

To my child

Was it from hunger
or from great love—
but your mother is a witness to this—
I wanted to swallow you my child, when I felt your tiny body cool
In my fingers.
As if I pressed them
A warm glass of tea
Feeling its passage to cold.

Since you are no stranger, no guest,
On our earth one does not earth a second,--
one births oneself like a ring
and the rings link like chains together.

My child,
Who in words are called: love
And who without words are yourself love, you—the seed of every
dream, hidden third one,
who from the wides of the world
with the wonders of an unseen storm
have made two meet together
to create you and rejoice—

Why did you darken creation
as you did when you shut your eyes
and left me outside, begging,
with a world blanketed in snow
which you shook off to go back?

No cradle had brought you joy,
Whose very motion
Holds within it the rhythm of song.
May the sun poke out her eyes—
since you never beheld her light.
A drop of poison burned out your faith,
You thought
It was warm sweet milk.

I wanted to swallow you my child,
To feel the taste
Of my anticipated future.
Perhaps you will blossom as before
in my blood.

But I am not worthy to be your grave.
So I bequeath you
To the summoning snow,
The snow--my first holy day
And you will sink
Like a splinter of dusk
Into the quiet depths
and bear greetings from me
to the frozen little grasses.

Sutzkever, January 18, 1943