

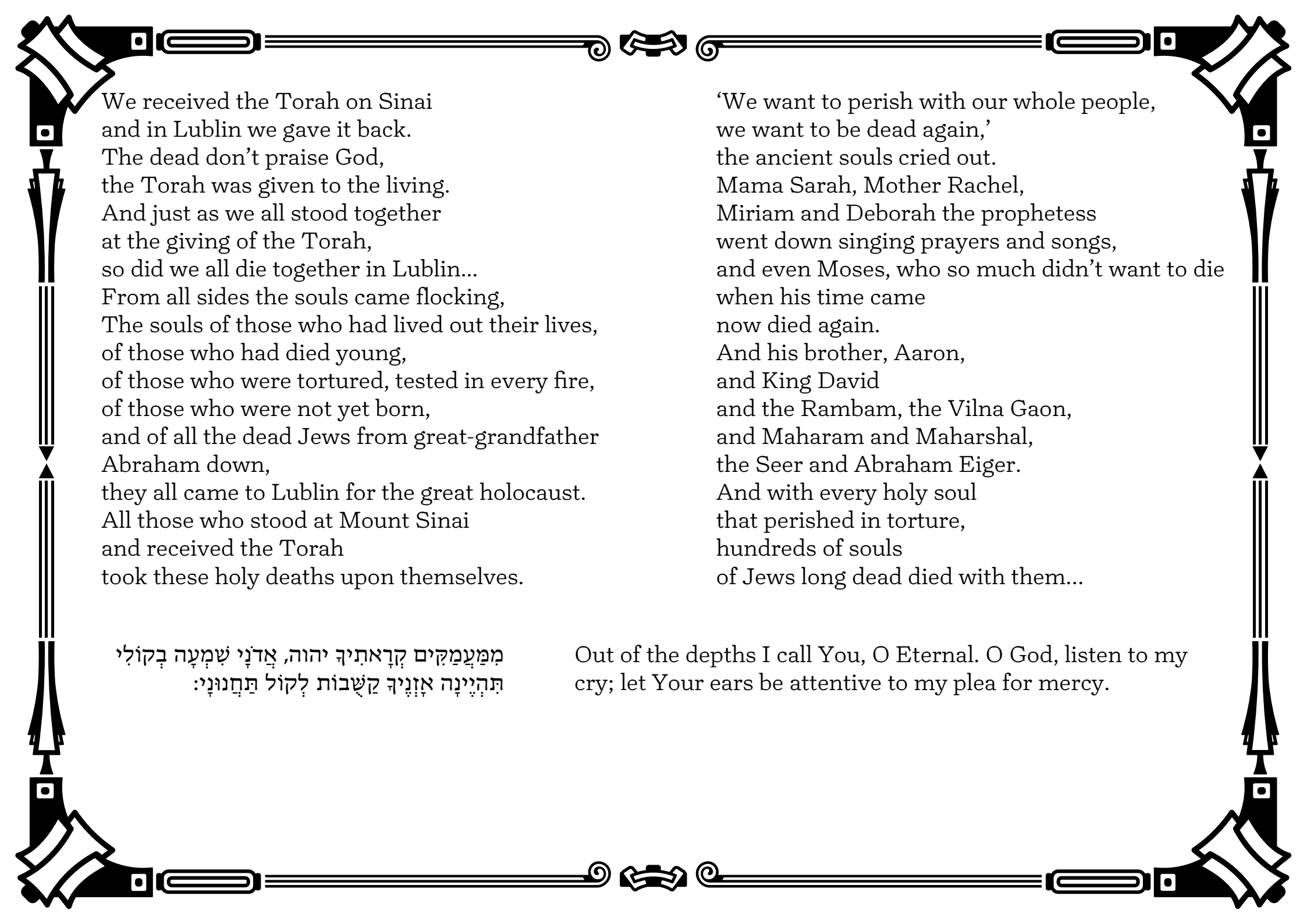
# YOM HA-SHOAH

The Middle Ages draw near.  
Do you hear, sensitive one, do you feel  
The whisper of crawling dust, the distant smell of sulphur?  
That unseen pressure in the air, the heart and the land,  
As during an eclipse...  
From medieval oblivion returns the ancient mist,  
As all streams return to the sea and the sun to the western clouds.  
The ancient wheel revolves with the old rust creaking...  
So has it always been. Thus fate returns to us  
After every spring-like tiding, seven storms and snows.  
The Middle Ages draw near!

## *A memorial candle is lit*

On this day we remember the most devastating episode of our history. From year to year it recedes a little further into the past, but the magnitude of it remains beyond our comprehension, and the pain of it beyond consolation. All we know for certain is that we have a duty to remember: for the sake of those who perished, so that they may not be forgotten; for the sake of those descendants who survived them, so that they may know that they are not alone in their sorrow; for our own sakes, so that we may not be blind to the evil of which human beings are capable; and for the sake of future generations, so that they may consider well what is needful to prevent such a sho'ah – such a destruction – from happening again, to our people, or to any people.

*We pledge ourselves to remember.*

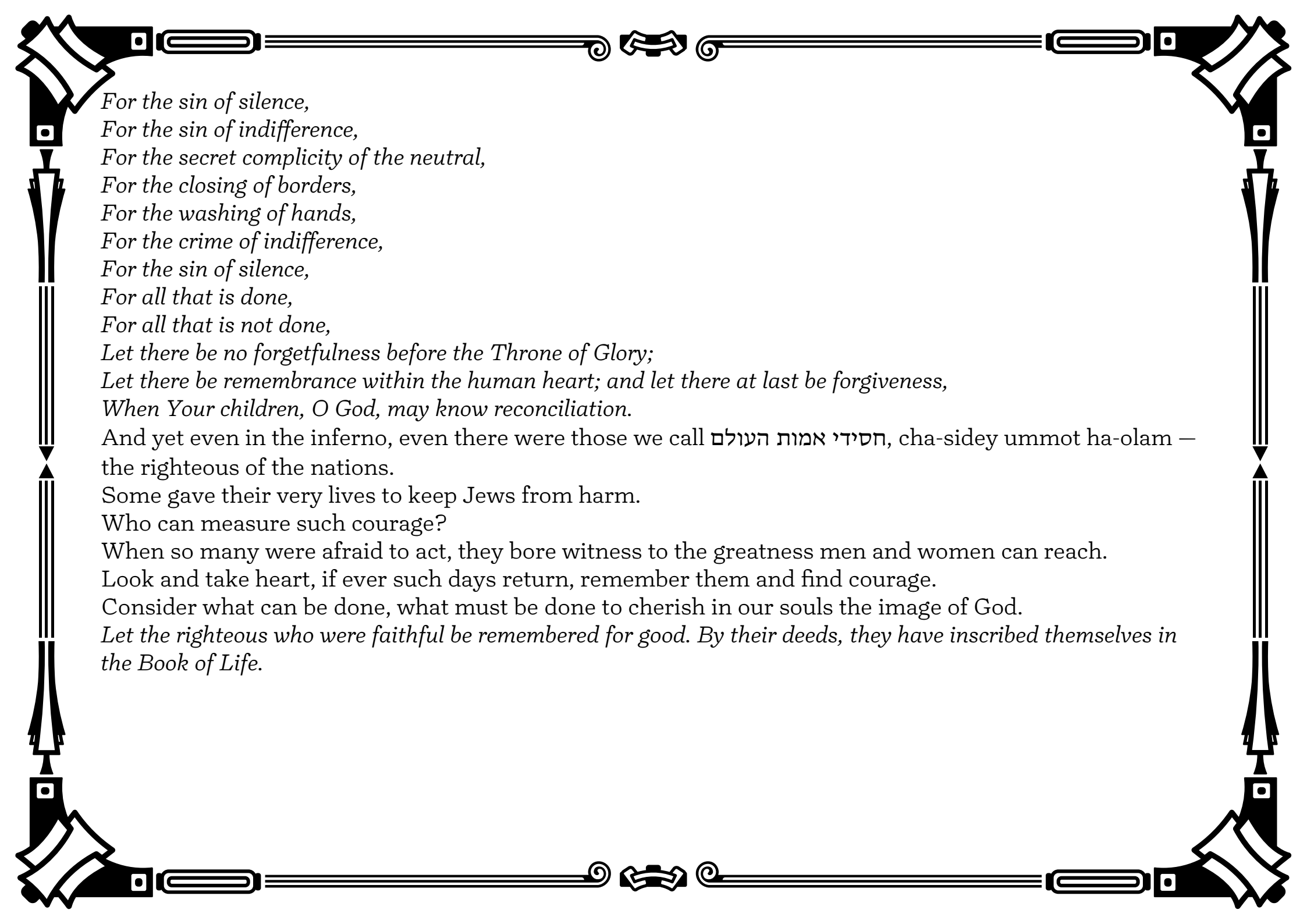


We received the Torah on Sinai  
and in Lublin we gave it back.  
The dead don't praise God,  
the Torah was given to the living.  
And just as we all stood together  
at the giving of the Torah,  
so did we all die together in Lublin...  
From all sides the souls came flocking,  
The souls of those who had lived out their lives,  
of those who had died young,  
of those who were tortured, tested in every fire,  
of those who were not yet born,  
and of all the dead Jews from great-grandfather  
Abraham down,  
they all came to Lublin for the great holocaust.  
All those who stood at Mount Sinai  
and received the Torah  
took these holy deaths upon themselves.

מִמַּעַמְקִים קְרָאתִיךָ יְהוָה, אֲדֹנָי שְׁמִעָה בְּקוֹלִי  
תְּהַיְינָה אַזְנוֹיךָ קְשׁוּבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֹי:

‘We want to perish with our whole people,  
we want to be dead again,’  
the ancient souls cried out.  
Mama Sarah, Mother Rachel,  
Miriam and Deborah the prophetess  
went down singing prayers and songs,  
and even Moses, who so much didn't want to die  
when his time came  
now died again.  
And his brother, Aaron,  
and King David  
and the Rambam, the Vilna Gaon,  
and Maharam and Maharshal,  
the Seer and Abraham Eiger.  
And with every holy soul  
that perished in torture,  
hundreds of souls  
of Jews long dead died with them...

Out of the depths I call You, O Eternal. O God, listen to my  
cry; let Your ears be attentive to my plea for mercy.



*For the sin of silence,  
For the sin of indifference,  
For the secret complicity of the neutral,  
For the closing of borders,  
For the washing of hands,  
For the crime of indifference,  
For the sin of silence,  
For all that is done,  
For all that is not done,  
Let there be no forgetfulness before the Throne of Glory;  
Let there be remembrance within the human heart; and let there at last be forgiveness,  
When Your children, O God, may know reconciliation.*

And yet even in the inferno, even there were those we call חסידי אמות העולם, cha-sidey ummot ha-olam — the righteous of the nations.

Some gave their very lives to keep Jews from harm.  
Who can measure such courage?  
When so many were afraid to act, they bore witness to the greatness men and women can reach.  
Look and take heart, if ever such days return, remember them and find courage.  
Consider what can be done, what must be done to cherish in our souls the image of God.  
*Let the righteous who were faithful be remembered for good. By their deeds, they have inscribed themselves in the Book of Life.*

אֲשֶׁרִי הִגְפְּרוּר שְׁנִשְׂרָף וְהָצִית לָהֲבוֹת.  
אֲשֶׁרִי הִלְהָבָה שְׂפָעָהּ בְּסִתְּי לָבֹת.  
אֲשֶׁרִי הִלְבֹּת שִׁידְעוּ לְחַדֵּל בְּכָבוֹד...  
אֲשֶׁרִי הִגְפְּרוּר שְׁנִשְׂרָף וְהָצִית לָהֲבוֹת.

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.  
Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret  
recesses of the heart. Blessed is the heart with the  
strength to stop its beating for honour's sake.  
Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.

We remember our six million, who died when madness ruled, and evil dwelt on earth. We remember those of whom we know, and those whose very names are lost.

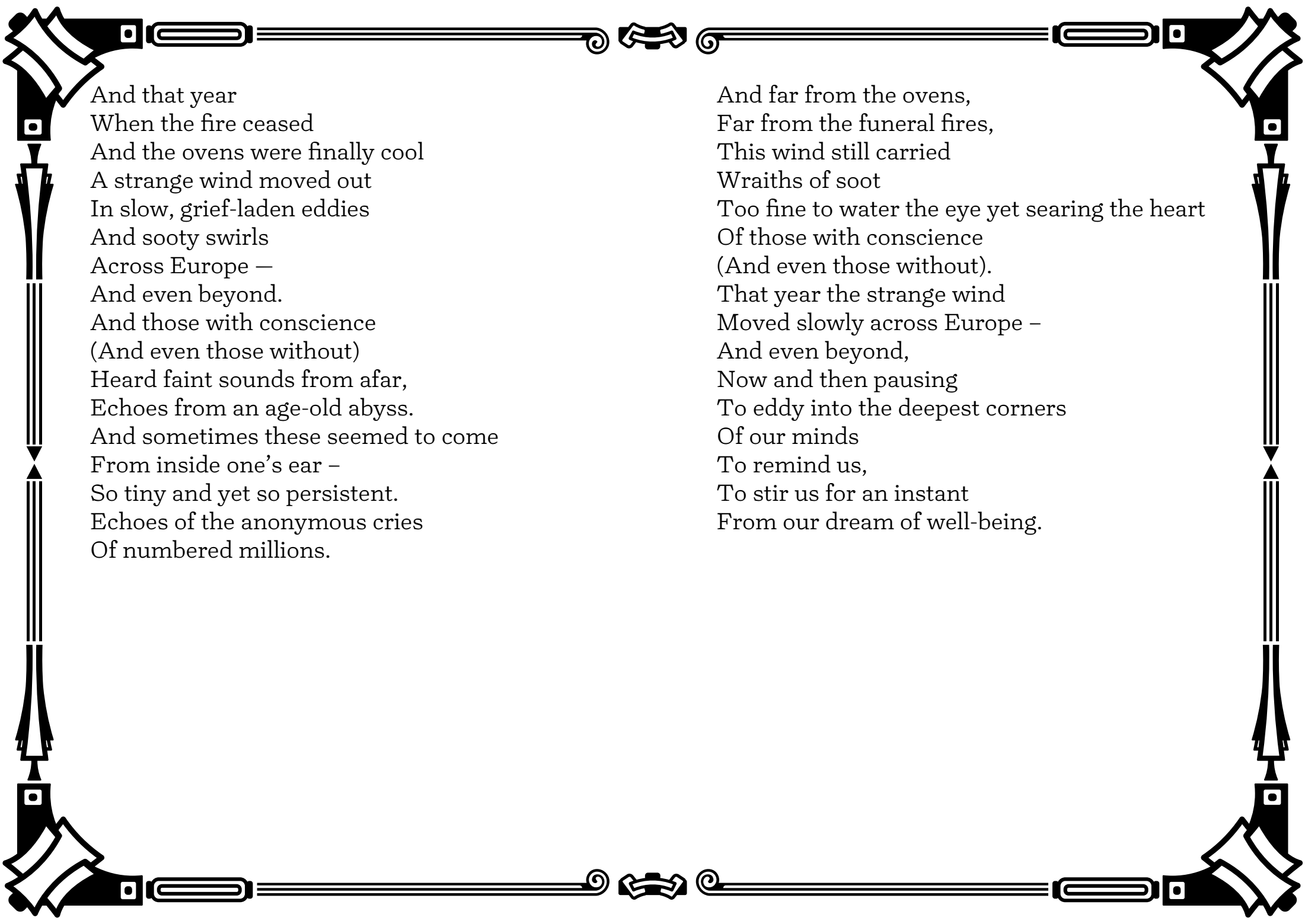
*We cherish the memory of those who died as martyrs, those who died resisting, and those who died in terror. We mourn for all that died with them: their goodness and their wisdom, which could have done so much to ennoble and enrich humanity. We mourn for the genius and the wit that died, the learning and the laughter that were lost.*

*We stand in gratitude for the simple, decent lives of those who were the Congregation of Israel. Their spiritual resistance remains as an enduring testimony to a community where light persisted in darkness. Each person was unique, and we remember them all in love and compassion.*

We salute those who had the courage to stand outside the mob, to save us, and to suffer with us. They, too, are God's witnesses, and a source of hope when we are tempted to despair.

*Because of our people's suffering, may such times never come again, and may their sacrifice not be in vain. In our daily fight against cruelty and prejudice, tyranny and persecution, their memory gives us strength.*

***In silence we remember those who sanctified God's name.***



And that year  
When the fire ceased  
And the ovens were finally cool  
A strange wind moved out  
In slow, grief-laden eddies  
And sooty swirls  
Across Europe –  
And even beyond.  
And those with conscience  
(And even those without)  
Heard faint sounds from afar,  
Echoes from an age-old abyss.  
And sometimes these seemed to come  
From inside one's ear –  
So tiny and yet so persistent.  
Echoes of the anonymous cries  
Of numbered millions.

And far from the ovens,  
Far from the funeral fires,  
This wind still carried  
Wraiths of soot  
Too fine to water the eye yet searing the heart  
Of those with conscience  
(And even those without).  
That year the strange wind  
Moved slowly across Europe –  
And even beyond,  
Now and then pausing  
To eddy into the deepest corners  
Of our minds  
To remind us,  
To stir us for an instant  
From our dream of well-being.

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן  
 במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה  
 תחת כנפי השכינה עם  
 קדושים וטהורים כזהר  
 הרקיע מזהירים, את־נשמות  
 רבבות אלפי ישראל שמתו  
 על קדוש השם. בעל הרחמים,  
 הסתירם בסתר כנפיד  
 לעולמים, וצור בצור  
 החיים את־נשמותם. יי הוא  
 נחלתם, ויגוֹחוּ בשלום על  
 משכבם, ונאמר: אמן.

God, full of compassion, exalted  
 God, grant perfect rest under  
 the wings of Your presence,  
 among the holy and pure who  
 shine as the brightness of the  
 firmament, to the souls of the  
 millions of our people who died  
 for the sanctification of Your  
 name. Merciful God, shelter  
 them for ever under Your wings,  
 and let their souls be bound up  
 in the bond of eternal life. May  
 they find their destiny in Your  
 nearness, and may they rest in  
 peace. Amen.

*Yitgadal*

*v'yitkdash*

*sh'mei raba*

*b'al'ma di v'ra kiruteih,*

*v'yamlikh malkhutei*

Kishinev

Warsaw

Auschwitz

Dachau

Buchenwald

יתגדל

ויתקדש

שמה רבא

בעלמא די ברא פרעויה,

וימליך מלכותה

*b'hayeikhon uv'yomeikhon*

*uvhayei d'khol beit yisrael,*

*ba'agala uvizman kariv,*

*v'imru amen.*

*Y'hei sh'meih raba m'vorakh  
l'alam ulal'mei al'maya.*

*Yitbarakh v'yishtabah*

*v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam*

*v'yitnasei v'yithadar*

*v'yitaleh v'yithalal*

*sh'mei d'kudsha b'rikh hu*

Babi Yar

Baghdad

Hebron

Kfar Etzion

Mayence

Terezin

Treblinka

בְּחַיֵּיכֶן וּבְיוֹמֵיכֶן

וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,

בַּעֲגָלָא וּבְזִמָּן קָרִיב,

וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ  
לְעָלָם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח

וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרֹמֵם

וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר

וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל

שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

Bergen-Belsen

*l'eila*

לְעֵלָא

Vilna

*min kol birkhata v'shirata*

מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא

Usha

*tushb'hata v'nehemata*

תְּשֻׁבָּהָתָא וְנִחְמָתָא

Massada

*da'amiran b'al'ma*

דְּאָמִירָן בְּעֵלְמָא

Jerusalem

*v'imru amen.*

וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*Y'hei sh'lamah raba min sh'maya v'hayim  
aleinu v'al kol yisrael, v'imru amen.*

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָה רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים  
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom  
aleinu, v'al kol yisrael, v'imru amen.*

עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם  
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

#### Sources

- 1 *The Middle Ages draw near...* Zalman Schneour, translated by Ruth Finer Mintz in *Modern Hebrew Poetry: a bilingual anthology* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1966): 90-95.  
*On this day...* Siddur Lev Chadash: 367.
- 2 *We received the Torah at Sinai...* Jacob Glatstein, translated by Barnet Zumoff in *I Keep Recalling: the Holocaust poems of Jacob Glatstein* (New York: Ktav, 1993): 92-97.  
*Out of the depths...* Psalm 130:1-2
- 3 *For the sin of indifference...* Machzor Ruach Chadashah: 326.
- 4 *Blessed is the match...* Hannah Szenes, translated in *Mishkan T'fillah*: 522.  
*We remember...* Siddur Lev Chadash: 369-370.
- 5 *And that year...* Bernard Mikofsky, from *Blood to Remember: American poets on the Holocaust*, 2nd ed (St Louis: Time Being Books, 2007): 293.
- 6 *God, full of compassion...* Siddur Lev Chadash: 370.  
*Yitgadal...* Shoah Kaddish formulated by Elie Wiesel.