

Miknaf Haaretz

A Shavuot Zine





Shavuot is a festival of feasting; a celebration of the first fruits and the revelation of Torah at Sinai. This zine, we hope, is both fruit and revelation; the first offering of 'Miknaf Haaretz' and of the Torah that continues to be revealed between us. It is the result of years of conversation and dreaming for a wild, reverent, justice-centred jewish diasporism in Britain. What a feast.

Miknaf Haaretz// מִכְנַף הָאָרֶץ (Isaiah 24:16) literally means end, edge or wing of the earth. From these edges, Rebbe Nachman teaches, however desolate or uncertain, there is song. *Miknaf-haaretz*, this edge-land, both end and wing at once, sings.

We have been teetering on a precipice long before this pandemic but that precipice has now been thrown into stark relief: the impossibilities of the inequalities that have become our status quo, the unnecessary inaccessibility of so much work & play, the mounting homelessness, the growing hungry, the dire institutional racism that has left our BAME communities especially vulnerable to the virus, the proliferation of 'non-essential work', the reality of so many forced to live in abusive homes, the state of care for our elders... We are at an edge, a frightening edge. But an edge with a wing.

The submissions we received speak both to this frightening edge and to the winged-dreams of something different. The pieces speak for themselves, of what it means to be alive in this moment, honouring the passing of jewish time when the world as we knew it has changed beyond comprehension. And they speak to each other, full of inter-weaving threads. A rich conversation. A song.

We have been overwhelmed by the beauty and generosity of these contributions. (We have to keep pinching ourselves - does such a vibrant british jewish diaspora already exist?!) Whilst most of these submissions do come from the UK, we are honoured to hold space for dear friends & comrades a little further afield. Our work is indelibly connected.

We feel so deeply honoured to weave this zine together and share it with you all. We offer it as a prayer for all of our healing & liberation at this time. Enjoy at your own pace & time, in a tree, with tea, in bed, in pajamas, etc. We hope it gives a sense of community over Shavuot even if we are physically distant. Please do share it with friends and let us know what you think :)

We want to offer a huge huge thank you from the bottom of our hearts to everyone who contributed. To the tradition at our backs (oh we've had our moments) but we are so proud & excited to be a part of this spirit-rich, liberation-loving journey which we learn more of every single day. To all our teachers, rebbes and priestesses, plants & creatures who nourish and heal, befriend & enchant us. And to the great mystery themselves, who spins our webs together, we are beyond blessed to be alive on this planet in this time.

Wishing you all a *chag samaech*.

With much gratitude, love & solidarity,

Sara & Samson Xx

5. *On Herbal Grounds*. Sam Fox.
6. *Revelation*. Yael Tischler.
8. *Dryad's Saddle*. Rum.
10. *Bell Flowers on the Doorstep*. Rosie Mercer.
11. *Counting the omer*. Margot Seigle.
14. *Owl*. Deana Gershuny.
15. *Tender Times*. Nici.
17. *The Healthy Hamsa*. Gillian Samuel.
19. *Mum's last Shavuot*. Louise Burman.
20. *Between a hard place and a rock*. Joel Lazarus.
22. *Letter*. Beebee Vanunu.
25. *Potential Bursting open*. Helen Jebreel.
26. *We hope, we wait*. Roxana Jebreel.
27. *Jerusalem*. Nadine Batchelor-Hunt.
28. *Kishkes*. Rena Oppenheimer.
29. *revelations / tefillin*. Ari Wharton.
31. *Time in Lockdown*. Rob Freudenthal.
33. *The Revelation Will Not Be on Zoom*. Sara Moon.
35. *The Intimacy of Unknowing*. Ryn Silverstein.
36. *Living in Rural Albania*. Maya Brown.
38. *These Weeks*. Mel Boda.

39. *Atzeres*. Jake Berger
40. *The Threshing Floor*. Sivan Rotholz.
41. *Food for All*. Nickolas 'Nakhie' Faynshteyn.
42. *The Feast of Weeks*. Isaac Tendler.
44. *I am Ownerless*. Joe Hyman.
46. *Three Mountains*. Samson Hart.
48. *The Broken Earth//Stone-lore*. Sage Brice.
50. *bleeding at sinai*. Taya Mâ Shere.
51. *The Edge Place*. Emily.
52. *Standing at the edge, again*. Yael Roberts.
53. *Untitled*. Sol Weiss.
54. *Each Day*. Lila Sarene.
56. *In the Here & Now*. Eliot Cohen.
58. *A Diasporist Vegan Cheesecake Recipe*. Sara & Samson.
60. *Us* (bios of contributors).

Shekinah שכינה • El Shaddai אלהים • Ima Ila'ah אלהים
• Tzimtzemai תצמצמי •

⌘ On Herbal Grounds ⌘

As I walk through the woodland nearest me, I am looking for medicine. It is much too dark under the tree canopy for most plant bodies. I find myself drawn to the edge where healing grows in abundance. I sit here. I hold space for this boundary by indulging in her bounty. The following plants are sacred guardians I've been supported by, invite yourself into their conversation by making tea, dream pillow, smudge stick, or take a cutting and explore that journey.

mugwort

nettles • skullcap • yarrow •

cleavers • ground ivy • dandelion •

♥ harvest, ingest, smoke w/care ♥

Revelation

Yael Tischler

וְהָיָה יְהוָה עִבְרָר וְרוּחַ גְּדוֹלָהּ וְחֶזֶק מְפָרֵק הָרִים וּמִשְׁבַּר סְלַעִים לְפָנָי יְהוָה לֹא בְרוּחַ יְהוָה וְאַחַר הָרוּחַ רָעַשׁ לֹא בְרַעַשׁ
יְהוָה:
וְאַחַר הָרַעַשׁ אֵשׁ לֹא בְאֵשׁ יְהוָה וְאַחַר הָאֵשׁ קוֹל דְּמָמָה דְּקָה:

And God/dess passed by. There was a great and mighty wind, splitting mountains and shattering rocks by the power of God/dess; but God/dess was not in the wind. After the wind—an earthquake; but God/dess was not in the earthquake.

And after the earthquake, fire - but God/dess was not in the fire - and after the fire - a still, small voice.

- I Kings 19:11-12

And Miriam saw the mountain, aflame and thundering. The winds blew dust in her eyes and the smoke clouded her lungs. She coughed, couldn't breathe, as the ground shook beneath her. The mountain hovered over her head. And she thought to herself, between wheezing breaths, *Is this the God we are meant to serve, now that we have thrown off the yoke of Pharaoh? Is this the only kind of power we can envisage, one that strikes fear into our hearts, so that we serve because it is the only way we feel we can cling to our lives? This is not the God I serve. I did not leave slavery to one King to serve another King.*

So, she turned, and she voted with her feet. And as her people stood in awe beneath the mountain, she walked away, until the smoke cleared and the noise faded in her ears and her lungs were full of clean air.

The Well had followed her, like a loyal pet, a sphere of water rolling alongside her like tumbleweed. When she stopped, it flattened itself on the chapped earth and settled into the shape of a pond. Around her, date palms grew up, offering shade and fruit. An oasis materialised around her. The air was fresh, with a whiff of something sweet.

“What do You want of us?” she asked, of nobody in particular.

No answer came, but the gentle rustle of palm branches in the wind, their reflections rippling on the water.

Miriam sat in the quiet for a long while, listening.

Out of quiet came a bird with wide white wings and a long, regal neck. It circled in the air above her, before landing in the pond. Its great orange beak looked sideways, so that its black eyes met her own. It paddled towards her, waddling with a familiar grace onto dry land.

“So, you left, too, Tzipporah? Didn't want to be there for your husband's finest hour?”

The bird changed - its feathers melting into skin the colour of earth, its long neck shrinking, but retaining its bird-like grace, its black eyes still beautifully piercing and knowing, its birdlike figure becoming that of a woman.

“My husband has many talents, but I’ve never been interested in the fanfare with which he conducts his relationship with the One Beyond Us. Fire and fury and thunder. It is not how She speaks to me. Or to you, I presume?”

Tzipporah sat next to her sister-in-law.

“I think power shows itself to us however we imagine it, however we conceive of it... I have never imagined Fire and Fury, so I have never received Fire and Fury. Only the calm, the water, the dreams, the prickling of an inkling at the back of my neck, the music, and sometimes the whispers of wind... I wish my brother could imagine something else,” said Miriam. “I am not here to be bullied into subservience. I left that life.”

Tzipporah nodded. “When my father took us to his shrine, he would always caution us - to never get stuck on one idea of the Ones Beyond Us, to never imagine They could only be in the fire and the smoke and the blood of the offerings and the violence that man imagines to be power. There is a power that looks gentle, too, like a Mother caring for her children. Like a bird, cradling her young with the tips of her feathers.”

“Moses grew up in the shadow of a tyrant. That is all he knows. *I* want to know something more... When She comes to me, it is - like this, Tzipporah -” Miriam drew her finger to her lips, and the two sat in the quiet.

The wind was only a soft note, and there was no earthquake, or fire - only...

...

...

...

A still, small voice.

The one inside each living being - the Earth, the sand, the water, the skies, the trees, the hum of the breath of two women - sisters - sitting beside a pond in the middle of a desert.

The only fire, the flicker of energy when Tzipporah reaches out to clasp Miriam’s hand and the two of them sit in the comfort of the Divine Presence.

“*This* is revelation,” says Tzipporah.

“*This* is revelation,” says Miriam.

Later, a white bird with a large wingspan flies off into the night sky. And a woman sits alone by a pond, in the middle of the desert, to receive Torah.

Dryad's Saddle

A soft cucumber smell
of seaside
and deep earth.

Scales gently graze
fingertips.

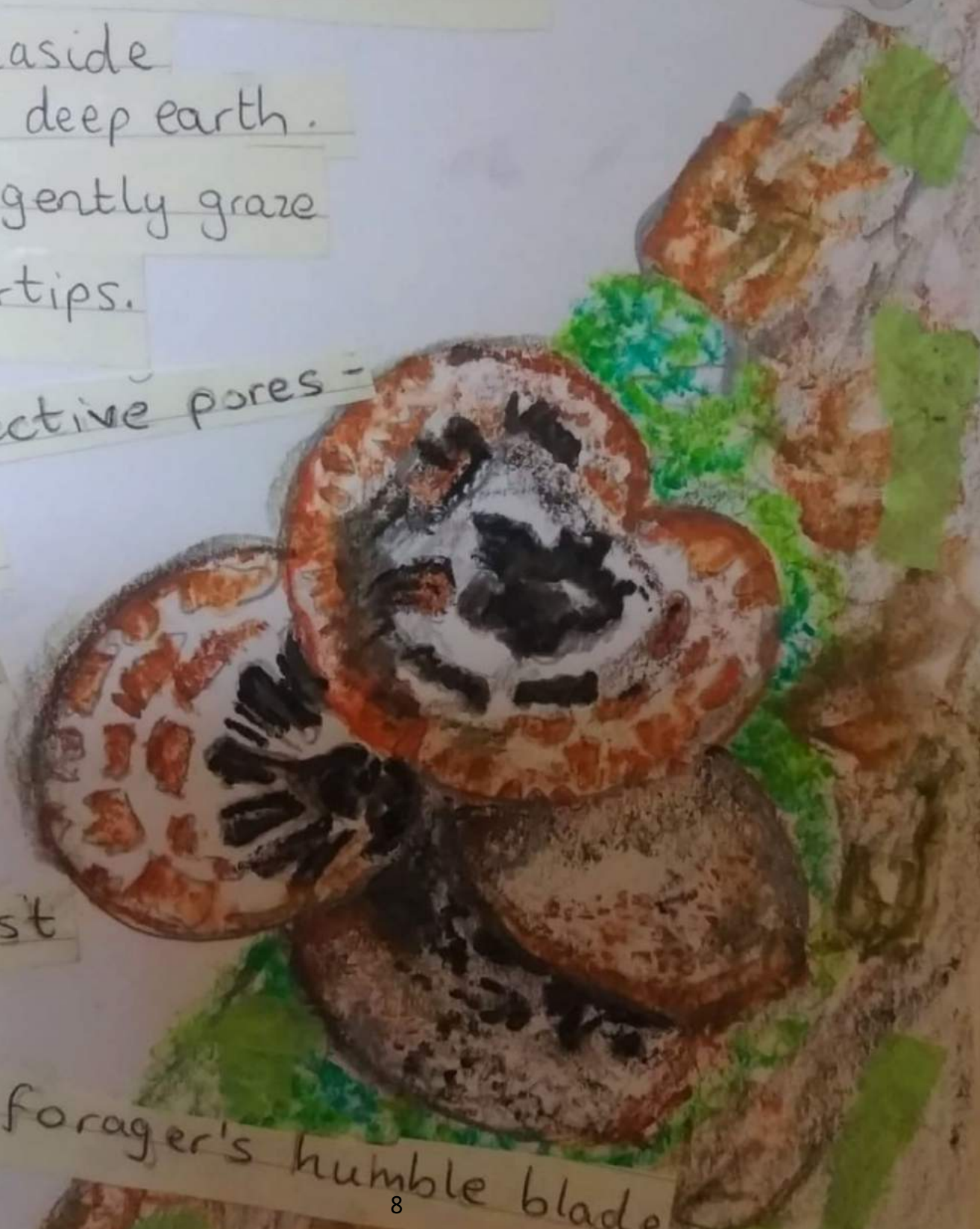
Reflective pores -

soft

scrape

against

this forager's humble blade



A few months back I asked a colleague if they had seen all of the mushrooms that had sprung up on psalter lane, at the foot of the grand old trees, during autumn. And though she walked down that road every day, she had not noticed them. "It is curious", I thought. "How could someone not notice a bolete as hefty as a toddler's head - its ominous pores glowing red? Or how could they ~~miss~~ miss the neon green of a parrot wax cap's unearthly sheen?" ~~But~~ But I have come to learn that sighting fungi is a lot about being aware of them in the first place - if you don't know to look, why would you be looking?



Let us encourage each other to notice things we previously had not opened ourselves to notice. Let us hold our palms open to the sky to receive the gifts we could never have predicted.

ALLEN

Bell flowers on the doorstep

Rosie Mercer





Counting the Omer

1 Snow flurries falling from the sky.
The energy is sad and dark and slow.
We are here, removed and also so close to the bug that is ragging the planet.
We walk and observe the phragmites, swaying in the wind, the buds emerging from the vines, the crisp air grazing our cheeks.
To lovingly observe is not to transform or change.

6 The more I get to know these woods, this place, the more I feel at home.
The more I feel at home, the more I preemptively grieve leaving.
Is this my first true love of land? Or is it awakening a connection that has been there all along?

7 Trees budding, flowers blooming, ramps emerging.

11 This is the week of slowing down in order to stay well.
If not now, when?
Slow down now, before it is too late.

12 Laying in bed doing amidah I felt my aliveness
& maybe that is g-d.
I'm like, "next year I'll rest". "Next year I'll figure out how to really rest."
But actually the time is now.
SLOW DOWN.

15 She says the songs tell the stories of the people.
Trust myself as a channel for what is meant to come through in this time.
You and every cell in your body is holy.

16 Nestled into my hammock with birds singing over me. Rest within song.
Longing to be more connected, while also feeling more connected, more in tune.
Make space for more ritual and prayer to flow through you.
It lives in my kishkes.

17 And now I'll sing myself to sleep.
Goodnight sweet one.

19 Feeling both grief and some sense of nothing being lost.
The land is just how we left it and maybe it's happy for the break.

25 I have lost track of days and time but it is still mid-apocalypse with no end in sight.
It's hard to grieve the not having because the day to day is rather sweet
(most of the time)
Singing under the bridge I could hear the reverberations in the concrete
As if they were the sounds of a room crowded with Jews singing our hearts out.
Instead, me alone in a tunnel.
For so long, we longed for each other.
Then we got to have it, the sweet feeling of home/community.
And now taken from us again.

26 zoom.

Is it still possible to feel connected to g-d in this way?
Did I ever feel connected to g-d while praying in the first place?
How do I focus less on singing and more on praying?
Is there a difference?
Why are there always just more questions & few answers?

27 Dreaming into a reality where excess wealth is non-existent.
Dreaming on a Wednesday within capitalism is hard.

28 This hits on the core experience of settler Jews - trauma of belonging, the need for repair.
We belong, and we must repair.

30 The clouds part, making room for the sun.
& then comes the snow flakes.
Where are we? What is happening?
The grief of the songs not coming right back to me the way they do through singing together IRL.
They are still in me.
Call on that embodied memory.

31 When is a song and song and when is it also a prayer?
Naye lebn, new life.
The feeling deep inside of being connected to the words as if they matter, as if me singing them matters.

35 You can lay safely here, dear lung-healing plant.
Rest well for now.

36 In a moment of so much constriction, how can I allow myself to dream?

37 Rest within Dreaming.
Dreaming without effort.
Effortlessly, we imagine the future.
Without attachment to outcome.
Only attachment to finding ease amongst the activity of imagining into the future.
We are in the future of shabbat.
Keep pushing the edges of what is possible.
But don't try too hard.

43 Feeling my voice weave with the sounds of the birds
I am with them and with myself
And also there are people on a screen.
Watching the birds swoop and sway in and out of the field.

44 When I take the time to pause, to rest,
I notice things un-noticed before.
Like how bird songs fill the air,
How the light of the setting sun makes the leaves glow.
How the trees sway in the wind.
There is an at-homeness I find in [this] rest.
My bones remember.

Owl

Deana Gershuny

Orange eyes, looking out,
staring from the back of a cage.
Plenty of food and water to keep me sustained,
in here,
but I feel dead.
Something is calling me
by a name I don't remember
but I know it's mine.
I'm opening the door,
opening the door to darkness
and I'm surrounded
surrounded by everything.
She spreads her wings wider than ever before
branches are falling on the forest floor,
cold wind touches all of her skin.
She's alive.
The mountain is covered with trees
there's no path.
Only your feet on the soft grass
and all of life,
breathing your name.
Orange eyes, looking out,
staring from the back of a cage,
and all of life breathing your name.

Tender Times

*The shhhh shhhh of courting pigeon tails on the path
And tender red spots on gull beaks
By the pond in the park.*

I've lived in social isolation for years. Chronic illness, an oppressive "benefits" system, and lack of accessibility keeping me home. Capitalism keeping others busy and me alone. I've made a good life anyway: I hold many loving relationships, I find joy, I learn acceptance, I grow. I've unlearned a lot of lies. I've learnt that existence doesn't have a point, it's a gift, and I am a gift to existence. I'm learning how to love myself well. I know my value and my values and I learn to live by them. And, it's really, really hard, there's nowhere to run from the fears, anxieties, griefs (and there are many).

As restrictions came into place because of the pandemic, I saw the panic in my friends and families about having to live a life like mine. I totally understood, and I wanted to leave every time it came up. I didn't want to poke my nose in *that* feeling (again) and I didn't want to hear them say that a life like mine is unbearable.

It's been exciting and frustrating to see all the creative ways people have been making culture, art, learning, work, etc. accessible to people from home. I hope when those that can be are more mobile again, they will remember how surprisingly simple creating that accessibility was, and keep doing it.

*I sprout blossoms from my heart.
Now that I can't show you with touch
Hawthorn grows from my heart to bloom sweet and musky,
And show my love to you.
My tenderness in bright pink pollen.
Soft kisses as pale petals,
Translucent and glowing like eyelids in the sun.*

I've been collecting herbs this spring. It's something I love to do anyway, but this year the pull to, and gratitude for, healing herbs found in the parks, woods and riversides I visit has been even stronger. Having recently read some books by Robin Wall Kimmerer I've tried to learn her teachings, be more mindful of my harvest, more honourable. Only taking what I know I will use, seeking permission from the plants to harvest from them, thanking them with song, or poem, or oatcake crumbs. I'm still greedy but I try to slow down and let go.

I've been visiting the lime trees in my local park as often as I can, saying hello, watching them put on leaf and bud, paying my respects, knowing I will come back to collect the blossoms when they bloom and that the kind, syrupy tea they give will soothe me, body and soul.

*To trees in early spring:
I awaken to your beauty like you awaken to the sun.*

The sunlight through fresh leaf growth has been so beautiful it's made me cry more than once recently. I know grief well. Grief for finite losses and grief for things too big to hold in your mind all at once, grief for every hurt that ever happened to anyone.

It's been the anniversary this week of the birth and death of a child from my chosen family. There aren't words really, that I know, to say what that's like. There is always an absence, he is always not here. Remembering the trauma of that time makes my muscles ache, my heart too. I feel exhausted and vulnerable. I miss three nights' sleep. I light a yahrzeit candle but am too scared to let it burn unattended overnight.

I stayed as close as I could to the family through that time (and now). I was glad I was practiced with grief. I was glad I could stay. I learnt so much about myself and the kind of friend I am. I've used that

model as a guide to how I could be in relation to myself: how to be trustworthy, compassionate, and vulnerably, tenderly, strong.

That first soft soft warm breeze that makes your skin long for a lover.

I don't know anyone personally who's been seriously ill or died from COVID-19, but I grieve for everyone who does. I grieve for the structures which made a situation like this. I grieve for all the hurt being done beyond the illness itself, the oppression targeting indigenous, black, brown, poor, displaced, working class, trans, queer, disabled, and homeless people, making them more vulnerable. I grieve for the people who aren't safe at home. I grieve for the people with compromised immunity who die, all the time, because we aren't usually this careful.

I try to understand how we built a world with this much hurt in it. I wonder how to explain it without saying it's because some people are bad. I don't think that explains it. I think we have to feel a lot more if we don't just say that they're bad. We have to feel the grief that our world produced people who do the things they do, and put them in power.

*I accept kisses from apple blossom, sweet smelling and abundant.
I touch the skin-soft new lime leaves to my hungry-shy cheeks.
I flirt quietly, long distance, with no way of knowing if they hear me.*

There will be change. We have reached an edge of the world. I've heard people talk recently about now being the perfect time to make positive radical change, and I've heard others say that at a time of so much trauma it's too much to expect we can really do that work right now. What happens between here and the 'there' we sometimes dare to dream of? I'm worried that in England the Tories will use this time as an excuse to bring in more austerity, that the wealthy and powerful will just keep clinging on to what they've stolen, costing the lives of the vulnerable. And I wonder if I'm brave enough for the radical change I long to live. How much do I need to give up for there to be equity, reparations even? I won't pretend it's not scary, but I want it too. How much space in my heart would I gain? I think there is hope to be found in every act of resistance, rebellion and mutual aid, every kind gesture, every health-giving herb, every moment of quiet rest, every sown seed and ripening fruit.

*Today we walked in the woods and by the river.
Glad of jumpers and scarves one minute,
Wanting to strip off and swim the next.
Glad of the light and glad of the dark,
Which made a dappled doughnut of sun on the path.
Glad of the smell of the woods,
Of the small adventure.
Glad of the handful of wild garlic to take home for dinner.
We laughed easily, and under a fallen willow tree,
Found a good spot to come swim from,
Another day.*

Breathe • Balance • Cleanse • Protect



Design by
Gillian Samuel

Diary entry 12
Gillian Samuel 14.05.20
The Healthy Hamsa

We are in the midst of a pandemic. The world has been, and still is, to varying degrees, in lockdown. Shielding, social isolation and social distancing have become normal. Now, seven weeks in, our government is announcing, day by day, week by week, tentative steps to ease the lockdown. The key issue now is one of 'protection'. We must find ways to venture out, return to work and rebuild the economy safely.

For many this seems a daunting task. Some people are terrified by the prospect of leaving home, of going on public transport. A sense of unease and anxiety is affecting our population. How can we protect both public mental and physical health?

The Healthy Hamsa Design - Breathe, Balance, Cleanse, Protect
The Hamsa symbol is universally known and recognised. It is an age-old design dating back nearly 2,000 years to ancient Egypt and Iraq. It is a sacred symbol for many cultures and religions. In spite of various doctrines, the underlying meaning of Hamsa is universally understood and cherished as a symbol of protection.

Designing the Healthy Hamsa felt like a natural and creative way to personally seek protection. My way.
I began by choosing a yoga pose, namely the Tree Pose, which I am familiar with and which is used to promote balance and focus.
This image then ascends towards clean lungs, which radiate energy. The delicate white heather sprouting from each side symbolises protection.
These three images are encased in a Hamsa hand, which is believed to promote health, happiness, good luck and fortune.

I feel reassured when I look at it. I hope that it can offer the same to the viewer.

← Memories



Mum loved my Shavuot cheesecake .. saving the base for the end .. oh and she said she doesn't like kiwi but that it was the best thing to put on the top .. and she ate it all! 🥰



So this was Mum's last Shavuot and how glad am I that I visited her that day in her Jewish care home, taking with me, Amy, then 17 and a box full of plates and serviettes and homemade cheesecake .. reminders of 'home' .. Mum was taken ill a couple of weeks later and spent 3 weeks in hospital before being allowed to come to our home for her final very beautiful and very gracious two weeks. I'm in Anglesey with Amy now and still in strict lockdown. Mum loved it here and like me would say that she found walking along the beach more spiritual than attending shul. Perhaps we have just never found the right shul but this is a place to feel content in every sense. As a lover of the sea, I thought it would be difficult not to be allowed to go in to swim, kayak or paddleboard. But over the weeks I have come to realise that being close by the sea is enough .. for now. I can see it, hear it, smell it and look forward to being able to go in again one day. Amy and I are the only Jewish people here and we have joined the local newly set up volunteers group, helping with a variety of tasks to a broad range of people in this community. It feels good. We have told people in this Welsh village that we are Jewish and shared our matzo during Pesach and other Jewish customs and in return we have learnt Welsh customs and songs.

Tomorrow we shall share our cheesecake and know that Mum would be proud that she was the best of mothers and grandmothers and that we will follow her traditions and pass them on to the next generations.

Between a hard place and a rock

Joel Lazarus

I sit in front of a blank screen. I reacquaint myself with well known feelings of fear - a pressure arising in my chest, my throat; an energetic forcefield that all too often surrounds my body. It is invariably there whenever I am in a state of awareness clear enough to be present to it. This is the forcefield, the fear, that says 'you've got to get somewhere else', 'do something else', 'be someone else'. We are invited to write about, to write from, the 'edge of the earth', about marginality, perhaps about our *terra incognita*, but, as I write now, this forcefield feels not marginal, but a central and totalising part of my experience. I have lived a lot of my life unconsciously feeling, yet acting in direct response to, this forcefield of fear; certainly much of the last decade. This has meant life lived in and acting from mind has been my experience, my heartlands, my *terra cognita*, my *terra firma*. Life, then, as reaction. So, will I write, then, from this fear - a process that will take me, undoubtedly, into the safety of mind, into the production of an intellectual artifice? I will not.

The act of writing this, sharing this, brings a relaxing. I breathe deeply, calmly, consciously and, as I do, I can both feel the fear forcefield - the contraction - and can breathe through it into more inner spaciousness - the expansion. The expansion brings elements of *Hod* that I yearn for from my deepest essence: surrender, acceptance, gratitude, potential. The expansion brings possibility. From here, I can say to myself 'I can be just here', 'I can do just this', 'I can be just me'. A welling of emotion within brings a tingling and sparkle to the eyes. The energy of this emotion reveals the connection to truth - the truth of my self-alienation, the truth that Hashem has been and always is closer to me than I have been to myself. No regrets, but a tinge of melancholy alongside self-compassion at this recognition.

So, what can I conclude thus far from this practice of writing my self? That I constitute a territory; that I have a cognitive map of my territory; that connecting to this deeper place makes me see the errors in my map.

So, I redraft my map to remarcate my previously designated 'safe' territory, my forcefield, as my *Mitzraim*, my 'narrow place', my place of contraction. On my old cognitive map, I was barely even aware of the edges of my territory, my 'hinterland' (literally my 'land beyond'). Indeed, it probably wasn't even shown. It cannot be fully detailed on my new map either, but I can begin to include it, describe some of its features. A new cartographical possibility opens up. New territory to explore. The new territory is simultaneously a valley I am descending and a mountain I am climbing. Yes, this is my *Sinai* and, yes, what is between *Mitzraim* and *Sinai* is my *Bamidmar* (wilderness). I am in *Bamidbar*, in wilderness, in the liminal space between the lowlands of alienated unfreedom and the mountainous heights of the return to Divine liberation.

My emergence from one place to the other is no linear process. Many steps back, but more forward, and my forward momentum is gradually building. But, here lies a trap! Using the concept of a map and the task of redrafting the map so as to complete my journey rekindles the forcefield, rekindles that part of me that says I must get somewhere, I must complete the journey. There is nowhere to get to, literally *no-where*, for the journey is back to myself...and I'm there already!!! Oh

fuck it! I'm tearing up the map! At first the map analogy helped, but now I'm holding on to the map and it's bringing me back to *Mitram*. Any attempt at semiosis – language, symbols, maps – foreclose. They force stasis upon that which is eternally and constantly dynamic. So, tear it up for I am simultaneously in *Mitzram*, *Bamidmar*, and, whether I know it or not, in *Sinai*. And who is 'I' anyway?! It is the very idea, the very experience, of myself as separate I with clear boundaries that separate me from you and every other living thing that is the ultimate source of my fear and suffering in the first place!

The map helped. It helped me to see my edge as my centre and centre as edge. But we don't need a map. We just have to feel into our own forcefields of fear, our own contracted places. Going through this feeling is the path through *Mitzram* to arriving at revelation, to *Sinai*, however temporarily; an arrival at a deep, luxurious sense of our essential nature, of our Divine nature, of Being. In this place, we get a sense of the journey we must undertake to come home to ourselves. And we come to understand that we are in *Bamidmar*, a liminal wilderness between these two, between contraction and expansion. But we also come to understand with deep acceptance and gratitude that this is just fine; that *Bamidmar* is (for most of us at least) the life-long experience of contraction and expansion. Every single heartbeat, each single breath reminds us of this physical and spiritual truth. To be in *Bamidmar* is to live a human life. So, let us find that necessary, beautiful balance between the heartfelt striving for the expansion of *Sinai* (*Netzach*) and the surrendering to the contractions of *Mitram* (*Hod*), knowing that when we achieve this balance (*Yesod*) we bring healing restoration to ourselves and to our world.

Dear Friends,

Please excuse my handwriting. I am a typist.

Cancer is terrifying because it seems to exist purely to leech and to grow. It is perfectly made; a perfect market, operating perfectly and with perfect non-regard to the host it destroys.

Hello my friends and thank you so much for reading this - especially at this time of great contraction -

I appreciate your time.

I am just shoring up fragments to try and impose some kind of cohesion to impose a sense of a beginning or a word about time. I mean, the world does have time, but the usual anthropocene (my new favourite word) time you know the one which has its pace set by our bodies running to distraction from death, that time isn't so cohesive anymore. The mesh has frayed and been cut in places. Sorry about that, I'll glue the vase back together!!!

The world is contracting my love. I have been reliably informed that we are heading towards Shavot - old human-era time which has happened before and will happen again. It is a post I can lean against in a windy desert. You know how it is - you're a wandering Jew too. Our annual time of freedoms hangs over,

headache, contraction. A Place In Time
(said the poet).

To impose some sense of a
middle, here's a political bit, although
nobody really knows anything anymore
and I work in an office.

• Is it possible to be a pacifist company? I
at companies as single organ
together to form a being both
a psyche, the individuals represent
impulses in state of harmonic
disharmony / conflict
• The human psyche as a complex
ent or

So if companies are people with
personalities, or people are companies with
personalities, they survive in ways that other
organisms do - according to Darwinian principles (I
have never read Darwin) - they compete and
destroy and manipulate with their bodies and
consider the effects of their actions on the survival of the fittest.

glommed to a newer organism and perhaps the
organisms form colonies and break off in a sin
Both geographic and cultural colonialism ag
making a myth of the division between the m
the economic. Are ants communist? Can other
companies balance what they receive from li
labour, energy (of all kinds) by small ameliora
measures? For a person, they forget their re
measures and become willingly or not part of
marketing. If there is profit, there cannot be

I live alone (at my age!) so
I thought I would write you this
letter to let you know some of
the things that have been rushing
through my mind. My thoughts don't
glow long enough for me to look
at their patterns and textures. They
burn out and I can't grasp them.
all I have is the sensation of
something having just happened.

Does it even matter? We no
longer have parentheses to wrap
around moments. No parentheses. Does
that sound intelligent? What's a
nebula to an ant? I don't even know
what I'm saying. I miss the people
that I love very much.

And now, the sense of something
riding, something to put this into
parentheses, something to put this into
time. I am not very good at conversation.
I am just shoring up fragments. I
don't know when this will end. I
don't know when I will be able to
keep in my parents' arms. I cannot
ever put into words how much I
miss my people. I miss them so much
I hate them for making me miss
them and then hate myself for
blaming them.



I am so tired, darling. I'm tired
of my life, I am tired of pale
half-people on screens, I am tired of
jobs, I am tired of breathing. I'm
just shoring up fragments in anticipation
of something happening.

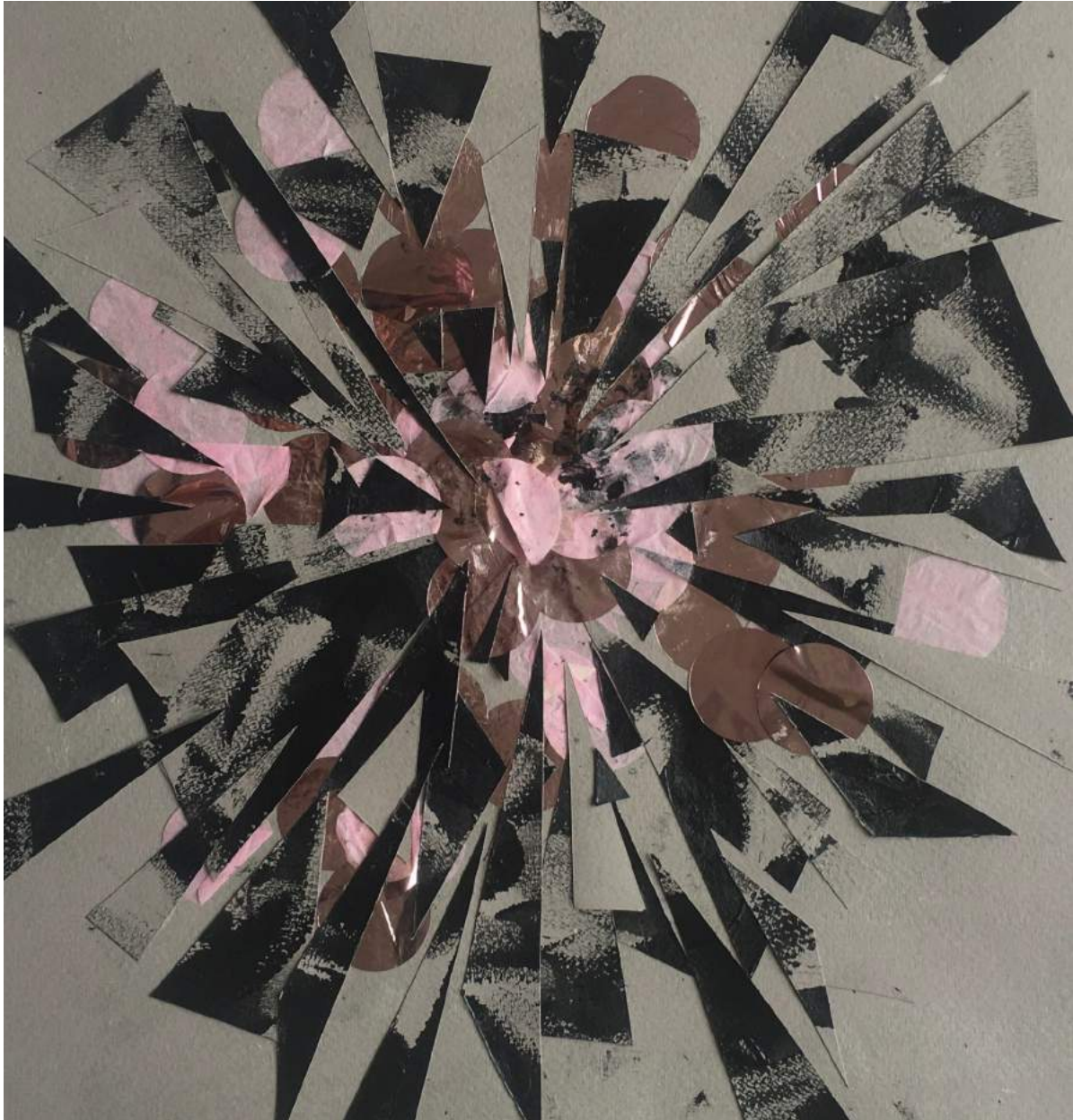
Anyway, do you have the Zoom
login? you have the Zoom me 20000

Best regards

Potential bursting open

Helen Jebreel





Confusion, pain, loss in lockdown
Brokenness and wholeness fluctuating
Prayers and blessings throughout

Leaves unfurling
Flowers surprise me
Glimmers of joy
We hope, we wait

Roxana
Jebreel
26

I was in Jerusalem several years ago, I spent a Friday night dinner with a wonderful rabbi. It was just before Shavuot, and I asked him how he spent his Shavuot each year in the holy city. He described how, in his neighbourhood, people dressed in white and flitted between houses. He said there were Tikkun Leilot happening across the city, and it was traditional to move from place to place, dropping in on learning sessions and shiurim over the course of the evening. From that moment, I put it on my bucket list to experience Shavuot in Jerusalem in this way at least once in my life.

Of course, this year it won't be happening. This year the streets of Jerusalem won't be full of Jews meeting together in each other's homes to feast, to learn, and to celebrate. Across the world, Jews won't gather and stay up all night eating and learning. Instead, this year will be the opposite; people will likely remain in their homes, many spending Shavuot alone, some feeling isolated. And Judaism was never meant to be done this way; ours is a tradition rooted in gathering, community, and being physically present - demonstrated through things like minyanim.

But, does that mean we can't find meaning in Shavuot 5780? I don't think so. While I spent first night of Pesach alone this year (though on the second night I did a Zoom seder), I found meaning in it. I went through the Hagaddah alone, asking myself the questions alone, reflecting on the story's message alone - and, in someways, it felt more meaningful. I also learned more practical skills - like how to lead seder for the first time. While in many ways I felt I missed out, in others I felt I learned more.

So, what does that mean for Shavuot? We are currently in bamidbar, where we wandered in the wilderness before we found the mountain - very fitting, I think. At home, and abroad, it feels like we're disorientated and lost - and the outside world feels like such an uncertain and dangerous place. We are wandering through the unknown, not knowing if or when it will end. But, as in bamidbar, we can learn lessons from this.

This year, we learn more about resilience, faith, and strength when it comes to handling uncertainty - both individually, and as a community. In some ways, I have never felt more connected to my Judaism - nor has Shavuot ever resonated with me as much. And this year, as fewer Jews can be physically present with each other, many are turning online to gather - leading to Jews from across the world celebrating and learning with each other in a way that would never normally happen on this scale. Despite the circumstances, this period has demonstrated the ingenuity, strength, immovability, and beauty of Jewish traditions that keep us grounded and connected - even during such difficult times; we are not alone, and nor are we lost.

And I have faith that soon, when this difficult time passes, people will gather at each others homes again across the world for Tikkun Leilot. And people will wander the streets of Jerusalem again, dressed in white, flitting between each other's homes hungry for food and thirsty for knowledge. And we will, ultimately, emerge from this time more connected - both to each other, and to our faith.

Kishkes

Rena Oppenheimer

Listen to your kishkes
For once--they've been waiting
For you, under it all,
In the times you've reached
For relief in unblinking pixels;
For caffeine and painkillers
That bleed rust on your tongue;
For bright little bags tucked
into your softest corners,
Keeping you up all night;
For any other aching, beating
nest of flesh-and-bone
Who might hold you in one place,
In one piece, for once. Listen--
They are singing like hot water
On the stove, pleading.
They are hungry for you
to remember their labor. Just like you,
They will someday stop working.
Your kishkes know why
You've been distant, for they feel
The world upending and it's more
Than one body can hold.
Listen--they have a lot to say.
They know all about being
in the right place at the right time.
They've done this for you
All your life. Like the earth
That makes you and takes you home,
You've split into drifting masses.
Listen--let your kishkes
Tuck you back into your own skin
And tell you that you are nothing
But whole, that you belong
To a fleeting mass of kishkes,
Pulsing in time with ripe answers
That were in you all along.



revelations

Ari Wharton

Your name is like honey on my tongue

Neztach —a doorway swims towards Hod— a doorway
Tiferet tastes the shape of Yesod, and notes the texture of abyss

Yesod notes everything and nothing side by side with their own streaming
eye- hands

Chesed licks Gevurah's salt from the sky and reaches upward again to touch
their cheek, with permission
Tiferet for the sake of time, says yes, so so carefully and so so fully and as he
cries the eggs come up from the ground in the shape of flowers

Gevurah spreads it's trees for Chesed to dip her loving-kindness into

Hyssop, harmony, Hod,

In one realm or the next I am assured that my yearning is heard by the wells,
which bubble over as butterflies land on sliced melon and by the cups that
crack and by the mirrors that shatter— what is pouring in now?

Your heartbeat is like honey dripping down



My feelings and ideas about gender felt too fluid for words right now so I made this tefillin for everyone I love to wear as a replacement for categorizing my gender.

These Tefillin are made to be shared by members of Kohenet, a group of genderqueer people and women who study and prayer together. The act of making these was an act of praying. Placed inside the Tefillin are the Tikkun HaKlali, a collection of 10 tehillim (psalms) that are meant to bring repair and miracles when said aloud every day.

Time in lockdown

Rob Freudenthal

The Jewish calendar already invites us to combine different speeds and senses of time – we combine the lunar and the solar, we count the days until Shabbat, the weeks until Shavuot, and the years until a Shmita year. This lockdown has sped up and slowed down time – for many it has provided an enforced pause and an opportunity to notice and count the passing of the days, whilst for keyworkers the epidemic has led to having to do more shifts, have fewer weekends, with even less control over rest time than usual.

This Shavuot – as we mark spiritual time with the receiving of the Torah on Sinai as though we were there ourselves, and we mark agricultural time with the harvest of the first fruits, and we mark present time with the days that we have been in lockdown, it might be helpful to look for kinship in the natural world around us where time is already experienced in radically different speeds and life cycles:



Like the cornflower: its beautiful blue flowers, scattered through corn fields, seedlings appearing around Pesach, flowering in time for Shavuot



Like the lupin: planted the year before, taking two years to flower. Tall colourful spikes, reflecting the time energy and nourishment invested in the previous year



Like the weeping willow: growing for decades, providing shelter, allowing us to appreciate the dedication of previous generation



(But will it?)

The other day I was walking with a friend in the magnificent ancient woodlands of moss valley, home to woodpeckers & bullfinches, towering oak and beech trees (bluebells at their feet). As we were nearing the path towards our bikes to cycle home she cries out, oak gall! And reaches into the oak tree beside us before turning towards me holding a small brown sphere with a tiny hole at its top. This friend is a gifted artist who makes inks and paints from foraged plants & stones. You can make a really nice ink with this she says, you just need to crush it up & boil it with some rusty nails... It's essentially the cocoon of a wasp (who fled through the tiny hole) and is thought to have been used since at least antiquity to make ink. It is what torah scrolls are written with.

Just here, casually in these sheffield woods. The literal ink of revelation.

I have lived between the walls of jewish classrooms for the last two years, poring over my tradition's texts, wading through the pages of our history, bowing my head to enter caves of antiquity, glugging back wine with the poets from the goldenest 'age of spain', in fervent prayer with my ashkenazi foremothers muttering their *tkhines*¹ at the bedsides of birth....

when my latest program ended abruptly due to the virus I felt as if I was teetering on the edge of our history book. on arriving back in the UK just as lockdown began, I felt like I missed the next five chapters and landed in the jewish future (please don't let this be the future): services on zoom, funerals on zoom, bat-mitzvahs on zoom, kiddush on zoom, havdalah on zoom. time zones constantly crossed, and the resultant nagging feeling, wondering what time is it really and where. US *shacharit* becomes british *mincha*, we miss each other by an hour because someone's clock did or did not turn back, from sheffield I ask london friends what time is it for you? Time sped up, folded in on itself, has become obsolete.

And yet

a full-bodied surrender to jewish time becomes an utter ark in this moment of time-space madness. There is *shacharit*, *mincha*, *maariv*². And they call us to pray at distinct times of our own days according to *where we are*. There is *shabbat*. There is *chag*³ like all the time. At their roots, our rituals of time call for deep presence & an embodied knowing of where we are. Over the last years I have become devout to these details and they have been a great comfort during lockdown.

¹ Yiddish women's prayers from early-modern period.

² Judaism's daily morning, afternoon & evening prayers, traditionally prayed within certain windows of the day.

³ Jewish festival

Shabbat arrives at sheffield's sun-down and ends only when I see three stars in its sky. In between I swim in a different time and it has nothing to do with zoom and everything to do with this wild world. With the latest ease in lockdown i immerse in nearby waters. I re-meet sheffield's trees, sit at their feet & pray, hello lime, hello chestnut, hello oak. I enjoy my home-made wild garlic pesto and my freshly foraged nettle and cleaver 'spring-time tonic'. I touch the magnificent details of this raucous spring.

This is not to reject the astounding benefits of a more intimate global community. I GET TO PRAY IN NEW YORK WITH MY RAD PRIESTESS BABES. I am under-taking some of the richest Torah-learning of my life. Suddenly i do not feel i live in the british jewish periphery just because i live outside of london... We are all now truly rootless cosmopolitans! and I am staggered by the tenderness and care which has gone into making jewish space available online, it is a lifeline for many of us.

As shavuot approaches I am overwhelmed by the number of brilliant *tikkun lei*⁴ offerings online. i need to be very careful, treading a fine line between holding community close yet growing increasingly wary of the ungrounding nature of screen-time that is really bad-news for my mental-spiritual wellness. to know that torah was revealed on a mountain top, that the very ink of revelation lives in our trees, cuts this line even finer.

I deeply grieve the possibility of gathering with community in person and in wilder places for shavuot this year. And i know this grief teaches me for what I most deeply yearn. what I must fully devote myself to now and in the future. The vision is faint but i do see us on the mountain again, by the river, in the lake, living a judaism that touches our fullest, wildest selves. That carries with it too extraordinary care and adaptability we have demonstrated in these last weeks.

I will continue to figure it out, to blunder. Sometimes tossing and turning unable to sleep after too many zoom classes, sometimes feeling a deep loneliness from prolonged absence from community. Sometimes finding a really sweet balance. but we are living through a pandemic, trying to look after each other, doing our best and, i/we won't always get it right. That's ok.

Yes. of course there will be revelation on zoom, because the wisdom of Torah knows no bounds and this pandemic has exposed us to a vulnerability that is ripe for receiving the depths of it. I have seen it. In the very quality & content of jewish teaching and in the increased tenderness and concern of those in 'the room'. We sing and cry together. We share the real stories of our lives. at our backs a people who have always struggled and survived.

And. there will be revelation too from the woods, the hills, the rivers and the trees. There always is. it grows from our attention. From the drunken man fishing by the *people's pond*⁵ who shows you the nest of newly hatched moorhens. to the ethereal dappled light on the waters of rivelin dam coupled with the shock of cold on immersion which immediately reminds us of our *place in things*.⁶ to the little brown homes of wasp larvae that hang in our oak trees and become torah's ink. our wild world holds us all, vast enough to withstand our tempers & tears whilst flooding us with unexpected delights and wisdoms.

Maybe this zine holds a place between. A bundle of abundant, rich wisdom woven between our far-flung selves, casting a web of connection between us all however far we are. maybe this web is a path to the mountain.

x

Sara Moon

⁴ The Kabbalistic practice of staying up all night learning Torah on Shavuot

⁵ Aka crookes valley park boating lake, soon to be liberated for all to swim in.

⁶ From Mary Oliver's Wild Geese

The Intimacy of Unknowing

Ryn Silverstein

“Grief is love that has nowhere to go.” — Roshi Joan Halifax, quoting a student

If this poem is a carrier bag for a constellation of ancestral wisdom ways, its fabric stretches around the unruly assemblage of its contents. Pieces of Toyre bump up against the constraints of English words, words that bear so much longing they may as well float up to the sky
as the Temple keys on Tish b’Av.

They say that, just as wilderness, Torah has no end
and isn’t that a piece of luck for now,
when we may have forgotten that the root of bamidbar
means that which resonates

Wilderness in her throat like a song,
spread your mantle over me,
his voice, rough-woven with wonder and no little desire,
stay over one more night, without a husband;
cleaving to the liminal in her

What is revelation,
Seen through a matrix of spiralic time?
What is it but taking the scroll of lamentations,
Dirges,
Woes,
Into our mouths

And tasting honeycomb, fractal on our tongues?

Living in rural Albania

Maya Brown

Mountain rhythms and rhymes

Waking up to the mountain
to the earth beneath you
to the sound of the birds, butterflies and bees:
busily, brewing, breathing. Bursting with life.
Calling us to the earth, calling us to life.
Reminding us that we too can rise with the light, and follow nature's rhythm.

Are these sounds the sounds of beauty, or the sounds of wild working? - whirring, whimpering, wondering,
worshipping, whispering secrets we will never know...

From Pelumbas mountain
to Tirana's trails
Sheffield's shores to
Yorkshire's moors
London's heath's to
Scotland's lavish landscapes

Nature does not pause or go into lockdown but pursues its continual rhythm,
reminding us that we too have a rhythm, we are also nature.

We too are wild, savage, salvaje (spanish), selvajo (italian), I eger (albanian), divlji (serbian), himji (arabic),
parah (hebrew)

Like the birds, we must sing in the morning, like the butterflies we must flutter and dance through life, like
the bees we must work with clear intention and find our rhythms. Rhythms of work and play, noise and
silence, laughter and love, tears and sorrow...

Sometimes we come to a cliff edge but if we can keep our balance, we will not fall but regain a heady sense
of our own existence.

We are reminded of our mortality, of our clear distinct reality.

Mountain tea we can drink freely...

Breathe deeply and let go...

let your wings carry you...

and feel yourself float effortlessly, over that cliff edge.

On the mountain, we become awake.

Shavuot in Albania...

The lock-down was quite strict in Albania with curfews, all sundays and some whole weekends not allowed out. The last few weeks it has begun to ease, and Albanians (who don't seem to like rules) are beginning to ignore more and more of them. Transport between cities is not running but luckily the hostel manager in Durres drove us to the new project. The project involves setting up a farm/campsite/community place for the village. Where we are living mostly outdoors, digging, growing, sourdough baking and living co-operatively. In the village corona hardly registers (although the school is closed and the children are bored) but all seems pretty tranquil. Here is the place to be for Shavuot, on the edge of the mountain, harvesting cherries, sharing cultures with Muslims, Christians and alternative thinkers, learning stories of life under dictatorship in Albania, and living closer to the earth. There may be little zoom, but it's still buzzing. With insects and hope. Let us rediscover ourselves and our world. Let us get closer to nature and the rhythms of our own festivals.

A day in Pelumbas

Light and sounds drifting into the tent wake me and I roll out onto the ground. I wander barefoot down the hill (careful of thorns), and find three other volunteers stretching. We exchange morning greetings in mixtures of Spanish, Albanian, English and/or Arabic. After some yoga we are given an initiation to climbing cloth rope by the Columbian circus fanatic. This turns into a spontaneous acro yoga session, followed by communal fruit and oats. Then people slowly start working. I go with another volunteer and we plant chickpeas, watering them from buckets. After a break I go and help clear campsite spaces, cutting down plants etc. This is slow at first but goes faster once you get into the work, lost in the task. At some point we get hungry and pick some of the salad leaves (planted and wild) to eat with freshly made flat breads someone made from excess sourdough and some tomato sauce gifted by the neighbouring farmer. Some days I work longer, others take a break from the sun and play music inside. There are various broken instruments to be fixed, walls to finish cleaning and cementing (inside and out) and one volunteer is crafting lampshades. There is a tiny violin (1/8th size) which had a broken bridge but we managed to fix and then half the day is spent teaching people to play. We take it in turns to cook meals and when the sun goes down (for those doing Ramadan) we eat together, play music, drink mountain tea with orange flowers and have discussions. Some disappear to get internet from the cafe/shop (the centre of the village). Some sleep early, others linger and watch the stars.

When we arrived we sat round the empty fire pit, someone was rubbing ash on their hands (apparently it's good for the skin and for cleaning). We were shown the two types of compost (acidic and non-acidic) and the well separated rubbish (Albania has no formal recycling system but the volunteers separate everything they can at the site). In the village a lot of rubbish is just burned together. Every other day sour dough is prepared and some days I am drawn in to this long process and begin making the bread. Other days some of the village kids turn up wanting to play guitar and do circus (but without a lot of concentration, I try to teach them a bit but don't speak enough Albanian to keep them concentrated for long). Various visitors come from the village to see the project leader and one day the son of the farmer owner comes and we play him some music and the two of them start to sing us an Albanian song! At the start I feel a bit unsure of how things work and are meant to be done, but I am starting to settle in and realise the pace is relaxed and you can do whatever you are motivated by. One day after planting I go for a walk to the cave and realise just how high in the mountains we are. How clean the air is. I pick some wild thyme and sage for dinner. And take time to get to know the other volunteers. I was planning to make challah on Friday for Shabbat... but somehow when Friday evening comes around we lose track of the time and day but it reminds me to take it easy the next day. A week passing by, before I had time to realise it...

These weeks

Mel Boda

The notion of submitting something to this Shavuot Zine has led to my reflection on the past few weeks of lockdown in relation to our connection to Judaism.

The thing is, the very definition of the word Shavuot is 'weeks'. I'm writing this on the 9th week of lockdown. But 'lockdown' isn't a word I would associate with our 'weeks'. In fact, whilst it defined the reason for this period of time for the initial two weeks, this time soon became much more than that for our family of five.

My husband and I have three boys aged 6, 4 and 1. These 'weeks' have given us the gift of connection, not only with each other, but with all the things that life usually gets in the way of allowing. For these weeks I am overwhelmed with gratitude, and I know the children will look back so fondly at this time and the memories it has brought us all.

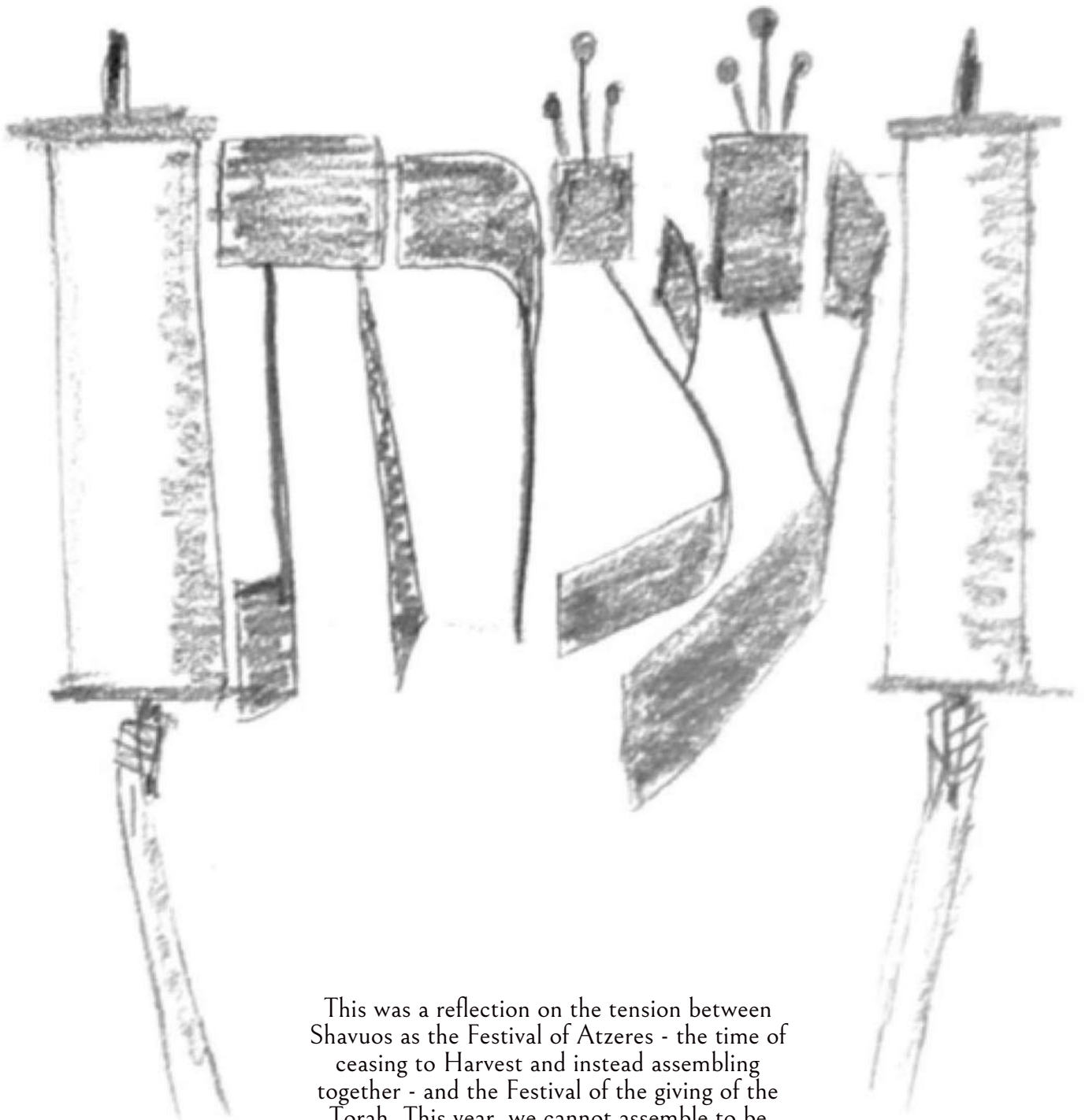
With all our usual routine and priorities out the window, we've found a new rhythm and focus. Different things have become important, and these 'things' mark our days, our weeks, our being and our purpose.

The creation and development of our lockdown planted fruit and veg patches are the thread that has connected our days and weeks, whilst the anticipation and celebration of Shabbat has kept each week fresh. Though many things have fallen by the wayside (academic home learning being one!), many influences have become stronger. Our connection to nature and the desire for something more spiritual is one of them.

My eldest boy is almost 7, and it is in these weeks that we realised we'd reached the half way point between his birth and his bar mitzvah. I have been searching for our true connection to Judaism for some time. Looking for the right shul, the right Rabbi and the right community. And it's in these weeks that I have found our connection. Nature. Our most spiritual and special times are in the woods, and nurturing our garden. We had plenty of nature in our pre lockdown lives, but not the deep immersive nature that we have in our life now. It's become a really important part of each day, our connection with each other, and our connection to Earth. A connection that has become really important for us all to maintain.

The Talmud refers to Shavuot as "holding back". This enforced period of "holding back", has allowed us as a family to find what we needed. Each year on Shavuot we will remember how this time defined us both agriculturally and spiritually during this time. Thank you Shavuot and these 'weeks' for the connection and togetherness we have found.





This was a reflection on the tension between Shavuot as the Festival of Atzeret - the time of ceasing to Harvest and instead assembling together - and the Festival of the giving of the Torah. This year, we cannot assemble to be present at the giving of the Torah in our communities. But we are still able to have a relationship with it; by taking a pause from our labours, and recognising that revelation is not a yearly event to be present at — but an ongoing, transcendent process

Jake Berger

The Threshing Floor

Sivan Rotholz

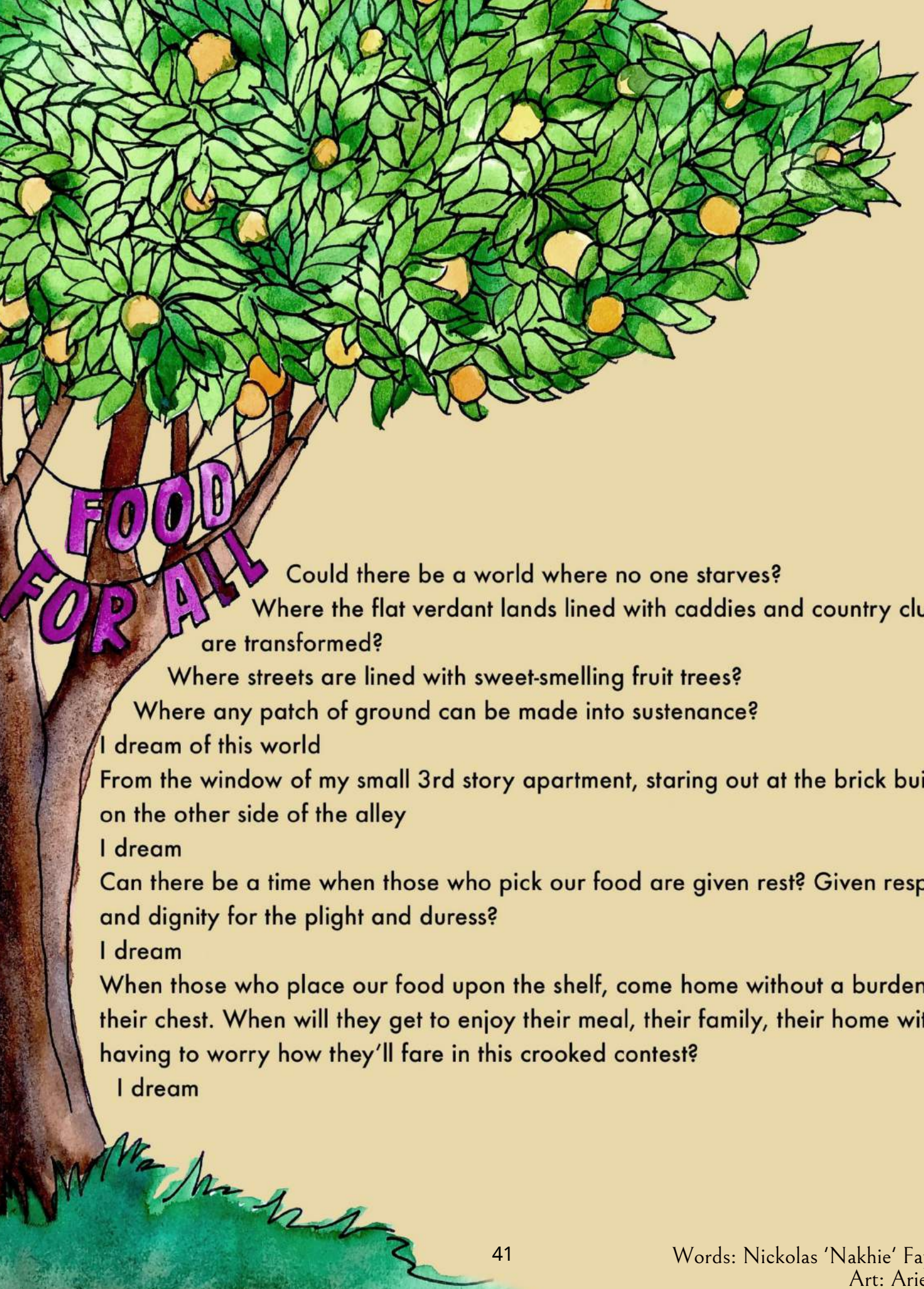
Time for a different kind of harvest*
where first fruits are seeds
stored for an unknowable future.

Time for a different kind of time
when days are long and lunar,
when we cannot punch our clocks,
can scarcely safely measure
our shadows.

Time for a different kind of different
diffident, disposed,
where the heroes are heroes
because they stay home
and the essential who enter the world
are the winged and fragile messengers
of God.

There is no Ruth here, no Naomi.
We journey no longer,
belong only to our own. It's
time for a different kind of harvest
where we reap and reap
but know not what or whether
we sow.

*The line "Time for a different kind of harvest" comes from Rabbi Rachel Barenblatt's poem, "The Handmaid's Tale (Ruth)."



FOOD FOR ALL

Could there be a world where no one starves?

Where the flat verdant lands lined with caddies and country clubs
are transformed?

Where streets are lined with sweet-smelling fruit trees?

Where any patch of ground can be made into sustenance?

I dream of this world

From the window of my small 3rd story apartment, staring out at the brick building
on the other side of the alley

I dream

Can there be a time when those who pick our food are given rest? Given respect
and dignity for the plight and duress?

I dream

When those who place our food upon the shelf, come home without a burden on
their chest. When will they get to enjoy their meal, their family, their home without
having to worry how they'll fare in this crooked contest?

I dream

The Feast of Weeks

Isaac Tendler

Shavuot is known as the Feast of Weeks. It marks the harvest. It's a time of plenty.

For as long as it's existed, human society has grown around the provision and sharing of food - it's how people build relationships, cultures, places and traditions. It's vital for building the social networks that keep us healthy and happy; eating alone is the single biggest contributor to poor mental health besides existing conditions. Also if you don't eat you die. As such, nutritious food, accessed freely and communally, is right that we can't afford to lose.

Unfortunately, it's not a right that anyone in the UK actually has at the moment. Our food system is an inaccessible and precarious one, almost wholly controlled by a handful (exactly 4) of huge companies. It's well established at this point that the covid-19 pandemic has shone a light on, and in cases exacerbated, many of the inequalities and injustices we've been working to tackle for years already. This is seen particularly clearly when we look at our food system: scarcity anxiety, fuelled by decades of a neo-liberal model of food provision, cleared supermarket shelves in hours. At the same time, a slowly unfolding crisis of food insecurity has accompanied disruption to the services of traditional emergency food providers, and widespread economic hardship as jobs are lost and a recession looms. The government's own emergency food parcel scheme, supplying weekly boxes of long-life food for people who've been instructed to shield for 12 weeks, was rolled out slowly and poorly, and does very little for the 3 million people currently going hungry. We need food to live healthy happy lives, and build cohesive, resilient communities. But all the signs point to a time of hunger, scarcity, and impotence.

So, how to mark the feast of weeks?

Foodhall is (usually) a community centre/cafe/venue/workshop space/utopia that's existed in Sheffield city centre since December 2015. The aim of the project is to tackle food insecurity, food waste, social inequality, and social isolation by bringing everyone together to share. We do this primarily by serving communal meals on a contribute-what-you-can basis, so anyone can access food, company, and community, and everyone can give something back. Once people are brought together through food, we build platforms for community members to develop their own projects at Foodhall, and so host a range of activities and events alongside our cafe, including film screenings, live music and DJ nights, a community garden, bike repair classes, pottery studio, and more.

Obviously none of this is happening right now. We suspended all usual activity at the start of the covid-19 outbreak, and have shifted our focus to the provision of emergency food parcels across the city. We've set up a telephone helpline where anyone can call and request a food parcel, are bulk cooking tasty meals, distributing them alongside long-life goods and other store-cupboard essentials, and delivering them city-wide with a fleet of volunteer cyclists and drivers. Alongside this we're continuing to offer food parcels for collection from our space to ensure we can continue feeding members of our community who don't have access to a phone, or don't have an address to deliver to. As of 15th May, since the start of our covid-19 response we have fed 3,509 people, prepared 8,472 meals, and delivered 856 food parcels from S1-S62. We've distributed enough food to feed a single person 3 meals a day for 33 years.

These efforts are being replicated around the country through the National Food Service (NFS). The NFS is a network of social eating spaces and alternative food projects, that aims to ensure access to food and community through spaces such as Foodhall nation-wide. We are not asking the state to one day build a national food service, we are building one now and showing that it's possible. We're working in solidarity, not charity. We work cooperatively and communally, refusing to replicate the corporate models of service provision that produce the inequalities we're trying to erase in the first place.

Since founding the network in 2018, we now have community-led organisations from Falmouth to Glasgow that are getting people fed. Some groups formed only weeks ago but are already up and running. As a mutual network, we share advice and resources so that groups have support from the start. The NFS has come into its own during this crisis - across the country we're feeding thousands of people who would otherwise go unfed. No charge, no means testing. We're feeding people freely, and we're feeding them well.

In doing so, we're saving lives. And we're demonstrating that another food system is possible. It's a system that doesn't crumble when people need it most, or mandate that people must have money to access what they need to be healthy/happy/alive. The vision of the National Food Service is one of abundance - there's plenty for everyone if everyone can access it, and we're making sure that they can.

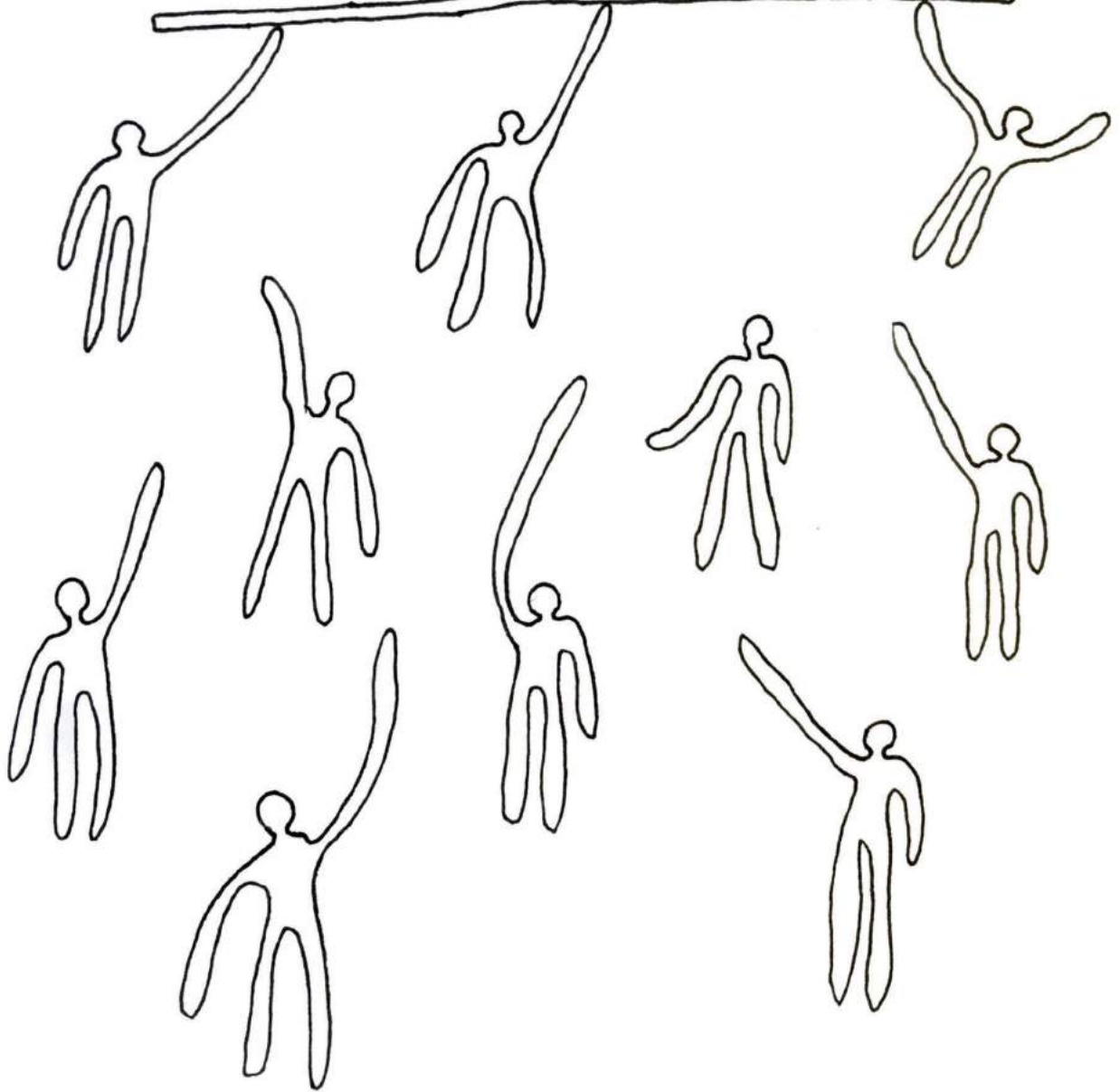
Shavuot is the Feast of Weeks. It marks the harvest. It's a time of plenty. And a good time to create a National Food Service.

If you'd like to find out more, or get involved, check out foodhallproject.org and nationalfoodservice.uk



I am

OWNERLESS.



This piece explores the following Midrash about needing to be ownerless like the desert to receive revelation.

"וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי (במדבר א, א), לְמַעַן בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי...כֹּל מִי שֶׁאֵינוֹ עוֹשֶׂה עֲצֻמוֹ כַּמִּדְבָּר, הַפֶּקֶר, אֵינוֹ יָכוֹל לְקַנֹּת אֶת הַחֲכָמָה וְהַתּוֹרָה."

"And God spoke to Moses in the Sinai Wilderness" (Numbers 1:1). Why the Sinai Wilderness? ... Anyone who does not make themselves ownerless like the wilderness cannot acquire the wisdom and the Torah.

Bamidbar Rabbah 1:7

Joe Hyman

Three Mountains

1. Adamah, Connecticut, US/Turtle Island

It is spring in a blessed land. Falls Village, up on the Appalachian trail, Mohican territory, mountains and waterfalls, unfamiliar and wild land. Great blue herons, muskrats, snapping turtles, black bears in the night, turkey vultures hovering over the chicken coop, wild geese and their goslings, chipmunks scuttling across the forest floor. My hands are meeting soil for the first time. My body is meeting Lake Miriam for the first time.

Shabbat and Shavuot fall together. I let everything happen to me. Weeping through the *shema*¹. Songs of my ancestors in waves of healing. Hearing the story of Ruth and Naomi and letting the wisdom of *Kohenet*² blessings seep through my skin. *Tikkun leil*³, giving ourselves all night between the fire and the yurt, to torah and song, to justice and life. Torah torah torah, up up up. By sunrise, there is much revelation. We go to Miriam to become porous again, to her healing waters of revelation. I am engulfed in such a rich and wholesome Judaism on this land. I feel true to my bones and also my heart. I feel pure.

After rest, I make my way to the woodlands. There is history beneath me, deep black charcoal underfoot. Children playing and learning and remembering. Adults playing and learning and remembering. Also underfoot, quaking aspens holding root-hands and springing into yellow, a harmonious corridor of leaf canopy. I follow it up, how couldn't I? Stopping amongst kin, then up again. At the top I reach the overlook, it is glorious. Trees for miles, the valley opens up, Housatonic river meandering, we need more words for all these greens, I think. This is my pinnacle, surely my ancestors' dreams, a rich, wild and reverent Judaism, a diasporist mountain-top.

I close my eyes and lay down, my mind drifts back to the temple and the book, I hear Ruth's words as she turns to Naomi. *Where you go I will go, where you lie I will lie, your people are my people, your divine my divine.*

2. Palestine

When Ruth turns to Naomi, I feel myself in her body, turning to Palestine. Your people are my people, and I know it so clearly. I have been shown it in the language of hospitality that dances through the streets of Nablus and the hills of Hebron. Even through the injustice, unforgettable and unfathomable injustice. Homes crumbled like salt flakes. Stolen sacred spring water. Burning olive groves and miles of concrete wall. Checkpoints and martial law, daily life-long humiliation and dehumanisation. And yet I love you is said a thousand times a day, in golden olive oil, handfuls of figs, smiles, handshakes, freshly baked bread, *maqluba*, coffee, tea, grapes. I can still hear the welcomes, still feel the warmth of your doors opening, the table set. I still see Hakeem laughing in the olive trees, still feel his mother's parting embrace. *You are my son, ma'a salama, go in peace.*

¹ Jewish prayer. שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד Listen, you who wrestles with G-d. Hashem is our G-d. Our G-d is one.

² Hebrew Priestess

³ Shavuot kabbalist practice of staying awake all night studying/receiving Torah. I refer here to the *tikkun leil for black lives* I attended at Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Centre in 2018. Led by Jews of colour, we stayed up studying the manifesto of *the movement for black lives* as a sacred text, asking what solidarity with black people means for Jews in diaspora.

If your people are my people, your mountain is my mountain, your *nakba*⁴ is my *nakba*. The memory of its brutality, the abhorrence of its continuation. I must refuse to forget, I must hold you with me as I reach for our freedom, I must hold you with me or the mountain will crumble.

3. *britain*⁵ (an old and beloved island)

This year there isn't a mountain to climb, this year there is a different kind of journey. This year there is a great and wild storm, a pandemic that has redrawn the map, turned the landscape upside down.

It is well into springtime in this wild place. Grasses long enough to hide a young roe deer. Golden-green foliage of oak, beech, rowan, birch. Hawthorn in bloom, oh hawthorn! Two elders drawing me to the river. The water trickles across the rocks, dragonflies and lily pads, hemlock at the banks, wild garlic in full white-sparkle flower. The meadow beside the river is rife with wildflowers. Red, white and crimson clover, burnet, daisy, comfrey, plantain, buttercup, vetch, cowslip, archangel, dead nettle, cinquefoil, self-heal, meadow foxtail. Blues, yellows, purples, greens, whites. Grace. I wade through the meadow and then down closer to the river bank by an oak and an elder, and there across the water, quaking or waving, aspen. I am not alone.

As soon as the sun peaks from behind the clouds, warmth touches my face, it is time to pray, time to meet the waters of revelation. Under the oak, I remove my otherworldly skin. Wools, cottons, synthetics, silver, opal, twine, weaved and formed from faraway hands in faraway places. There in my bareness, maybe I am most whole, the veils between body and the divine stripped away. It is *mikveh*'s⁶ request, to strip away the blocks, to be remade pure again. Slowly, with intent, footsteps approach the water. First toe-dip, legs slowly submerged to knees, tentative, then one brave swooping embrace of the waters, a deep shock-breath and joyous squeal. Here I am.

Eyes closed now as I float, I want to dissolve and I also want to hold it all, to receive whatever it is. Somehow to be with the water I feel the vessel of myself expand, only here can I hold you in my arms. I am here in the river Frome and I am also chatting with Hakeem in the olive groves, I am also the diasporist Jew longing for homeland in the mountains of Connecticut. Expanding further still, I think of this moment and all of those tragically lost, and all that you are beyond the numbers. I think of your names, your faces, your stories, your loved ones.

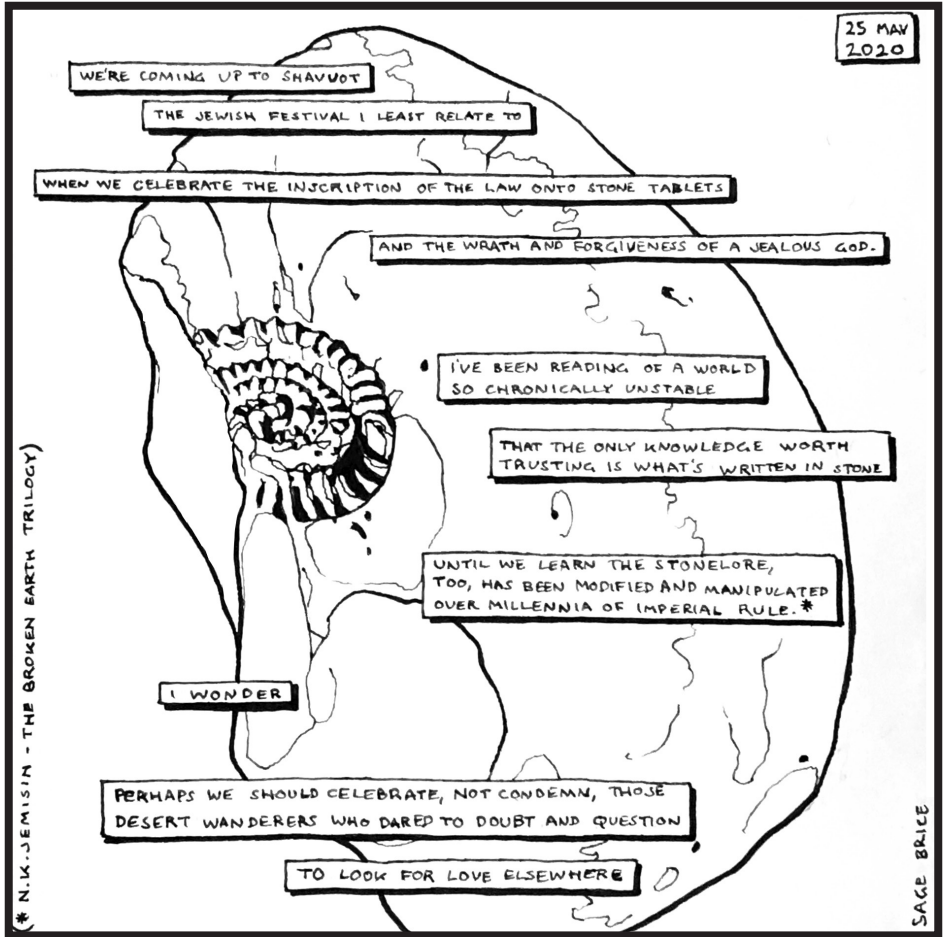
This year there isn't a mountain, only the waters and their ever-moving flow. River, brook, stream, ocean, rain, waterfall, lake. Trickling, flowing, roaring. This year there is no path to claim my own, only the deep serenity of knowing that we are one great, interweaving whole. One deep breath and I submerge. Once. Twice. Three times.

Samson Hart

⁴ النكبة, al-Nakbah, literally "catastrophe." Referring to the 1948 fleeing and expulsion of more than 700,000 Palestinians.

⁵ Using lower case is a reclamation. I do not refer to the nation-state, rather *britain* as the place, the landscapes, the songs, all of the peoples, plants and more-than-human beings.

⁶ Purification ritual of immersing oneself in flowing waters, used to enter a different state of being.



We're coming up to Shavuot
the Jewish festival I least relate to
when we celebrate the inscription of the law onto stone tablets
and the wrath and forgiveness of a jealous god.
I've been reading of a world so chronically unstable
that the only knowledge worth trusting is what's written in stone
until we learn the stonelore, too, has been manipulated over millennia of
imperial rule.*
I wonder
perhaps we should celebrate, not condemn, those desert wanderers who
dared to doubt and question
to look for love elsewhere

* N K Jemisin - The Broken Earth Trilogy

25 MAY
2020

WE WERE WONDERING

WHAT WOULD A HEALTHY KIND OF FLIRTING BE

IF UNHEALTHY FLIRTING IS PRESENTING AN IDEALISED IMAGE OF YOURSELF

IN ORDER TO WIN APPROVAL

AND SPARK DESIRE

MAYBE IT WOULD BE ABOUT VISIBLY, OPENLY, TAKING PLEASURE

IN YOUR ACTUAL, MESSY, IMPERFECT SELF

LOVING YOURSELF AS YOU WOULD WISH TO BE LOVED

INVITING OTHERS TO SHARE WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THAT JOY.

SAGE BUXE (FLOWER ARRANGEMENT AND QUESTION @NICICINI WITH @SCARLETSUMAGR)

We were wondering
what would a healthy kind of flirting be
if unhealthy flirting is presenting an idealised image of yourself
in order to win approval
and spark desire
maybe it would be about visibly, openly taking pleasure
in your actual, messy, imperfect self
loving yourself as you would wish to be loved
inviting others to share wholeheartedly in that joy.

Flower arrangement and question: @Nicicini with @Scarletsumagr

bleeding at sinai, a shavuot transmission by taya mâ shere

**click the image to listen to the song*

bleeding at sinai malchut shaddai
flowing fountain goddess mountain
tamei tahor illusion impure
liminal space moment of grace
niddah is a choice your yoni your voice
separation needs reparation moontime brings revelation
prophecy what will be blood bless yes yes

flow ebb weave web
pull of tides between thighs
rivers deep sow steep
shed uterine lining embody divining
potential life leaving give tears to grieving
womb release birthing peace



bleeding at sinai is a transmission received on shavuot. a call to reclaim menstruation as sacred. a flip-script on jewish notions of 'purity' and 'impurity' to reflect a deeper meaning of tumah as liminal. this piece is a poetic invitation into the portal of possibility and transformation that opens when we honor bleeding bodies and menstrual time.

The edge place

*This is the edge we have always known -
impatient, and full of empty pregnancy.*

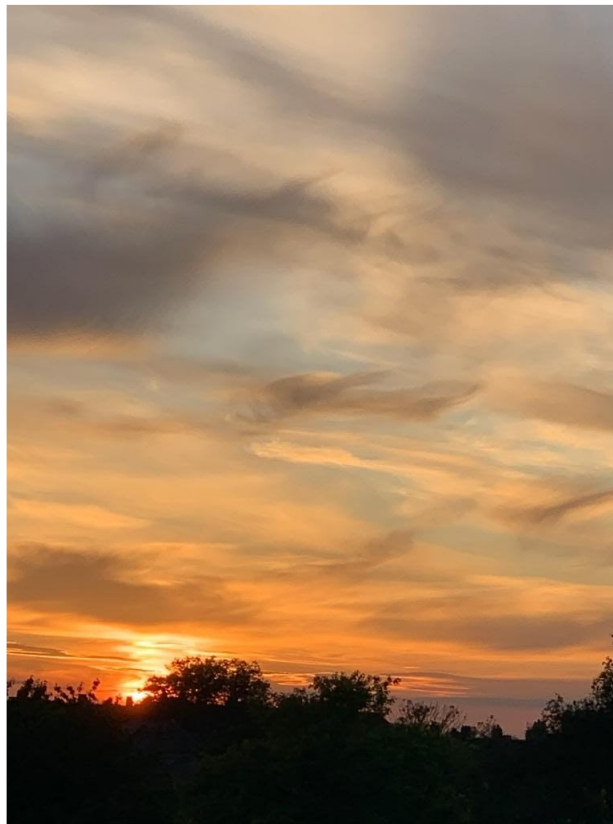
We must take its wait.

*As our bodies become islands,
they are, also, our way home.*

*And through our tender reaching from our still places
we become the mountains themselves,
offering each wanderer a place of rest,
as we clear our together path through.*

I...know this place. It's in the questions that linger. Are we born to stay in one? How do I speak of the path I can't see? Will the elders reveal themselves so that I might recognise in my dreams the songs as they live in me?

It's in the twilight times I venture forth into nearby nature spots to be cradled. Even locked down, the edge place calls. So I trundle up the hill to pay my respects to the day. And to the watercolour sky and to all the expression in it. It is ok here, this place between viewpoints. Where all that is known is already here, and no special thing required but thank you.



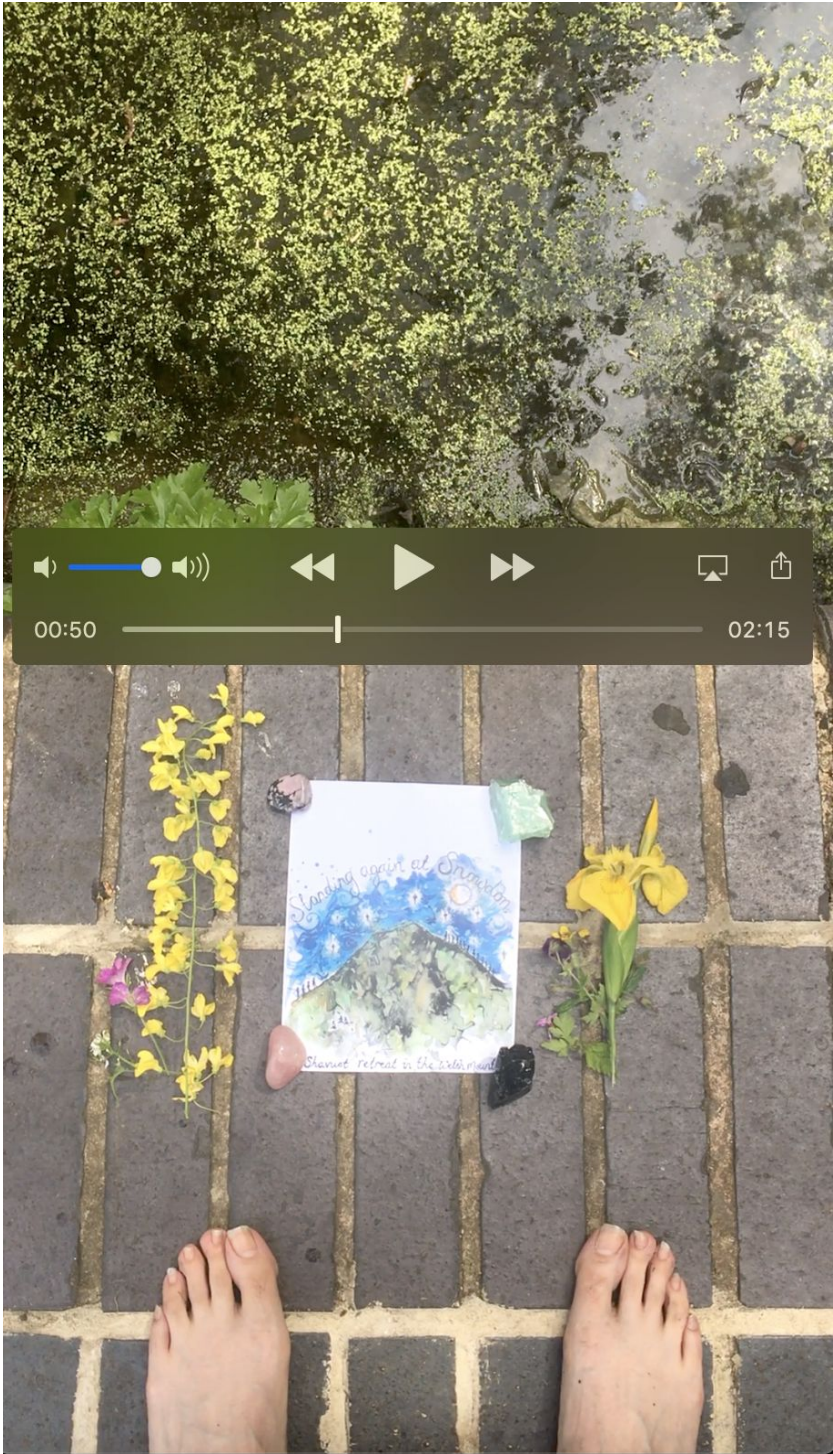
Emily, May 2020, London Lockdown

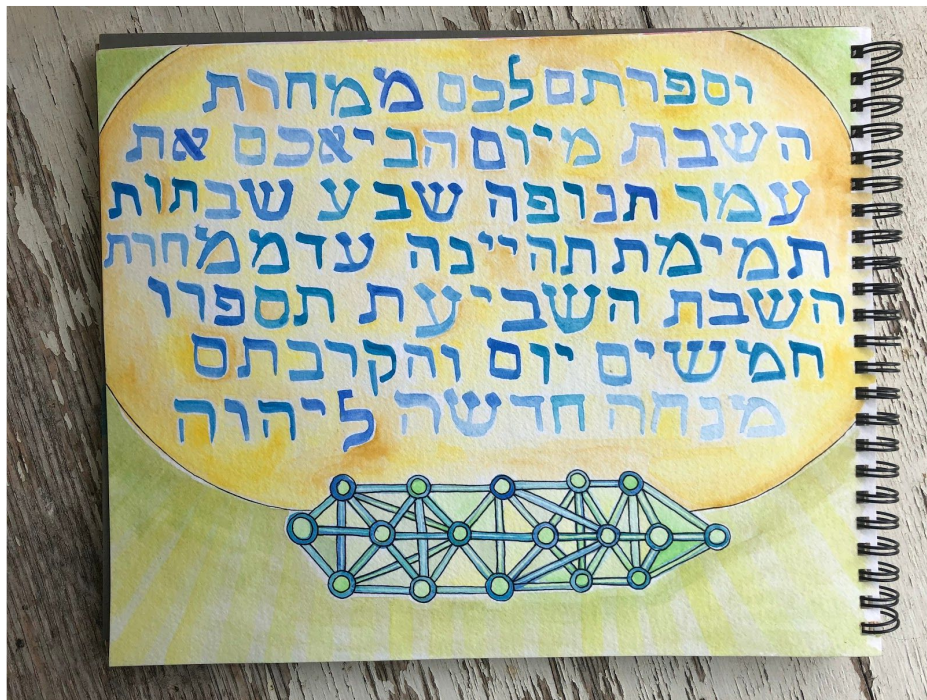
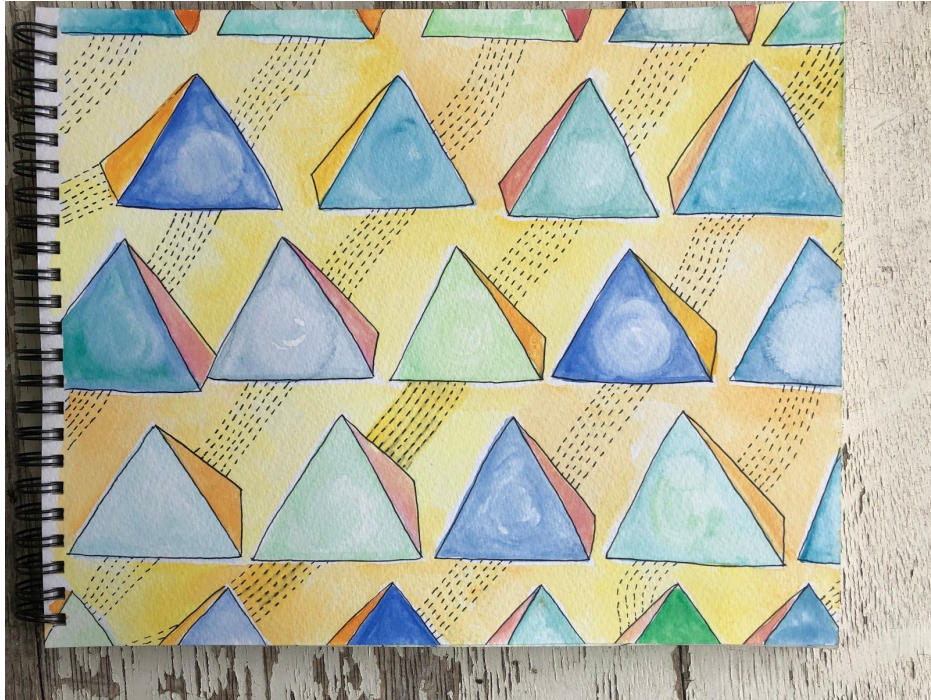
Standing at the edge, again

Yael Roberts

*Click the image to watch the video

A pre-shavuot moving meditation from a wild spot in London.





These paintings use repetition to explore some of the commandment of Sephirat HaOmer, the Kabbalist tree of life, and ideas of "mountain." The map of the Tree of Life is doubled, overlapping and demonstrating the expanse of relationship between the sephirot. The second image shows a series of mountains and paths. How do Sephirat haOmer and Shavuot explore the sacred geography of these paths to revelation? How are they mirrored infinitely in life within and around us?

Sol Weiss

each day.

we breathe like the slow rise of mountains and the solemn sway of glaciers giving way to disappearance

we are combed clean by gravity, pulling at our coat tails with the persistent wonder of a child's urging to kneel down and play, and the enduring quicksand of remembering we are tethered to the soil that cradles the ash and bone of each body we have loved and hurt and forgotten

we are hoisted into the sky each dawn on the backs of a billion stars, hands clasped in spiral merging to form one ball of unrelenting fire, relearning our invincibility to the heat of that which we are made of

we are shipped down into the melodic caves of void on the cool shoots of moonshine

we are a storehouse of seeds, cataloging each scar into longing, each a spark of conception piled against the boundary of one single lifetime, we are a womb crowded in stomped rhythms of readiness, refusing our avoidance of the gentle fist of the midwife reaching inside us to pull out our next crowning vision

we are dissolved like one single salt crystal on the smooth tongue of the ocean untraceably swallowed into her vast body of splendor and spit out, reborn into a lineage of reaching for the nibbling quiet of oxygen and sand

we are opening like the soft net of decay, the freedom of returning nourishing a glistening stream of renewal in the trail of every loss, every hollow of silent prayers trickling out from a sticky sinew of heart muscles too tired to attend to the fields of still unburied dead stuffed in torn pockets and littering our wake

we are feeding our young the hard tumbled wisdom of leathery life lessons, chewed into gentleness before passed through the unblemished faith of their expectant lips, we are dropping our leaves, laying down our limbs in relentless effort to shelter our seedlings from the sharp edges of our own limitations

we are spinning light into skin, chasing our translucent chlorophyll reflection, keeping time with the quick step of shedding, all 52 trillion shades of us made anew each solar revolution, we are tracing a hologram of memory that outlives every molecule, neuron and chemical bond that makes us known to ourselves.

we are a broiling molten center that never stops warming, never gives up trying to comfort all of her children, reaching for those so shattered by torn trust they can not muster a kind word for the body that molded them, we are stuffing our sweat glands with carbon and resentment, blaming the enduring love of our earth mother for our inability to remember how to collapse in her arms and weep, and shake and break the fever of separation and betrayal haunting the twisted chains of our dna.

we are standing at a crossroads, every old growth wisdom and new growth future coiling away from the myth of linear time and lying open before us, every dead end's seductive serenade lulling us to keep smashing our tender minds against what was never working, against the dull drone of control by destruction. we are watching determined hope in the curious eyes of every proton bundled relative watching us and wondering, which tomorrow will we choose to set free on each other?

Lila Sarene

YOU SHALL NOT CROSS
 FOR HERE IS A HOLY PLACE
 AND TO HOLINESS YOU SHALL NOT REACH
 FOR WHAT MAKES ONE MOUNTAIN HOLIER
 THAN OTHERS WHAT MAKES ONE PERSON ANY HOLIER
 THAN OTHERS WHY DO YOU BRAND ONE THING AS HOLY
 AND ANOTHER AS PROFANE ARE NOT ALL THINGS ABLE TO BE
 AS HOLY AS THIS MOUNTAIN ARE NOT ALL THINGS MY CREATION
 ARE NOT ALL THINGS ALL BEINGS MY CREATURES CAPABLE OF BEING
 REVEALED TO YOU FOR YOU AS A HOLY PLACE A HOLY THING A HOLY SOUL
 CAN YOU NOT SEE THAT THIS MOUNTAIN DOES NOT NEED TO BE CLIMBED FOR
 HOLINESS TO EMERGE FOR HOLINESS NEITHER ASCENDS NOR DESCENDS IT CAN
 NOT BE PROCLAIMED OR APPOINTED OR ANNOINTED OR ELECTED OR CHOSEN IT IS
 HERE WITHIN THESE FOUR WALLS THESE FOUR AMOT THESE BOUNDS THESE BORDERS
 THESE CONSTRAINTS HARBOUR MORE HOLINESS THAN YOU COULD FIND AT THE PEAK OF
 ANY SUMMIT OR IN THE EYE OF ANY STORM OR IN THE TREASURY OF ANY STATE OR
 THE PRICE OF ANY STOCK O YE OF LITTLE FAITH CLING NOT OUR COMMANDS TO OUR DEMANDS
 TO OUR AWARDS TO OUR RULES TO OUR LAWS TO OUR LIES TO OUR DIVISIONS TO OUR PERMISSIONS
 ALL FREEDOM IS HENCE IN OUR PALM IN YOUR PALM IN YOUR STEP IN YOUR SIGHT HERE NOW
 THIS IS HOLINESS HERE LIES HOLINESS IN YOUR SACRED SPACE IN YOUR SACRED CAVERN HOWEVER
 CONSTRAINED HOWEVER SMALL HOWEVER NARROW HOWEVER WEAK HOWEVER TRAPPED YOU MAY BE
 FOR THINE IS THE LORDS AND THINE ARE THE LORDS AND THINE IS YOUR HOLY MOUNTAIN SACRED AND STANDING
 READY FOR WHERE YOU ARE WHEN YOU ARE NO JOURNEY REQUIRED NO TREK CALLED FOR NO RULE PRETERMINED NO CONTROL
 EXPECTED NO VOICE DENIED NO LIFE COERCED NO HEART MOVED BUT THOSE THAT FREELY CHOOSE THOSE THAT SAW THEIR SHARED SPACE
 RECOGNISED THOSE THEY ARE PLACED WITH THOSE WHOSE HANDS STRETCH OUT AND FIND ANOTHER WAITING FOR IT IN THIS NARROW PLACE
 BETWEEN THESE WALLS AMONGST THESE PEOPLE THAT YOU FIND SUCH HOLINESS SUCH LOVE SUCH SUPPORT SUCH FAITH SUCH FULFILMENT
 SUCH GATHERING SUCH ASSEMBLY SUCH HOPE SUCH JOY SUCH SOLIDARITY SUCH COMPASSION SUCH HELP SUCH SOUND SUCH VIBRANCY SUCH
 BEATING HERE IS YOUR JOURNEY HERE ARE YOUR PEOPLE HERE IS YOUR LIFE LIVED WITH OTHERS FOR OTHERS NOT MERELY STRIVING FOR THE
 HOLY ELSEWHERE AT ANOTHER TIME IN ANOTHER PLACE FOR ANOTHER COMMAND OR DEMAND YOU ARE HERE AS SIMPLY AS I AM HERE AND
 THAT IS MORE THAN ENOUGH THAT IS ENTIRELY SUFFICIENT THAT IS REVELATION THAT IS TORAH SEEING WHAT IS HERE SEEING WHAT IS NOW
 TAKING WELCOMING HOLDING SHARING GIVING DOING AS A KINGDOM WITHOUT KINGS WITHOUT RULERS WITHOUT MASTERS WITHOUT GODS
 MERE SUCHNESS MERE ASSEMBLY HERE TOGETHER AS A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND A HOLY NATION

והגבלת את-העם סביב לאפר, השפירו לכם עלות בהר ונגע בקצהו:

This piece takes the form of a midrash on the Torah verse, “You shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, ‘Beware of going up the mountain or touching the border of it’” (Shemot 19:12). It explores the significance of boundedness, or feeling encased in boundaries, in the process of revealing Torah.

Matan Torah, the gift of Torah, is envisaged as the “hereness” of the Sinai experience, in each moment of our lives. We are not expected to hike or scale mountainous heights in order to encounter the Divine Word, but in fact can find such pearls of wisdom and presence within the constraints of the given moment. Gaining access to God and paths of righteousness is indeed a journey, but it does not involve merely following rules instituted by elites, enacting coerced behaviour or performing a dangerous struggle that forces us to escape or separate from the world.

Acceptance of Torah, acknowledging God’s commands, involves a recognition of how humans are thrown into an uncertain, unnecessary world, into shared spaces where each individual affects the other, where abuses of authority and demands of power inhibit the already fragile capacity to create, to act, to collaborate. The givenness of a community of Torah could then be a freely chosen gathering and sharing with others, with those around you, those on whom you depend and are responsible for.

Through an ethic of compassion and mutual support, in the here and now, we become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Shemot 19:6). In this time of living on the edge, teetering between the destruction or redemption of Gan Eden, it is incumbent upon us to seek out and embody Torah amongst and against our everyday constraints: the urgency of the climate crisis, the estrangement of lockdown, the reign of capital, the perils of our stale politics.



Yes! You're absolutely right, we couldn't possibly finish a Shavuot Zine without including the bestest vegan gluten free cheesecake recipe there is. So here goes. Obvs, it's a tricky time to secure ingredients so only try this if it's safe to do so and feel free to adapt the ingredients (we've given some hints!). It also needs some kind of juszher//blender. Otherwise drool at the pic & just you wait until we can make it together in person! This recipe has been adapted from Sarah Britton's 'raw cashew dreamcake' at mynewroots.org

A Diasporist Vegan Cheesecake Recipe

Ingredients:

Crust:

1/2 cup raw almonds (pecan or walnuts will also work)

1/2 cup soft Medjool dates

1/4 tsp. sea salt

(You could also simply whizz up some of your favourite biscuits for the base with butter/coconut oil)

Filling:

1 1/2 cups raw cashews, soaked for at least 5 hours, overnight is best
juice of 2 lemons

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1/3 cup coconut oil, melted

1/3 cup agave syrup (any syrup will do!)

1 cup strawberries//raspberries//any soft fruit (thaw completely if using frozen). Note, strawberries are probably the truest 'first fruit' of

Directions:

1. Place nuts and dates in a food processor with sea salt and pulse to chop until they are to your desired fineness (process a finer crust longer than a chunky one). Test the crust by spooning out a small amount of mixture and rolling it in your hands. If the ingredients hold together, your crust is perfect. Scoop out crust mixture in a 7" spring-form pan (if you don't have a spring-form pan, use a pie plate lined with cling film), and press firmly, making sure that the edges are well packed and that the base is relatively even throughout. Rinse food processor well.
2. Warm coconut oil and syrup in a small saucepan on low heat until liquid. Whisk to combine.
3. In the most powerful food processor / blender you own (this is the only reason vegan anarchists dream of marriage) place all filling ingredients (except strawberries/raspberries) and blend on high until very smooth (this may take a couple minutes so be patient). If you have a Vita-Mix, absolutely use it.
4. Pour about 2/3 (just eyeball it, you can't make a mistake!) of the mixture out onto the crust and smooth with a spatula. Add the raspberries to the remaining filling and blend on high until smooth. Pour onto the first layer of filling. Place in freezer until solid.
5. To serve, remove from freezer 30 minutes prior to eating. Run a smooth, sharp knife under hot water and cut into slices. Serve on its own, or with fresh fruit. Store leftovers in the freezer (what leftovers?).

Some vegan cheesecake Torah

There are so many far-fetched reasons given for eating dairy on Shavuot. One of my faves is that the giving of the Torah happened during the anniversary of baby Moses being returned by his big sister Miriam to his mother to be breastfed (Talmud Bavli Sotah 12b). It is the potency of his mother, Yocheved's milk that prepares Moses to receive the Torah.

In celebration of breast-milk & all that which nourishes us and in solidarity with the right of all creatures to nurse as they desire, we offer this delicious alternative.



Us

Cover

Amber Grothe <http://www.ambergrothe.nl/>

On Herbal Grounds

Sam Fox. I am a queer jewish farmer recently graduated from my field of food justice and community resilience. I'm currently a travelling sponge with the intention of deepening my connection to the earth. I like to make intuitive herbal medicines, create plant songs, and cook foraged goodies. Instagram: @samantharosefox

Revelation

[Kohenet](#) Yael Tischler is a ritual-weaver, Jewish educator, writer and song leader. She is the co-founder of [Yelala](#), a constellation of work that celebrates Earth-centred, feminist Jewish spirituality and reclaims the practices of our women/femme and folk ancestors.

Dryad's Saddle

Rum is a 29 year old queer, non-binary fungi lover, who is into radically queering the domestic space, rethinking how we 'do family', and foraging for wild foods and mushrooms. Their dream is to start a queer Jewish co-op living project where they can have big Jewish celebrations, provide space for stray queer Jews who need a family environment, and raise curious and nourished children. <https://jewishsharedliving.wordpress.com/>

Bell Flowers on the Doorstep

Rosie Mercer, lives in Liverpool.

Counting the omer

Margot Seigle (they/them) is a community builder, cultural organizer, ritual weaver and song leader living and farming on occupied Schaghticoke land also known as the Hudson Valley, NY. They are a co-founder of [Linke Fligl](#), a queer Jewish chicken farm and cultural organizing project and [Let My People Sing!](#), a liberatory Jewish singing retreat. They believe our vibrant queer Jewish diasporist future is both here and on its way, and that being in right relationship with land is a integral piece of the puzzle.

Owl

Deana Gershuny is an earth-loving seeker, finding paths of weaving life through medicine, music, yoga and land based community. You can find her on Instagram @deanagershuny

Tender Times

Nici, (she/her). Some of Nici's favourite things are: plants, sunshine, quiet, having compost under her fingernails and glittery nail polish on top, tender queers, dancing, loving her born to and chosen family, singing, making mistakes and trying to learn from them, baths, candle light, making people cry (in a good way, especially with birthday presents), bird watching and listening, shadows, music, tenderness, opportunities for healing, yummy food, friday night zoom check-in's with Jewish pals, herbal tea, colour. instagram: @nici.cini

The Healthy Hamsa

Gillian Samuel is passionate about mental health and combines her lived experience with working in this field. She is currently a researcher with the McPin Foundation working on a Public Mental Health programme. Gillian enjoys travel and spending time with her partner and three adult children.

Mum's last Shavuot

Louise Burman. Mother and grandmother. I love my family. I love my life. I wish for less sadness, more gladness and for people to be healthy and happy.

Between a hard place and a rock

Joel Lazarus is 43 and lives with his wife and three children in Bristol. After rejecting and being rejected by mainstream orthodox Judaism in his earlier years, Joel has reclaimed his Judaism through a practical study of Kabbalah. He is dedicated to contributing to ideas and practices aimed at restoration and transformation, but right now is mainly cooking, cleaning, and playing with his kids!

Letter

Beebee Vanunu (she/her). I live in Manchester. I play drums in queer-post-punky type bands, play free improvisation, make wonky pop songs with all sorts of instruments and play shows when the occasion calls for it. I also make collages and write things. I don't have any portfolio or bandcamp to link you to yet because I'm a fretful perfectionist, but you can find occasionally listen to some of the free expressive music on Resonance FM. When I am not doing that I am what they call a lawyer and I like to journal, meditate and stretch often. Dogs!

Potential Bursting open

Helen Jebreel (she/her)

We hope, we wait

Roxana Jebreel is a creative and curious Mizrahi woman. She enjoys tending her houseplants during lockdown, staying inspired by their evolving growth and movement. Next year, she will qualify as an Art Psychotherapist in London.

Jerusalem

Nadine Batchelor-Hunt (She/Her) is a journalist and former student of the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem.

Kishkes

Rena Oppenheimer (she/her) is a queer white Ashkenazi Jewish social worker living on Ohlone territory/Oakland, California. She loves Hebrew letters, transformative justice, and friqqi Jewish burlesque performance (stage name Jerri Herring).

revelations / tefillin

Ari Wharton (they/them) is 23 yrs old and currently lives on occupied Lenape land. What they make mostly comes from some combination of listening to materials about what they want to be, a desire for all people to feel held and a yearning to change something. link: <https://myteraphim.tumblr.com/>

Time in Lockdown

Rob Freudenthal, London, he/him ~ NHS mental health professional, active member of Kehillah North London, loves gardening and building community" @robfreudenthal

The Revelation Will Not Be on Zoom

Sara Moon is a hebrew-priestess in training, dedicated to building radical, wild jewish community in the UK. after two years studying torah between jerusalem & stockholm she is currently on lockdown in beloved sheffield. writes occasionally at jewofthewoods.wordpress.com

The Intimacy of Unknowing

Ryn Silverstein is a poet, diviner, scholar, Kohenet (Hebrew Priestess), and cat mama with a Scorpio stellium. A queer femme of Ashkenazi and Celtic lineage, her practice is embodied, diasporic, and ancestrally-rooted. Ryn works with ancient Jewish understandings of the body as inseparable from both Divinity and time through the creation process. Honoring the moon as ancestral portal, they tend to the tides of longing that flow between our bodies, land bodies, and water bodies. She lives in Brooklyn, NY with her wife and can be found on Instagram @batpriestess and @mysteriousqueer.

Living in Rural Albania

Maya Brown is a violinist and performer comprising one half of the duo Techo las Mias who was touring the Balkans with her partner until covid-19 shut down Europe. She is a long distance member of the alternative Jewish community in Sheffield where she studied and The Three counties community in Gloucestershire near to where she grew up in the Malvern hills.

These Weeks

Mel Boda is CEO of Electric Umbrella, a registered charity challenging the perception of people with learning disabilities and empowering and enriching lives through music. Wife and mummy to three boys. Living in Hertfordshire.

Atzeres

Jake Berger

The Threshing Floor

Sivan Rotholz (she, hers) is a poet and professor who teaches at the intersection of gynocentric Torah and creative writing. Her poetry and nonfiction have been published widely, and she is working on her first novel. She is currently a third-year rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles.

Food for All

Nickolas 'Nakhie' Faynshteyn (He/Him/His) is an activist in Boston, MA. He is a first generation, working class immigrant originally from Odessa, Ukraine. Nakhie works on climate justice, building class consciousness and a culture of reparations in the Jewish communities he is part of. In his spare time Nakhie enjoys cooking and drawing.

The Feast of Weeks

Isaac Tendler (he/they) is director/organiser/ community member of the Foodhall Project.

I am Ownerless

Joe Hyman (he/him) is a Young Adult programmer at JW3, co-founder of DAVAR (@davarimmersive), and an LGBT+ activist striving for a more inclusive and creative community. Find occasional sharing of work and whatever Jewish stuff I'm working on at @josephmhyman on instagram.

Three Mountains

Samson is a farmer, writer and earth-based Jewish diasporist. His work weaves land tending, food-growing, writing, ritual, prayer and community building. He is a member of *Na'amod*, *The Landworkers' Alliance*, and a [Gentle/Radical](#) collaborative associate. Subscribe to his writing/poetry here: tinyletter.com/thecomingspring

The Broken Earth//Stone-lore

Sage Brice (she/her) is an artist-geographer interested in the politics of nature, particularly in relation to queer and trans ecologies of identity. Her practice is an exploration of vulnerability as a political, ecological, and philosophical orientation. Methods include drawing, sculpture, animation, writing, and various forms of collaboration. The work presented here is an excerpt from an ongoing covid-19 diary, published in full at dandelionroots2020.wordpress.com. For her other work see also sagebrice.com.

bleeding at sinai

Taya Mâ Shere (she/her) co-founded Kohenet Hebrew Priestess Institute, teaches Jewish Ancestral Healing and is on faculty at Starr King School for the Ministry. She is co-author of *The Hebrew Priestess: Ancient and New Visions of Jewish Women's Spiritual Leadership* and *Siddur HaKohanot: A Hebrew Priestess Prayerbook*. Her albums of Hebrew Goddess chant rock devotional tribe worldwide. www.taya.ma

The Edge Place

[Emily](#) (she/her) is a systems thinker, facilitator and researcher. She loves working in the field of relationship and bridging the space between stories. With a grounding in psychology, philosophy and complexity, she's curious about human behaviour, narratives, process design and decision making. She is always seeking to make connections between people, contexts and ideas, and is a Warm Data Lab and Sister Stories circle host. Identifying as a 'JewBu', she is passionate about surfacing and living the kind of questions that can support wider systems transformation and help to create an ecologically and socially just society.

Standing at the edge, again

Yael Roberts is a visual artist and Jewish educator with a love for or for all things wild and urban.

Untitled

Sol is an illustrator, ritualist and organizational development nerd living and farming on occupied Schaghticoke territory in Millerton, NY. They co-run Linke Fligl, queer Jewish chicken farm and cultural organizing project, and make art and music inspired by Jewish tradition, queer family and movements for indigenous land sovereignty.

Each Day

Lila Sarene (she/her) is Minneapolis based writer, healer, queer Jewish witch and survivor blessed with the task of integrating the gifts of a bountiful bouquet of teachers of various spiritual, cultural, healing and justice traditions.

In the Here & Now

Eliot Cohen is a trainee solicitor in London, organizes with Na'amod and edits for Vashti. After receiving degrees in religious studies and philosophy of religion at university, he studied in Yeshivat Ma'ale Gilboa in Israel and Yeshivat Hadar in New York. He is very excited by opportunities for artistic expression of Torah in England.



*We are an emerging collective of british-based diasporist jews
committed to building radical, wild jewish community in the UK.*

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(for now!)