

A barg-shpatsir in Sveyts.

Gevorn gants mid
ikh bin in der mit
mayn bargishn veg -
un kh'zets zikh avek.
Mayn otem iz shver,
klapt hastik mayn harts...
Ikh zits un derher
a murmlen a tsarts.
Mayn zeyger vayzt akht.
S'iz shtil, nor nit shtum.
Alts otemt arum
mit ruiker makht.
Di luft iz 'zoy frish,
der vald - azoy sheyn...
Ikh bin do aleyn,
nor elnt kh'bin nisht.
A shmeterl dreyt zikh
aruf un arop -
un ot in mayn kop
heybm on zikh tsu dreyen
fraye ferzn af yidish...
Vilt zikh mir alts bashraybm,
alts, vos ikh ze, her, derfil, -
un davke af yidish. Es dreyt zikh a vort
nokh a vort -
un tsuzamen
mit di yodles, di berg un der luft,
mit dem murmlen
funem vaserfal kleynem dernebm,
filn on mayn gants vezn
libe yidishe verter.
Es vilt zikh mir ufshteyn un shrayen,
az yidish zol shaln do, iber di berg.
Un plutsem kh'dermon zikh, az efsher fun
do gor nit vayt
se hobm shpatsirt di fir yidishe shrayber a
mol...
Nu, es vert shoy'n shpet,
darf men, layder, geyn aheym.
Morgn hob ikh a kontsert -
un dos ershte mol
in der alter velt
vel ikh shpiln yidishe muzik.

A Stroll In The Mountains In Switzerland

I grow quite weary
in the midst of my mountain stroll
and I sit down.
I breathe heavily
and my heart beats rapidly.
As I sit here,
I hear a gentle murmur.
My watch says eight o'clock--
it's quiet, but not silent;
everything around me is breathing
with quiet strength.
The air is so fresh,
the forest so beautiful...
I am here alone
but I am not lonely.
A butterfly twists and turns,
back and forth,
and then---
free verses in Yiddish
start whirling in my head,
and I want to describe everything--
everything I see or feel--
in none other than Yiddish.
One word whirls after another,
and together with fir trees,
the mountains, the air,
and the murmuring of the small waterfall nearby
my entire being becomes filled
with words of love for Yiddish.
I want to stand up and shout, so that Yiddish
would resound here across the mountains.
And suddenly I remember
that not far from here
the four Yiddish writers used to stroll.
Well, it's getting quite late--
unfortunately I have to go home.
I have a concert tomorrow,
and for the first time in the Old World
I'll play Yiddish music.

In early 20th century, Mendele Moykher-Sforim, Sholem-Aleykhem, Khaim Nakhman Byalik and Ben-Ami.

travelled together to Switzerland.
Their walks in the mountains outside Geneva
were described by Sholem-Aleykhem in one of his
cycles of short stories.