Ep #16: Poetry as Midrash

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Hebrew College

Ep #16: Poetry as Midrash

Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: Welcome to *Speaking Torah*. I'm your host, Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal, spiritual leader of Temple Beth Shalom in Melrose, Massachusetts and 2019 graduate of Hebrew College. In this podcast, Jewish leaders from around the world read essays from Hebrew College faculty, alumni, and students about how Torah can help us navigate the most pressing issues of our time. Together, we explore the ways Torah could help us approach the world with creativity, healing, and hope.

This week, we are pleased to share a discussion between Hebrew College faculty member Rabbi Rachel Adelman and her Rabbinical Student Risa Dunbar, about poetry as midrash.

Midrash, the stories that open our text to even more questioning, along with understanding, is presented beautifully in these offerings. Both writers bring their individual voices and experiences into the conversation with the text, allowing the ancient words a new place in the modern era.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman is an Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at Hebrew College. She is currently working on a new book, Daughters in Danger: From the Hebrew Bible to Modern Midrash. When she is not writing books, papers, or divrei Torah, it is poetry that flows from her pen.

Risa Dunbar is a Rabbinical Student at Hebrew College. She has worked at Lehrhaus, a new hybrid beit midrash/tavern and communal learning space in Cambridge, Massachusetts, BBYA's International Kallah Program, Camp Ramah in Northern California, the New Israel Fund, and this year is a Rabbinic intern at Ohav Shalom in Albany, New York.

Rachel's poem, The Luz and the Dew is inspired by these verses from The Song of Songs:

He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first. When heights are frightening and terrors are in the road, when the almond, luz, blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and the caper berry crumbles, and Man sets off for his eternal abode, and, rambling about the market, the mourners abound. Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and

almond, luz, and plane, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the rods.

And now, here's Rachel reading her poem.

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Rabbi Rachel Adelman: The Luz and the Dew. This is a poem in four parts.

One: A place where a ramp, embedded in earth, breaches Heaven's gate and angels, knees unbending, glide up and down, shock waves along the spinal column.

In the time of the Judges, a man rebuilds this town, uncovers the hidden gate to eternity.

This place is full of lucid old men who would crumble, like the dry caper berry if led outside its bounds.

They make the sapphire-blue dye called tekhelet, for only they know the recipe of the angels.

Sannecherib cannot dissolve the walls of Luz or scramble nations there, like old bones in an ossuary. No, they remain integral, of one cord. Even the Babylonian army could not raise them to the ground.

Two: Some say luz is the resilient bone just below the cerebellum.

Hadrian tries to crush it in a millstone, makes not even a sliver of a crack.

When he throws it into the fire pit, not a singe.

He sinks it in water for hours, it won't dissolve.

He strikes it with a mallet, it doesn't shatter.

The source of stem cells, oncologists siphon its marrow as water from a wellspring underground.

Three: Or let luz be the almond nut or wood.

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Jacob made striplings from the luz tree, and laid them across a watering trough, to speckle or mottle his sheep and goats.

Four: I want to live in that town, to suck on that bone, strip the bark of the luz tree bare.

But only dew would soften the dry bones into eternal life.

What is my dew?

What will waken the dry bone in me?

Bring me back to life?

I look for the dew that wakens the dawn, shakes off the dreadlocks of the night, darkening the palm leaf. It carries the moon's loadstone and gravity's pull.

My granddaughter names the wildflowers: Lellow, greeeen, wed, pupple.

Field of yellow mustard, poppies, and lupines growing rampant in the wild grass, as high as my knee, up to her neck.

Her hand in mine, we play: "I spy with my little eye." She runs up to bend over the petal of something that is purple and pink, and traces the darkening corolla inward.

Can you say, "Purple-and-pink?"

"Pupple-an-peek."

Her laugh would soften any almond nut shell, dissolve any stone in dry ground.

I need no dew of dawn to quicken the dead, no luz bone of eternity.

The Angel of Death has no jurisdiction here.

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Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: What made you write this poem?

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: I began this poem at the height of COVID, in the spring of 2020, when like many, I was housebound, under lockdown in Jerusalem. And despite the restrictions, I formed a pod with my daughter and her family.

And at the time, I was doing Gan Bubbe that is childcare for my granddaughters, who are about three and one-and-a-half, in the morning, so that my daughter could teach high school on Zoom.

And I would teach my classes in Hebrew College, the Rabbinical School classes in the afternoon and the evening. So, it was exhausting and exhilarating. But I was so grateful at that time that I could be here in Israel, there in Israel, through the height of the pandemic, and in contact with that source of vitality of life that these gorgeous little girls had become for me.

So, around that time, a friend of mine, a teacher and a poet, philosopher, Sarah Friedland Ben Arzah gave a workshop on Zoom on the Luz and the Tal. Now, the word tal in Hebrew means dew. And according to Midrash, in the End of Days, dew will drip down from the locks of The Holy One, blessed be he to awaken the bones of the dead to life.

So, that's based on a verse in Song of Songs, where the head of the beloved is described as wet with dew, his locks dropping with the drops of the night.

So, in that workshop with Sarah Friedland Ben Arzah, we explored the biblical and midrashic tradition on the luz, that bone at the top of the spinal column, right up there. I don't know what it's called in English.

So, it's a source of stem cells that can regenerate bone marrow. And apparently, it's indestructible, a source of eternal life. And in the Book of Genesis, it's identified as the place where Jacob had his Night Vision of the Angels ascending and descending a ladder. That is Beth-El. It's the same Beth-El where Jacob says, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not

know it." And he said, "How awesome in this place, this is one other than the House of God Beit-El, and this is the Gate to Heaven."

So, the midrash connects this place, Luz, with a kind of Shangri-la where no one ever dies. So, Sarah Friedland Ben Arzah, in the workshop, posed this beautiful-yet-simple question, what is the luz for you? What is the source of your intimations of eternal life?

Risa Dunbar: It's so interesting hearing this background because there are instincts that I have reading it. But really, sort of getting to understand the reverberations of this idea of bounty in its most endless sense and its most mythic sense of the coming of the Moshiach or of a bounty that will be a part of that, and dew being this source of water that is gentle, and at the same time, extremely nourishing.

I feel like this poem does that. It is gentle, and in its right moments, it's hard. Like, even intonations of the speech pattern or the repetition of a phrase is both a gentle to listen to and you can hear the annunciation and the hard syllables in there. And I think that balance of the need for structure and the need for gentleness or flow if very much present, both in the actual words and also in the content of this work.

And I think, I just feel and have such a sense of bounty listening to it and also hearing you talk about your grandchildren. Rachel, it's so beautiful to hear, right, because it's – for me, particularly her laugh would soften any almond nutshell, dissolve any stone in dry ground.

Just those two lines even, it just encapsulates this beauty of relationship and the nourishment that we can get from our relationships, and how we witness the way that a particular person in our life affects others around them, and just this attention to not only the double entendre of including almond in there, which also is the word that's used for the almond blossom, like the luz, and the reverberations there.

But also, I think of how almond trees need a lot of water to grow. Particularly, I'm from California and there are a lot of almond trees and they

take a lot of water. And you hear the tal in the almond there in a way that I think is very beautiful.

And then, it's like direct interaction with the relationship between the wetness, or the richness of the almond nutshell and the water that you know was required to make that, and the dry ground that it's up into contrast with in that immediate next line, would dissolve any stone in dry ground.

Also, the potential of that, that there is the potential for this to actually be watered and to be full of life in some way. So, I think it's just totally gorgeous, the way that it holds those forces here. And I also just want to know your granddaughter. It makes me want to know your granddaughter.

Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: Why did you decide to write this in four parts?

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: I think about poetry as something that doesn't mean something, but rather, in heightened language, it's full of multi-layered illusions. And instead of meaning something, it evokes meaning. It's generative of meaning rather than fixed in what it signifies. It's an associative medium. It's a flowing medium. I like your work, Risa, flow with rhythm and word play.

So, my inspirations for this kind of genre are people like Tamar Biala, who is the writer and editor of many of the pieces in Dirshuni, volumes one and two in Hebrew, and Alicia Ostriker and Alicia Jo Rabins, who's the rockstar of an indie rock band called Girls in Trouble.

I feel like I'm mixing two sensibilities, modern existential feminist, with classic rabbinic creative commentary. Poetry gives me that freedom.

Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: Risa, do you have thoughts on Rachel's poem?

Risa Dunbar: I think that what Rachel said is everything. That's definitely how I think about it as well. I think also, what is quite gorgeous about particularly putting this into steps here, or movements rather – because I think actually in classical midrashim, it also is movements. It's moving you

through a particular verse or it's moving you through a particular narrative or an arc or a way of searching in the text.

And I think that what's so gorgeous about this is that it really – you feel the search here. And I think that poetry, in its line breaks and in its way of moving you along the page, is a form that very much lends itself to doing that searching, both within the meaning realm, but also physically, the way that it is on a page, you're looking for the next word.

You're moving your eye down or across or you're noticing what is italicized or what isn't. And the way that it plays, it's playful in that way, using this canvas. And I think that Midrash, in many ways, through its own creative interpretation, is also deeply creative and it's also playful, a lot of the time.

A lot of the way that midrash thinks about making meaning is sort of riffing off of words and turning them into a set of two words instead of one word, and those two words add deeper meaning to that one word. But it's a play on it, or something like that.

And I think that that is so clear in this. You can also just tell how incredibly well learned Rachel is in this mode because of the way that it evokes that in the reader without necessarily knowing what the midrashim themselves are, which is a very powerful and difficult thing to do. You have to really know it inside and out.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: Risa, I just want to add to that, that the term midrash comes from the word lidrosh, which is to seek, to ask, to probe, and that's what the poem is also doing. It's posing questions, possibilities.

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Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: Now, we'll hear Risa read her two poems, The Fifth Trial: On Hagar Conceiving a Child or Save me from What I Want, and The Sixth Trial: Dear Hagar, a Promise from the Water.

Risa Dunbar: The Fifth Trial: On Hagar Conceiving A Child or Save Me From What I Want.

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Hagar, mistress of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going? Genesis 16:8.

I did not want you but she wanted you and

since he betrayed her I want what she wants

she may have wanted me but and she wanted you but

the way that a spider wants. she did not want you

this way but she did want you I promise you she did once

but she did not want what came with you but and

she wanted you and I wanted him and I want You most and and

In truth I did not want you until I had you

but but when I had you I knew I knew I know that you were also You

and you were You and You I wanted most, more than I could want

You are all I want and she knew this but and and it caught her spider in web

she wanted but why didn't she say save me from what i want

Abraham said what I want I thought would save me

I said what I did for her I thought would save me

You said: where have you come from and where are you going?

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Risa Dunbar: The Sixth Trial: Dear Hagar, a Promise from the Water. Genesis 21:10. Rationale.

It takes a lot of work to remember we are nothing

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What has history given us but a fickle home? A legacy

of bloodied men. What's a nation to the sky? Some other wood

to call ours, some other snippet of cloud to pretend we own.

Fatimah Asghar, "How We Left: Film Treatment"

We are bare burnt body beautiful, sun-basked, on the run

Sweat slips off us like dewdrops on aloe's parched tongue

Like a moth runs into firelight, or a cocoon that is unspun

Did I commit crime having you when I know the world to be a cruel one?

I tear myself away to leave you and yet I gaze there, knowing life is done

Is it because I fought my whole life for a pulse when others whispered numb?

I fought my whole life for not even a single grain of sand, not a crumb

You were the greatest of them all Ishmael, the tenderest yarn into sweater that I spun

I was asked once where I was going, where I was coming from

I turn, a pool so clear I know it must be a snippet of sky pulled undone

A promise from the water: A mother watching her son who has barely begun.

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Rabbi Rachel Adelman: It's really special to hear you read it, Risa. You make it come alive in your reading.

Risa Dunbar: Thank You.

Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: Tell me about why you wrote these poems.

Risa Dunbar: The two that actually we chose to look at today are some of the more fraught ones. And I really think just the whole narrative arc around Hagar is quite a difficult text to read, even just from the literal meanings. And it's very evocative, and also when I talked about compassion being in here, I think you can hear that in both of these poems because I wrote them with Hagar at the center.

I did not write them from Avraham's point of view. I wrote them with Hagar as the protagonist because I think Hagar is the protagonist in these, and that quite frankly I was okay with being more critical of Avraham in these moments because I really was angry with him. And I really felt for Hagar and for the pain.

That feels like not strong enough of a word. The trauma, really, that she experiences as the maid servant of Sarai and her role, very deep role in this story of our foreparents, of the Jewish People's foreparents, and the role that her story takes as emblematic of really this woman who is disempowered and who comes from Egypt and who serves Avraham and Sarai and his household, and how she conceives a child and what it might have been like to be in that position of triangularity with Sarai and Avraham and also the pain of being banished.

And actually, that second poem, I really took quite a lot of influence, as you could see, from the text that I quoted by a poet, Fatimah Ashgar, who talks about immigration and what that is like. But also from a more modern movement that talks about Hagar and identifies Hagar with a Black experience, in America specifically, of a Black mother watching her son giving birth to a son in a world that is unkind and in a world that targets Black men, young Black men, and maybe what that actually means on a spiritual level for Black mothers.

There's actually a really wonderful podcast from On Being that talks about this. And so, I took quite a lot of influence from that as well for the second poem.

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Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: In the first poem, the repetition of words, the stuttering brought up struggle and a feeling of discomfort for me. What was your intention?

Risa Dunbar: I tried so many variations of those words that are the connector words, that are the but and the and, and the if, or in, and all the variations, of course, of the overuse of you. Intentional overuse of the word you.

And I think, for me, I wanted there to be some sort of a stopping, starting, kind of shifting focus way that the reader would read this. And almost like, okay, it seems like there's some meaning that's concealed that I'm about to find out, but it seems like maybe something was skipped over or I'm not sure what was supposed to be there.

And this idea that perhaps she was constantly being put in the middle of something, that Hagar was constantly in the middle of looking one place, looking another, watching herself be watched by someone else and the ways that that might make someone's focus shift constantly and what that actual effect of that might have been like.

That's how you feel reading about her too. You want her to be treated better. You want things to be smoother for her. And you just sort of know that when – when is it going to be smoother?

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: She's wedged, literally wedged between, in the conjunction of the and, if, or but, and you, and the you keeps shifting. The you keeps – we're constantly, throughout the whole poem, we're thinking, who is the you she's talking to? From the little Y of the you, to finally the big Y of the You, meaning Thou, oh God, right?

She's the first one to whom God speaks, first woman to whom God speaks directly. So, it's quite remarkable and she's never called a prophetess. Yet God speaks to her, not once, but twice.

I want to say, a really striking change that you made in the narrative – I'm not sure if it was deliberate, but the angel – she's been banished from the

house of Avraham and Sarai because she's pregnant and Sarai is jealous and irked by the fact that she became pregnant so easily. She's banished. Really, actually, she runs away from Sarai's punitive hand.

And then, an angel appears to her at the site of a well and says to her this question. But the way that it's introduced in the biblical text is the angel of the Lord appeared to her and he said to her, "Hagar, slave girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?"

Hagar *Shifrat Sarai*. So, you've changed that in a really interesting way. You called her the mistress of Sarai, not the slave girl of Sarai. And it reminds me of this principal, this rabbinic dictum that, acquire yourself a slave, acquire yourself a master, because you have to treat that slave well enough that he becomes master of you.

So, you've done this really interesting reversal of roles where she becomes the mistress to Sarai and she does that by posing the question that Sarai perhaps comes to realize, why didn't she save me from what I want, i.e., she wanted, that is surrogacy? You know, this triangulated relationship.

Why didn't she tell me that she didn't want this? Why didn't she save me from what I want? I want to think about that shifting you through the poem. So, initially it's, "I do not want you but she wanted you and he betrayed her." I think you're probably referring to the episode in Egypt where he passed her off as his half-sister, his sister, back in chapter 12. So, he's the he, but the you keeps shifting.

Risa Dunbar: Yeah, the first you is her speaking to her son.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: Yeah, that's what I thought. Maybe it's the baby in utero.

Risa Dunbar: Yeah, that's what I picture, is this could be a whole internal dialogue of her talking to herself.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: Yeah, and then it goes, “She wanted you and I wanted him and I want You, capital Y, most.” Meaning, “I want a relationship with God.” Yeah.

Risa Dunbar: I wanted to make sure that God was in each and every poem about Hagar because of how important that relationship is in the text. As Rachel mentioned, I mean, the relationship there is very clear. I mean, is it ever clear? But it’s very much there. It’s very present.

And the way that Hagar – at least my understanding also of her, a part of Sarai’s hatred of Hagar is because of this particular form of relationship to God that Hagar seems to have, either because – I mean, the ability to have children is attributed to God, classically. And so, the way that Sarai may, by actually hating Hagar through this particular mode of having a relationship to God may also be jealous of that relationship in some manner. And I wanted to make sure that that triangulation also was present here.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: So, initially it’s the child and then it’s the angel. And it’s as if you’re having tis internal dialogue, and only after this internal dialogue that she’s having, only after that, the angel reveals the angel’s self and says, you said, “Where have you come from?”

And it’s like, that’s classic midrash, right. After these things, what things? What internal dialogue was Avraham having? So, here comes Risa and says, “Well after these things, the angel appears. Well, what things?” She has this internal dialogue, which then prompts.

So, she goes from praying to the child or speaking to the child, to addressing Sarai indirectly, then to a direct relationship with God. Maybe I wanted You after all? And then God says, “Now she’s ready for a direct encounter.” And speaks to her.

Then, the question, “Where have you come from, where are you going?” has already, in some ways – she only answers it by saying, “I’ve run away from Sarai, my mistress.” But in this inner dialogue, she’s answered that question already.

So, the question ends. The answer to that question has already been provided in a really beautiful way. I love that you end it that way.

Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: Rachel, what did you think about Risa's poem and the Sixth Trial?

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: The Sixth Trial is in the context of Genesis 21. And this is when Ishmael has already been born and he's accused of letzachek, of playing or mocking or doing something problematic to Isaac. Although Robert Alter…

Risa Dunbar: Robert Alter's favorite translation…

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: Right, which is, "He was Isaac-ing." He was trying to become the heir. So, Sarai banishes Hagar and Ishmael. And you have taken that moment where, again, there's kind of revelation. There's a fear of death. There's an anxiety that they're going to die of thirst in the desert.

But you've taken that cusp, "Will she be saved? Will there be a moment of faith found in this barren land bereft of water?" And you have spun – I'm going to use that word. That's your word…

Risa Dunbar: That's a favorite verb of mine.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: It is a gorgeous, gorgeous poem with a beautiful rhythm and stunning similes. I love the dew drop on aloe, the moth to firelight, unspun cocoon. And I'm thinking about, what is that image? "Something I did not ask for, I did not want, and yet I'm drawn to that light. So, why am I singed? Why am I burned?" Asks Hagar, "Drawn to that which will harm me."

And so, instead of turning from the caterpillar to butterfly, she's actually stuck in an unspun cocoon and wondering, what is this for? It's really a dire existential moment evoked by your similes.

And she invokes a question. She asks, "Did I commit a crime, having you when I know the world to be a cruel one?" And she asks another question, "Is it because I fought my whole life for a pulse when others whispered

numb, I was looking for life? I was in search of life, am I being punished for that search of life?"

Ad then, you use this other gorgeous simile, "I found my whole life, not for a single grain of sand." So, that's being juxtaposed to the promise to Abraham where she's told in the *akedah*, the covenant is being re-invoked and God tells Abraham, "I will make your seed or offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky or dust of the Earth." And you said, "I don't want any of that." Hagar says, "I don't want the promise of the stars of the sky or the dust of the Earth of r the sands of the seashore." She's pushing back against that covenantal promise, against God…

Risa Dunbar: And that's what Fatimah Ashgar also says in What's a Nation to the Sky? Some other wood to call ours, some other snippet of cloud to pretend we own.

Because all of these similes, these ways that God promises a particular kind of future to Avraham is via these metaphors and these similes of sands of the Earth and stars of the sky.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: And, I mean, I guess for Fatimah, they're ephemeral. These promises are ephemeral. They're like clouds. So, she's rejected that. She's rejected the covenant with the patriarchs and divine promise.

And instead, what you do is you do this beautiful movement where you move to the domestic, the maternal desire for a child, where Ishmael then becomes the tenderest yarn into sweater that I spun. Beautiful, it's just so beautiful.

And then, she becomes watchful over the child with an intimate domestic gaze. She's a snippet of sky pulled down, like undone. It's a promise of water. It's a mother watching her son barely begun.

And then, I have the image of the spring. It's a spring that wells up within her. That's her source of faith. That hope in that child.

Risa Dunbar: I felt so drawn to that, to the water, particularly because that's actually absent from those two images of the divine promise, or of those two images of the the. And that actually, there's this other thing that is so life-giving and so full and actually the thing she needs. And it's exactly what she finds. And it's withdrawing consent from this other thing.

It's not just that it's what she needs, but it's in it being the thing she needs, she also is somehow withdrawing consent from this other paradigm that has oppressed her.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: It's water versus sand.

Risa Dunbar: It's almost water versus sand in this kind of strange and – also like the moth running into firelight is also about a harkening to the forth of, you could argue, water, fire, air, that whole sort of paradigm.

But I think that specifically the water is supposed to evoke that as an opposition to and almost perhaps more desirable in its own kind of way to the sand.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: I've always read chapter 21 not as Abraham's trial, but as Hagar's. This is Agar's act, binding of Ishmael, a kind of binding of Ishmael, like Avraham's binding of Yitzhak, *akedah Yitzhak.*

And I wonder how a woman experiences trial in this way differently, like how Hagar experiences trial differently than how Abraham – Abraham's 10 trials are, let's say, divinely induced. God says *lekh lekha*, go forth from your land. God says, sacrifice your son. God says, circumcise your son.

And I wonder about the way that a woman experiences trials differently. Chapter 21 is her trial. What's her trial?

Risa Dunbar: I think it has felt very important to use the poetic form to explore her relationship to the trauma or the pain of this moment, particularly because I wonder about what is it that for her was hard.

Was it, she left? Or she was told to leave, but is it actually – does she wish for it back? Or is this actually better for her? And what kind of psychological

experience would it be like to admit that perhaps this was better than what she was subjected to in Avraham and Sarai's household? Which I think is a possible reading. And perhaps the trial is the actual psychological experience of having to admit when something we have endured, that the thing that we were more afraid of is actually the thing that's better.

Particularly in a disenfranchised situation where you really have either slavery or the harshness of the desert, which is really the situation that she's in here, and it's sort of in a moment where those are really the only things that are available to you.

What I find so unbelievable about her as a character is her sheer ability to be at all. To be at all. Even just that is an absolute miracle when those are the options. So, I think for me, I'm still left with just this sense of deep wonder and awe at this model of this character that we have.

And what it asks us to think about when we see injustice in our lives and injustice in the world and injustice in our communities, perhaps even where we feel triangulated in some way, I think it's a really important call for us.

Rabbi Rachel Adelman: Can I read the poem back to you, Risa? The Sixth Trial, Dear Hagar, a Promise from the Water. I think the listeners would appreciate that. And I think it's also important for the poet to hear it in a different voice. Padrig O' Tuama always ends by rereading the piece, and then it comes to light in a new way, so I'm going to read this back to you.

We are bare burnt body beautiful, sun-basked, on the run

Sweat slips off us like dewdrops on aloe's parched tongue

Like a moth runs into firelight, or a cocoon that is unspun

Did I commit crime having you when I know the world to be a cruel one?

I tear myself away to leave you and yet I gaze there, knowing life is done

Is it because I fought my whole life for a pulse when others whispered numb?

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I fought my whole life for not even a single grain of sand, not a crumb

You were the greatest of them all Ishmael, the tenderest yarn into sweater that I spun

I was asked once where I was going, where I was coming from

I turn, a pool so clear I know it must be a snippet of sky pulled undone

A promise from the water: A mother watching her son who has barely begun.

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Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal: Thank you for joining us for this episode of *Speaking Torah*. We want to thank Emily Hoadley for our logo and Hebrew College Rabbinical Student and composer Jackson Mercer for our theme music Esa Einai. To learn more about Hebrew College, please visit hebrewcollege.edu/podcast and remember to subscribe, like, and rate *Speaking Torah* wherever you listen to podcasts.

We'll leave you this week with "*Hashkiveinu*," performed by Hebrew College grad Kevin Margolius and the Touro Synagogue's house band, The Panorama Jazz Band. You can listen to the full album on Spotify by visiting our website. I'm your host Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal. Thank you for joining us on *Speaking Torah*.