

the following is a dialogue between an israeli man (“lo” – “him”) and an israeli woman (“la” – “her”).
their dialogue is interspersed with headlines from the 2011 jerusalem post.

i often write in only lower-case letters –

the first zionist congress was held in 1897

1 8 9 7

a poem in 4 voices

MARTIN NAKELL

lo = him, an Israeli man

la = her, an Israeli woman

**all of the material in bold are headlines taken
from the Jerusalem Post of 2011, the year the poem
was written.**

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EIGHTEEN NINETY-SEVEN

Io: last night i dreamt that israel was at peace not just with her neighbors but with herself.

Ia: amazing what these words can do how they ride the light

Io: so different than the israel we've yet to know

Ia: words aren't symbols of anything yet look at all the rambunctious stuff they do they get themselves into

IRAN DOMINATES OBAMA-NETANYAHU MEETING

Io: all israelis would be different because of this peace i dreamt of

Ia: and yet where do they come from all these words we know i'd love to just once see where they come from that wordless origin wouldn't that be something

Io: because as he'd said we haven't been afraid to make war and we are not afraid to make peace

2011 BRINGS PROMISE TO STOCKS WITH HIGH-DIVIDEND YIELDS

Ia: like the words is & is not don't all words contain their opposites because of where they come from

Io: my father told me – we were sitting in jerusalem – at a café – that my father's jordanian friend – from amman – signed all his letters to my father with the arabic salutation meaning: *infinite bliss*. do you think such a thing exists, my father asked me? a bliss that is infinite? and can it co-exist with the stream of the extraordinary ordinary of things within that stream? or are those just meaningless words – *infinite bliss*? if the temple were rebuilt from the western wall would there be a reign of infinite bliss? and yet isn't bliss infinite as long as it lasts? and once it passes, the infinite passes with it? is the universe – as one of the rabbis of the first temple once said – always in a state of infinite bliss? and aren't we – as the same rabbi said – the supplications of that bliss?

Ia: and then just think about how a language forms the way we think for example if i say the word father what do *i* think of and what do *you* think of? and all from just one little word.

Io: and why did i have that dream i had to ask myself. i had it because i so want that peace i want it so and i didn't even know how much i wanted it until i dreamt my want my desire my outrageous demand my childish tantrum

PRIME MINISTER: ISRAEL HAS ACTED AGAINST U.S. ADVICE BEFORE

Ia: have you ever seen a word arrive and be and then depart i mean literally well i mean in your mind seen a word arrive in a somewhat unformed unshaped way and then become the word *here* and then depart again into dissolution. have you ever? no? have you never? they arrive like annunciations but of what what of? i'm just a little nutty aren't i?

Io: and i don't just mean a cold peace i mean where all the arab states felt friendly toward israel and israel felt friendly toward all the arab states and what wouldn't all that be like, huh? well i'm not crazy i'm just saying it was my dream. i'm not naïve. i'm not outside the pale of passions outside the aether of history.

la: did you know that carl gustav jung told james joyce: james, he said, jimmy, boy, he said, your schizophrenic daughter lucia she is drowning in in the seas that you james joyce that you swim in meaning of course the seas of language freed from what? freed from language's normative role of meaning only one thing in only one way at only one time

lo: when i was in college, in the states, in a lit class, 'the literature of peace & justice,' the prof brings in a palestinian student, a girl, and an israeli student, a guy. he asks the palestinian girl: what do you think of when you hear the word "israeli," and she says: enemy. and the prof asks the israeli guy: what do you think of when you hear the word "palestinian." and the israeli guy says: well, ok [kind of having to admit it], enemy. and the prof says: it's all a language question. if we change the language, we change the reality. if we change enemy to neighbor, if we change enemy to cousin, if we change enemy to, simply, friend. you are my friend. i am your friend.

la: r.d. laing the psychoanalyst said that if you listen carefully to the rantings and the ravings of a schizophrenic – in the hospital where he worked – it all – eventually – especially once you get to know the person – it all makes ordinary common sense. does all language have to at some level make ordinary common sense?

lo: once, i was walking in haifa with two friends: one israeli and one palestinian. i said to them both: think of the word israeli what comes to mind and then think of the word palestinian what comes to mind and you know what they both said about both words: an enigma they said. about both those words. and that's what they were calling *themselves*

TAX CHANGES FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS

la: look. the moon now is rising. i mean the sun now is rising. look. there. do we call that the sun or the moon?

lo: in a turkish café in jerusalem he said to me: whoever owns jerusalem owns the world & i said i own jerusalem it's a city full of ancient languages of quarried beliefs & their disbeliefs of predestined harmonies even of flying carpets for sale of maggots feeding on stone & marble of shades resisting people of poetries elevating fig trees to the level of foremothers of tourists looking for modern jewish prostitutes who might whisper magical signs

la: there are the languages of magical signage to be found in the medieval gardens of italy & spain but their symbols are so far indiscernible although i know what they say would you like to know what they say? no? ok. of course not

lo: i'm going to repeat it: israel at peace not only with her neighbors but with herself. golden hospitals. a nobel prize in every home. A cool wind along the axis of fervencies. an israel that exists and does not exist that resides in the plethora of its existence & its non-existence

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY CHIEF: IRAN NOT TELLING ABOUT NUCLEAR PROGRAM

la: is there a difference between the words existence & non-existence? what does kabbalah say? what does st. augustine say? what does the poet say the one who couldn't be stopped from digging with his shovel in the vineyards looking for the potsherds of his family's demise

lo: i mean also her neighbors at peace with israel and at peace with themselves

la: the languages are all inexhaustible even were someone to try to exhaust them

Io: only the country – israel – herself is real: jerusalem, tel aviv, haifa, jaffe, the hills of judea, the white white moonscape drive along the road to the dead sea, the kids in the streets of acre, the garbage truck, the #7 bus, the finest falafel of homegrown labor and adolescent daydreams at the stand on the hilltop right where the jewish the armenian the christian and the muslim quarters converge to the sound of the music of the fishes

A RAPIST REDUCED TO BLAMING THE COURTS

Ia: *if* we agree that language can't arrive at what was once called truth & that what language *can do* is describe the world word by word then what does it "mean" if i say: the lord is my shepherd or the woman is not a woman but an image come naked from the garden of shamelessness to imitate our world or the sun stood still over jericho or the ship gallops over the rooftops of that neighborhood night after skyseed or if i say they listened to the music from where they had once gone inside the radio sound wave

Io: perhaps despite appearances every man woman & child in the land of israel is at their core driven by a precise logic which one scholar said was the first gift given by yahweh to mooses on sinai. that scholar climbed sinai. her mind clarified with a precise impulsive logic that includes the proposition: israel exists and it does not exist.

Ia: the basis of language is logic; the basis of logic is grammar: the logic of grammar is beauty; the grammar of beauty is the midlight of existence.

Io: the two pilgrims – one arab the other a jew – approach the temple mount and the wailing wall. with a kind of indifference found only in the sublime, two security police approach each pilgrim, accept their passports as valid, then grant each one leave to proceed. These two will never meet. If they did, how would they describe how would they discuss how would they express their respective experiences to each other? think about it. If the time came and the circumstances were right they would kill each other

ISRAEL CALLS ON UNITED NATIONS TO CONDEMN ROCKET ATTACKS FROM GAZA

Ia: the psychoanalyst/philosopher/critic jacques lacan writes that: everyone, as a child, looking into a mirror at a certain moment, sees, for the first time, "themselves," a "self"; they then just then they hear that voice that speaks to them as themselves. Doesn't a nation of a people also have such a moment? but what if, at a certain point in time much later, that nation sees that the voice of itself which speaks to itself falls away, grows faint and quiet. what is left? is it something altogether new which had always been there? lacan did not go on to say that this could have been a question for kabbalah. but it could be. after all, it's a question of language in which the letters fall away. after that, i've heard, lacan wrote no more philosophy but enjoyed – every bit as he had enjoyed philosophy – a second career as a botanist specializing in the breeding of and revolutionary methods of cultivation of roses and especially of succulent roses that would grow in the israeli desert where he'd settled. i don't know if that's true, but i heard it said of him.

Io: the breeze blew through the garden of roses bearing scents from africa

Ia: i called you by every conceivable name ad infinitum but you never answered. i began from the beginning i continue without bitterness

Io: the grammar of wheat incites the dream of experience

JUSTIN BEIBER AND ISRAEL'S MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Ia: my notebook was new, the pages were empty. i could have started to read a book. instead i went out for a walk looking for words. i found thousands of them. & hundreds of thousands.

Io: i suddenly was hungry for sights to fill my eyes. i walked out among all the buildings. i walked through the streets. i walked all the way to the beach then all the way back home. it was exhilarating. all that time i was no one i was all of no one.

Ia: if you wait long enough the right word will come to you. this could take minutes hours days or years. you might not know the right word for what you want until a long time after you begin searching even until a long time after you've seen – but not recognized – it. but it'll come. even if you have to make it up it'll come. every word has an urge to come.

Io: when i realized that i had a competition going with all my male friends, i wondered if that weren't a kind of madness. not that i didn't love some of them all of them. but i had to ask myself what was this competition? what was i competing for? when the best thing i could get was friendship. i went around to all my male friends with a different thought in mind and goddamn it it worked. the competitiveness fell away. i lost nothing. i was more attached to everything even my country which for god's sake i'd fought for even having watched some of my friends with whom i'd been competitive fall in battle

IDF: WE ARE READY FOR POSSIBLE MILITARY OPERATION IN GAZA

Ia: when we say friendship what do we mean. when we say love what do we mean. when we say self what do we mean. when we say enemy what does it mean. all these words mean something important.

Io: and then i got to thinking about my country. looking around me, everyone i saw was a countryman/woman. i thought of them as fellow countrymen. man woman and child. even dogs! that's the way thought is. that's an israeli dog. isn't that crazy. even people i mean israeli strangers whom i might see on the street and have no personal affinity even vast differences with i think of as countrymen/women. israeli arabs – they're countrymen. druze – they're countrymen. the super orthodox whom i also hate in a way – they're countrymen/women. a thief, a prostitute, even a lawyer! yet what is it i share with these people that i don't share with others of a different even a friendly country who are also different from myself. from the most ancient of times all this means something and you can't escape it. even if you go somewhere to find out who you are outside that country you come from somewhere as alien to your culture as you might get somewhere like india, say. it wouldn't change a thing. it can't.

Ia: in the tensionspace being erases nothingness act on the first miracle of a god-given language to a bookbody people

Io: we are a stoneborne bookbound bookenamored booklost mesmerized people of the sacred parchment whose fires ignite our synapses we who are the contemporary kind of freethinkers liberated from the book in quest of the translucent book

Ia: the permanent book

Io: the grammatology of sex walk the desert granulated earth to cools underfoot step calculated in terms negotiated under the sign of the broken egg under the aegis of a breathless tribe inventing

geometric proportions between then and now between the here and the there the geometries of the brain to the responsibility owed to the heritage of poets

A TWO-LEGGED GREAT DANE

Ia: someone once said that without language we live in a world only of a continuous continuum one thing melding without meaning into another. it's only language that gives us any chance at order at functioning at doing at being. but i don't quite believe that. something prior something more instinctual gives us all of that; *then* language comes along to name it. language lets us communicate it. language allows us to say: "i'll meet you at the cave at noon." but i have carved out the meaning of a cave and i know the sun before we had named it sun. where in the mind does all that take place. or, in the whole body.

Ia: and then i think well the legends abraham sarah isaac rebekah jacob Leah they're all countrymen whom i never knew but they mean something so much different than what george washington plato aristotle winston churchill mean to me. king david. solomon. even if as i have no idea of who king david or king solomon were. what muhammad means to a muslim. what odysseus, to a greek. and i build myself on that. i can't help it. jesus christ is an interesting case. he was born in my country he died in my country. but to me he's not a countryman. that's what they've done to him. that's how strange strangeness is, otherness is.

Ia: it's nighttime. it's just turned night. elephants lumber across the sky. the night signals to the cartographers. the false gods turn over their names to the Dispenser of Names. lives there a true god who keeps the name? Such a ridiculous question I won't even grace it with an answer.

Ia: take passover, for example. israeli archeologists have concluded that the exodus from egypt never happened. they have a whole nother story about how the jews came from egypt and it's wholly different. no thousands ever came. and every year we sit around a passover seder table and we eat certain foods and we say certain ritual sayings and we interpret the stories and we talk about freedom from all kinds of slavery and it all none of it ever happened. and i love that. i love it. it fills a void and leaves the void a void. and it – passover – it's really all about spring and we cannot talk about spring as a void spring happens. spring is. spring belongs to no one. no one makes it happen. there is no mooses of spring. spring is an unalterable fact of existence like being human is unalterable. so i think of passover as a ritual of being human. no one else does but then everyone invents their own judaism. even if you have to destroy a myth to do so. i am all for certain kinds of destruction. it's the only way to get anywhere when there is nowhere to get to but here

ISRAELI AIR FORCE STRIKES GAZA TARGETS AFTER ROCKETS FIRED AT BEERSHEBA

Ia: in the tensionspace nothingness devours being a god-given miracle of revelation to a people in love with time who celebrate the turn of each season with the corn and the wine wrought forth from the covenant with the seed-mystery

Ia: say that this is the last moment you had on earth to say something entirely earthly. would you say that the whatever of death is nothing compared to the grandeur of living? the grandeur of the incomprehensibility of living. would you say that the question of living is grander than the ineffability of dying. would you say that even after this moment your greedsoul would cling to the living until it yields up its sacrilegious its devout envy its grandeurpassion. would you say that everything worth saying must be said even the most worthless the most vain prayer uttered in the fragments of the templestones parched of legends absent of myths the most altruistic flowering absurd song of itself.

Ia: so, we have to take up this question. it was supposed to be “what is a jew” but now it’s become “what is here?” it’s gone from a possible question to a nonsense question. a question that has abandoned the senses. is that the transition the transformation from talmud to kabbalah? from jesus christ to st. augustine? from shakespeare to beckett? from what you were to what you are? to what you are not? so then: what is “are” and what is “are not”?

Io: he holds *the will to change* in the palm of his drained-out breath. It capitulates to the trembling that comes from the river. It resides in the miracle that we call the oscillations of the nerve ends. The trembling of *the will to change* recapitulates the birth of the womb. the stasis of pure action is a bloodtrust bridge to the stasis of pure thought from the perpetuum that illuminates the spectrum of light.

Ia: the equation is also a form of words which defines a reality. there was once an equation of grain and an equation of the fortifications for the heart.

Io: and i've taken up a history of the equations of the middle east and i've drawn a series of equations of the middle east all of which include in them equations of the cosmos because everything is related to everything and because you can't describe a utopia without describing the struggle to achieve it without describing the history - in immutable equation - of the failure of utopias

AND THE FORECAST IS....HOT!

Ia: is it possible to draw an equation of the mind?

Io: it's possible to construct an equation of the history of the mind.

Ia: the individual mind or the history of mind itself?

Io: isn't it im/possible to differentiate an equation of the landscape from an equation of the mind. doesn't every equation of a landscape signal an equation of the mind. an equation of wishes. an equation of detritus. an equation of knowing. an equation of personal objects.

UNITED STATES ATTACKS TALIBAN-HELD AFGHAN TOWN

Ia: isn't every equation a book whose narration is finally pinned fully to the page and whose formulation has to be rewritten continuously.

Io: here in the middle east we say the equation changes every ten minutes.

Ia: even the name middle east is an equation. the equation is always asking: where am i/who am i

DANCE REVIEW: AVI GOTHEINER

Io: the equation is always asking: what is change what is chaos what is the equation of the irrational

Ia: what might ever formulate the equation of the distance between us, between you and i.

Io: is there a distance between us, between you and i.

Ia: it depends on how you read the equation.

FATAH ACCUSES IRAN OF TRYING TO BLOCK PALESTINIAN UNITY

Io: you need an equation to define what you are and where your enemies are.

Ia: you need an equation to calculate that which lies at the heart of equation: the garden of eden

Io: an equation of delusions.

Ia: an equation of the odors of seeing.

CAN SHE LEAD?

Io: an equation of sleep.

Ia: an equation of oppositions.

Io: at the heart of the same equation, then, there is gehenna, there is hell, which is the garden of discord which is the anguish generated in the dissolution of ash into hate an inextinguishable flood remorseless in acid

Ia: an equation of human energy.

THREE NEO-NAZI PARATROOPERS SUSPECTED IN FRENCH SHOOTING

Io: an equation of energy itself.

Ia: an equation of the human condition. doesn't every human have her/his own condition? make her/his own condition? *know* her/his own condition

Io: i have seen written the equation of the leagues of friendship.

Ia: have you ever seen written the equation of the sensibility of the heart.

FOR PALESTINIANS, NON-VIOLENCE PAVES THE PATH TO STATEHOOD

Io: i have seen written the equation of tender friendship.

Ia: and have you ever seen written the equation of the villages of pleasing verses.

Io: i have seen written the equation of the gallant letter.

Ia: and have you ever seen written the equation of the land of tender.

OBAMA OFFERS CONDOLENCES AS TOULOUSE STANDOFF CONTINUES

Io: i have seen the terms of the equation swirl both in fixed orbit and at random at every variable speed and on each plane of every world

Ia: have you seen the equation of the prophesy of the end of time

Io: the equation of the end of time mirrors the equation of war & peace

Ia: have you seen the equation of the streets

YOEL SILBER TAKING ON DANCE MUSIC ESTABLISHMENT IN TEL AVIV

Io: i have seen the complex equation which describes moses going through the city dressed as a beggar just for play just to see the people ascending as descending on the colored air collected from human breath made into art at peripatetic rituals

Ia: what's the equation for the relationship between the animal the vegetable and the mineral including the horse but exclusive of the super-orthodox rabbi of ecstasy

Io: i have seen written the equation of those lost in the lake of indifference;;; those climbing the steep inclination to the hill of amity

Ia: and do you believe what you see written?

US LAWMAKER RELEASES HOLD ON AID TO PALESTINIANS

Io: i believe that it's written. is that enough.

Ia: in a world where the word *enough* is a term of inquisition

Io: for a time, i followed all the laws. each and every one of them. all the laws having to do with personal behavior; all the laws having to do with worship and ritual; all the laws having transactions and justice; all the laws having to do with the harmonies of nature. i only got more confused. i only got entangled in a net of laws until the net became the only law and it had to be destroyed it had to be broken asunder even if what lay ahead was not freedom or i didn't understand freedom

Ia: is the book itself the book of lies? the book of puzzles? the book of paranoid and beautiful letters?

A NEW ADVENTURE

Io: let's get back to some kind of reality, no? an equation of the peace of the middle east would do.

Ia: reality? that's a funny word to play with. it's the only word that wants to be itself that wants to be what it names.

Io: today i began a new life. i've constructed it from the pantomime of leather and flax. from oil. from the chance meeting of a HIM and a HER. the foreordained correspondence of the mediterranean gods Gravitas & Levity.

Ia: let's begin a discourse that will have no end throughout the generations: let's begin with a court of analysis into the guilt *and* the innocence of the words "new" and "life"

PLANNED NUMBER OF IRON DOMES CAN'T OFFER FULL PROTECTIONS

Io: while even birth isn't even the beginning

Ia: drop it. the only thing that might follow this dialogue between a HIM and a HER is a question whose answer belongs to someone else, neither to HIM nor to HER. whose answer is an equation beyond our mathematical beyond our astronomical abilities and belonging to the realm of the harmony of science and poetics.

Io: and what about peace.

Ia: and what about peace.

ACT SAFELY ON NEW YEAR'S EVE SO YOU CAN ENJOY 2012

Io: and what about peace.

Ia: and what about peace.