms would I repose  
Sweetly, covering  
My haggard self  
With sullen oblivion.

Must I wrangle with fool existence  
Unbabbling the bard's word  
The sage's gem, only for  
~~the~~ Soddy, commercial pelf.

Must I wrestle Dionysius  
In frenzy stuporous  
Vainly struggling against treacherous  
Tides, Dishonest word, Morbid  
concession of arrogant tolerance?

Come, becloak me,  
End all struggle  
All torturous conflict  
Singeing my tethered soul.

Come, now, there is no purpose  
No direction, no end  
- not in starry planet,  
nor on barren social earth.

Come, prithee, now!  
- but hold...

Faint do I hear the tinkly tread  
Of Eros, She descends upon me  
Her lips taste my furrowed brow  
Her kiss balm my sanguine breast.

Yet stay, O Scythe,  
Pause for moments singular  
While I taste of ~~Eros~~ <sup>supple</sup>,  
In her, perhaps, will I find  
solace, partial solution  
to Life's sordid complexities.

Stay, momentarily, Linger  
While I try this once,  
For if not in her  
Do I find Purpose,  
- Then wherein?

Should she be the age-sought  
Balm to fevered mind  
Then leave me to suckle  
This once, Ethereal,

Again will I summon thee, O Scythe,  
But then when all  
To Perdition's lest  
- Eros as well...

ROOTED, ETERNAL

In my garden' heart  
There blooms a rose  
Stalwart, yet delicate,  
Fine, yet fulsome.

Her roots fasten deep  
In my garden's heart  
And nourish does she  
On freshets of my  
earthen soul.

For nought, foreign winds  
Caress her, for my bosom-loam  
Enmesh the rose-roots  
Embracing them for Eternity.

Jan 3, '47

LABYRINTHINE HEART

To the partner  
of an astromically  
wonderful relationship!  
Herman

I took my heart in hand  
and looked thru it.

Nothing could be seen  
for inflamed, festered tissue  
Enveloped, beveled the  
Pumping soul.

With scalpel's shimmering edge  
I incised the veiling, opaque tissue.  
Thru the rent aperture I peered  
To fathom the mystery of  
Passion, heart, mind.

Probed, I probe  
And widen the breach did I  
But more did I gaze an' seek  
Less did I know  
Less could I comprehend the maze.

Mending temporary the cut  
I placed the torn heart  
Within the bosom well  
Leaving it to heal with time,  
Leaving it till mind could comprehend  
the incised, festering heart.

(conceived wistfully on a  
morbid morn sprinkled abundantly  
with lurid moonlight...4/6/47)

BLISS ON HIGH

The warmth of silken night  
Vapors into nothingness  
As heart of my near one  
Exudes affectionful sighs  
Destined for me, for me alone.

On high, Gabriel <sup>trumpets</sup> jubilantly  
For me, for me alone,  
For in moonlit air  
The sveltness of body melts,  
Distills in beloved fingers.

~~But~~ <sup>really</sup> Not for the caress  
Does he exult  
The mellowness of trumpet-tones  
Herald glorious union  
Only union of <sup>entwining</sup> ~~binding~~ spirit.

Yea, he does exult  
How he does embrace  
Not the corporeal  
Not me, me alone  
But we - we of spirit.

## NAIVE TOUCHES

Guard your reach to the grape-bunch,  
Naive one.

Are they yours...

...Singularly yours?

Cannot your musty pupil perceive,  
Foolish one.

See, they nod in the whistling wind  
Turning to each who deign touches.

Your lips smack lusciously the nectar  
But, silly one,  
Is not saccharine taste equally sweet  
On tongues of others?

Reach, yes, reach  
But think not thyself  
Sole connoisseur  
Sole luscious taster.

The grape-bunch will be plucked  
By passerby  
Till hemmed in by you  
If you will but consider hemming,  
Naive one...

## ABLAZE

The seas, massive typhooning  
crushed pulverized the fetid dust

the heavens cracked under  
blazing shattering thunderclap

volcanoes churned festered sorely  
spilled over hot furious pustulent lava

electricity sparked surged  
spewed forth dynamitic fury

the earth was rent, the heavens  
burst, the skies rumbled

cosmos, a seething cauldron  
was enflamed, brewed over

under spuming sun  
you bared your incandescent skin

you were all the fury  
- past and Future

June 1947

OMNIPOTENT

You lay in my embrace  
and the heavens bowed  
to kiss the waters, damp  
chloridic kiss

The world my beckon obeyed  
and the night paused  
and the dawn was reticent

I was omnipotent  
and you were my power  
my right to rule

Within the <sup>my</sup> passive moment  
all nature cowered  
as we were one

We were reason, logos, cause  
we were space, ages, geography  
force, passion

in wake of our inexplicable  
magnitude  
all else was residue,  
meaningless  
impotent

## CHARGE

With first crushing embrace  
I knew you charge of my  
life...

You electrified my being, surged  
crazedly thru my coiled ~~being~~ body  
and with  
wild, orgasmic fury  
you rushed, welled over my  
mind, my thought

You flamed my whirring world  
with maddening, frenetic  
frenzy you were  
electricity, sparks, ~~blaze~~ fire  
you were all that simmers, that  
ever will ...

Without your incandescence, I am  
but hulking, lifeless mass  
...with you, I am life itself

Life  
vivid mad rushing  
endless

## BLIGHTED MATERNITY

Lost -

Eternally lost?

sucked into the quagmire  
pulled down into societal abyss  
of flaccid complacency

the tutorial prod is snapped  
and clammy familial bonds  
invest the once restless  
yearning mind

now shackled soul

- only smothered smugness?

engirdling, matriarchal arms  
lovingly going "good only for you"  
lead apace into the yawning, gaping  
chasm where the groping light  
is now snuffed, now permeated  
with horrid stench of littered souls  
Lost, eternally lost  
in familial, societal embrace  
- "good only for you..."

the dainty sodden word, the tainted smile  
commercial chit-chat - these  
the guideposts, the end  
the elan nouveau, maternally-propelled

pricked, needled mind - swaddled  
in other climes - writhes, cringes serpentine  
in abortive revolt...but late,  
too late - or lost  
Lost eternally?

June 1947

## MY LIFE

With first crushing embrace  
I knew you charge of my  
life...

You electrified my being, you  
surged crazedly thru my coiled  
body and with  
wild, orgasmic fury  
you rushed, welled over my  
mind, my thought...

You flamed my whirring world  
with maddening, frenetic  
frenzy.... you were  
electricity, sparks, fire  
you were all that blazes, that  
ever will blaze...

Without your incandescence, I am  
but hulking, lifeless mass  
...with you, I am life itself  
Life, vivid mad rushing  
endless

I took my heart in hand  
and looked thru it.

Nothing could be seen,  
for inflamed, festered tissue  
enveloped, bevelled the  
~~Soot~~ ~~poor~~ pumping Soul.

With scalpel's shimmering, edge  
I incised the veiling, opaque tissue.  
Thru the rent aperture I peered  
To satiate the mystery of  
Passion, heart, mind.

Probed, I probe  
And wider the breach did I  
But woe did I gaze and seek  
Less did I know  
Less could I comprehend the maze.

Minding temporarily the cut  
I placed the torn heart  
within the bosom well,  
leaving it to heal with time,  
leaving it till mind could comprehend  
the ~~opened~~ heart.  
incised, yet festering

## NAIVE TOUCHES

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By passerby

Till hemmed in by you

If you will but consider hemming,

Naive one...

OMNIPOTENT ~~man~~

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and the heavens bowed  
to kiss the waters, damp  
chloridic kiss

The world my beckon obeyed  
and the night paused  
and the dawn was reticent

I was omnipotent  
and you were my power  
my right to rule

Within the impassive moment  
all nature cowered  
as we were one

We were reason, logos, cause  
we were space, ages, geography  
force, passion

In wake of <sup>our</sup> inexplicable  
magnitude, all else  
was residue, meaningless  
impotent

CHAFF OF TIME  
(THE FICKLE FURY...)

Hurting moments  
scurry through the abysses of  
the space

you, moment,  
most valued gift of ages  
I long to share with  
whom I thought cherished

Palm-wise I held you out  
as a token of esteem, trusting  
you would be in-gathered fiercely  
precious gem that you are

for in embrace, embrace of you  
and the cherished one (I thought)  
you, exquisite moment, become  
meaningful timeless eternal ---

but the palm extends in vain  
and you, gilded moment, are chaff  
repudiated by a wind-blown, directionless  
fury  
all past, without future

Sept 1, 1947

## NUCLEAR VISION

Gather in, my brothers  
For we are at journey's end

Stark, brutal, flashingly sudden  
our fate  
Under mushroom's dervish  
Loosed by addled mind  
Crushed down

...all

Gather in, my brothers  
Noah revisits  
And into the ark-bowels  
descend we...all  
To Arrarat be off

The cycle full-wheel  
has turned  
And the dove is dead.  
Gather in, my brothers  
gather in

Or is there  
a messiah

February 1948

## INHUMANITY PRECIPITATE

It was in the loneliness of morning  
I found the freedom of man  
When the cool unhurried breeze  
Envelops the undriven mind  
When ~~even~~ the far-distant  
    sounds of commerce  
Are tiny symphonies of pleasant  
    peace.

When the clock ticks, not as in waking  
    ~~noon~~ day  
The leisure of calm morning moments

And the newspaper is still abed  
And the shriek of hate is deathmute  
And the scud of inhumanity ~~has~~ settled  
Leaving clear the fluid of man's peace  
In the loneliness of morning

April '48

BEFORE INHUMANITY WAKES

It was in the loneliness of morning  
I found the freedom of man  
When the cool unhurried breeze  
Envelops the undriven mind  
~~And~~ when even the far-distant sounds  
of commerce  
Are tiny symphonies of pleasant peace.

Then the clock ticks, not as in waking day,  
The leisure of calm morning moments

And the newspaper is still abed  
And the shriek of hate is deathmate  
And the scud of inhumanity has settled  
Leaving clear the fluid of man's peace  
In the loneliness of morning



April, 1948

PROPOSAL

For a loaf of bread my hand?

No, for paties and verandas  
scotches at twilight  
for low-slung carriages  
whisking thru fetor of drunken night.

and ringlets, and armlets  
and noselets (what say, primitive?)

no, these -- Class, veneer  
of inbred existence

For these, not alone hand  
but heart and mind  
total submission.

But what of love?  
Is not the soul too tender  
for barter across the board?  
Must all life, even the reality of passion,  
be weighed, sliced, measured, and offered  
on the block to highest bidders?  
have we sunk low, so abysmally low  
in economic vale so determined  
to deny the priceless, the unbarterable  
the human element...

But security, friend  
think of security...(is this really your voice?)

think of morning without maids  
(I think of its...so what?)  
think of noon without play  
(I think of it - ~~but~~ not in  
~~the~~ ghettos of the select, but  
in the free open places where  
MAN is the measure, not the MINE)  
think of evenings without drink  
(I think of it - liquid is wet and  
quenches mightily from brook as from vintage bottle)

think of all these, friend  
Security...

Well.....

I think of all these  
I think of the hollow mock laughter  
the dull insensate brains  
swaddled in cognac fine  
I think of long corseted evenings  
in polished stables  
I think of all these  
and more

Hear you, then:  
Give me my bread, crusted but real  
my freely-flowing brook  
in everyman's open places

give me these and  
a heart that wills life  
a mind that wills freedom  
a voice that is its own

these are my security.



HT 7/48

returned and why

the slumb'ring fold of pillow impressed

the quiet crinkle of sheet reminding

hair strand, ebony

preserved and lingering

softlipp'd whisper predawn and

corridorlong

the place where fur rested soft

where foot padded elegant

where pleasantformed back reclined

these betokened you

you were these - infinite more

but you are not here

and I long

ever

dec 27/48

## SWITCHBOARD BLUES

or—"...the crown of gloria has gone from our head..."

Now, o now, that Gloria is gone

Whom, o o'er whom, shall all o' us fawn?

Who will replace that golden voice-box

Thrilling more even than bagel-and-lox

Who will make now that "Yes, Please?" so liquid

With Gloria now gone our fate is so wickwed

Eyes that smouldered and a smile so rutilant

Gloria remains a memory so succulent

Peter and Shirley and Edith and Ruthie

and Saul and Louie and Shalom and Boozie

the boys in the backroom, the girls in fuchsia

all sadly lament the wan-going of Glori - a....

April 21, 1950

### FRUITY MORAL

Bob-white glided o'er the gardener's fence  
To sate his hungered breast  
With the dangling cherry  
Matured by sensuous breezes.

"Dart and pluck," chided the voice,  
"It is yours but for taking.  
The fence is no barrier...  
Dart and pluck - it is yours."

But lo, Bob-white stayed his flight  
And in his pristine soul murmured:  
"It is the gardener's  
It is not mine..."

The gardener gazed wistfully, for  
He cared not.

Black crow glided o'er the gardener's fence  
To ravage lustfully  
The dangling, ripened cherry  
Pathed in salty dew-mist.

No voice chided.  
No voice restrained.

Black crow darted, and plucked  
With worn beak the fulsome cherry.  
"It is not the gardener's," cawed he  
It is mine - mine."

The cherry, Black Crow consumed  
Whilst Bob-white ever murmured morally  
- yet hungrily  
And the gardener cared not.

CHAFF OF TIME  
(THE FICKLE FURY...)

Hurtling moments  
scurry through the abysses of  
~~the~~ space

you, moment,  
most valued gift of ages  
I long to share with  
whom I thought cherished

Palm-wise I held you out  
as a token of esteem, trusting  
you would be in-gathered fiercely  
precious gem that you are

for in embrace, embrace of you  
and the cherished one (I thought)  
you, exquisite moment, become  
meaningful timeless eternal ---

but the palm extends in vain  
and you, gilded moment, are chaff  
repudiated by a wind-blown, directionless  
fury  
all past, without future

## A LESSON IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

To M. H. T.

The typewriter's going clickety-clack,  
Two fingers are pounding a steady hack,  
The presses are rolling  
The deadline is tolling,  
And Marc is fit to be tied.

"Yes Mr. Gellman, No, Mr. May,"  
(Gosh, get the heck out of my way)  
"I'll have it ready, don't worry a bit,"  
(Those guys'll soon see me having a fit.)  
At last with his head up, he smiles and then  
Turns to his typewriter once again,  
But there's only one more thing he must do,  
He types "number thirty" and his day's work is through.

R. S. Z.

SHOWERED-EVE

In sacred circle

they bellowed joyously,

Aimlessly endlessly lavishly

they chortled

Like bold-breasted robins

they murmured mellow, and

cawed they as spirited ravens raucous.

The gossip-worm thru commune beak

slivered wriggled and at

its plush pregnant segments they

jabbed and bit and chewed

to a thick luscious cud satisfying.

And as the beaks sharpened

to brightness so dull and

the gossip-worm wriggled

o'er and o'er

the feather-capp'd minds light

as their cover

soared high in mystic heights

sundered everlastingly from

bodies' bosom.

This showered-eve was for

beaks betokened, only beaks.

June, 1947

## MANEUVER FOR FREEDOM

I looked out, far out across the glazed waters  
And saw with clear eye  
Civilization's freedom-guarantors.  
Huge were they, like their creators  
And their pale drabness of gray (surely reflective of their  
makers' state)  
Shone defiantly under heaven-sent rays.

Amidst the cordon of freedom's bulwark  
Dipped the graceful gull  
(Surely not propelled by atom's vengeful drive)  
Untrammelled she soared and dipped.  
No fears, no hates, no suspicion  
Marked her maneuver.  
Surely was she free as she flapped her wing elegant  
Baring a white breast, so glistening white  
(Surely reflective of her maker's state).

The somber, monochromed armada (of certain technological  
perfection)  
Inched awkwardly, mechanically, slicing the waters  
Whilst the gull flapped heavenward, them (at will's desire).  
Glided sylph-like to water's surface, pausing refreshingly.  
But the pale hulks plodded onward, ever onward.  
In their black cavernous depths, their creators  
(once their creators, now their shackled serfs)  
Moved in order, disciplined in action (and thought?).

Maneuver for freedom did the giant automatons  
To the clank of hard, beaten chains (symbolical?)  
And the gull softly, peacefully, unrestrainedly winged  
On nature's breeze; hovered o'er man's proud creation  
Wondering, "Maneuver for freedom?"

Deep in her white, feathered breast she buried her head  
And shed a tear - a salty, bitter tear  
Dropping it *gravely* ~~gullily~~ upon these  
Maneuvering for freedom.

1/20/47