

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Unter Dayn Vayse Shter'n

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(text, Avraham Sutskever; melody, Abraham Brudno)

Yiddish:

Unter dayne vayse shtern  
Shtrek tsu mir dayn vayse hant.  
Mayne verter zaynen trem  
Viln ruen in dayn hant.

Ze, es tunklt zeyer finkl  
In mayn kelerdikn blik.  
Un ikh hob gornit keyn vinkl  
Zey tsu shenken dir tsurik.

Un ikh vil dokh, got getrayer  
Dir fartroyen mayn farmeg.  
Vayl es mont in mir a fayer  
Un in fayer-mayne teg.

Nor in kelern un lekher  
Veynt di merderishe ru.  
Loyf ikh hekher, ibqer dekher  
Un ikh zukh: vu bistu, vu?

Nemen yogn mikh meshune  
Trep un hoyfin mit gevoy.  
Heng ikh a geplaste strune  
Un ikh zing tsu dir azoy:

Unter dayne vayse shtern  
Shtrek tsu mir dayn vayse hant.  
Mayne verter zaynen trem  
Viln ruen in dayn hant.

English (literal translation)

Under Your white stars  
Stretch to me Your white hand.  
My words are tears,  
Wanting to rest in Your hand.

See, they twinkle very darkly  
In my cellar-beaten view;

And I have no place  
How to send them back to You.

And I will, dear God,  
Confide in you these of mine  
While in me a fire grows  
And on fire are my days.

But in cellars and holes  
Cries the murderous quiet  
I fly higher, over rooftops  
And I search: Where are You? Where?

Something strange hunts me  
Stairs and courtyards are on chase  
I hang as a broken bow-string  
And I sing to You this way:

Under Your white stars  
Stretch to me Your white hand.  
My words are tears,  
Wanting to rest in Your hand.

English (free translation)

Who are you that in your hands is my death and is my life?  
Listen, my voice breaks toward you and you are deaf to me.  
See, my day ends, expires, and darkness falls.  
My soul, no-one knows. Would you know it?

A silence rises to you from streets and houses.  
All my life explodes in strength for my life is filled with  
dead.

And only graves know quiet here in this valley of tears  
Would you dare to hear? A dead city mutes lamentation.

And silently pursuing me, all my city who've been slaughtered  
And your silence strangles me. How can I carry my prayer to you?  
Who are you that in your hands is my death and is my life?  
Listen, my voice breaks toward you and you are deaf to me.

Note: (from Mlotek and other sources) This song was written in the Vilno ghetto, words by Avraham Sutskever (1913-); music by Abraham Brudno (?-1944). It was first presented in the ghetto theater in the play "Di Yogenish in Fas" (the hunt in the barrel, a pun on Diogenes in a barrel.) It was first sung by Zlate Katcherginsky. After the liquidation of the ghetto, Suskever joined the partisan fighters. He survived the war and lives in Israel where he edits the literary quarterly

"Di Goldene Keyt". The composer, Abraham Brudno, following the liquidation of the ghetto, was deported to a German concentration camp in Estonia, where he died. YW

YW