

FROM THE HEART

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Wind out of the West

Seeking warmth within
This season we huddle in
our hearts
And spend, sing, seek
Wind out of the West

By Bill Gaul

Photograph by Bill Gall

The dark time of the year is a time of wonder. What is the darkness hiding? And a time of hope. The light will return. The following poem by Marcia Falk expresses that wonder.

*The breath of all life will bless, the body will exclaim:
Were our mouths filled with song as the sea
and our tongues lapping joy like the waves
and our lips singing praises broad as the sky
and our eyes like the sun and the moon
and our arms open wide as the eagle's wings
and our feet leaping light as the deer's,
it would not be enough to tell the wonder.*

Sh'ma yisra'el is a passage from the Bible beginning at Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verse 4. The following is an adaptation of a translation of the Sh'ma by Marcia Falk.

Hear, O wrestlers with the divine—
The divine abounds everywhere
and dwells in everything;
the many are One.

Loving life and its mysterious source
with all our heart and all our spirit,
all our senses and strength,
we take upon ourselves...
these promises:
to care for the earth
and those who live upon it,
to pursue justice and peace,
to love kindness and compassion.

We will teach this to our children
throughout the passage of the day—
as we dwell in our homes
and as we go on our journeys,
from the time we rise
until we fall asleep.

And may our actions
be faithful to our words
that our children's children
may live to know:
Truth and kindness
have embraced,
peace and justice have kissed
and are one.

Eating an Apple

by Malka Heifetz Tussman
translated by Marcia Falk

The little paring knife
with the cool, round, ivory handle
took pride in being
in my grandpa's...hand
when
he would peel an apple,
and slowly lift to his lips
the thin, ripe, fragrant slices,
and say the blessing over the fruit of the
tree.

He was a fine and proper grandpa,
and behaved
as a proper grandpa should.

I'm a kid with an apple in my hand.
I dig my teeth in, greedily.

Living on the banks of the Hudson, we can appreciate this song to the river.

The Blade of Grass Sings to the River

by Leah Goldberg

Even for the little ones like me,
one among the throng,
for the children of poverty
on disappointment's shores,
the river hums its song, lovingly hums its song.

The sun's gentle caress touches it now and then,
and I, too, am reflected in waters that flow green,
and in the river's depths each one of us is deep.

My ever-deepening image
streaming away to the sea is swallowed up,
erased on the edge of vanishing.

And with the river's voice, the ever-silent soul,
with the river's psalm, sings praises of the world.