



Selections from *Poems of Jerusalem* by Yehuda Amichai

Jerusalem

On a roof in the Old City

Laundry hanging in the late afternoon sunlight:

The white sheet of a woman who is my enemy,

The towel of a man who is my enemy,

To wipe off the sweat of his brow.

In the sky of the Old City

A kite.

At the other end of the string,

A child

I can't see

Because of the wall.

We have put up many flags,

They have put up many flags.

To make us think that they're happy.

To make them think that we're happy.



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Ecology of Jerusalem

The air over Jerusalem is saturated with prayers
and dreams

like the air over industrial cities.

It's hard to breathe.

And from time to time a new shipment of history arrives
and the houses and towers are its packing materials.

Later these are discarded and piled up in dumps.

And sometimes candles arrive instead of people
and then it's quiet.

And sometimes people come instead of candles
and then there's noise.

And in enclosed gardens heavy with jasmine
foreign consulates,

like wicked brides that have been rejected,

lie in wait for their moment.

Father, don't get me down, our Father our King,

Leave us up here, our Father our King!"