The Third Mother/Nathan Alterman

(free translation)

Singing mothers, singing mothers.
A thunder's fist is pouring, a strong silence
In the empty squares marching in rows
Red bearded street lights.

A dire autumn, a weary inconsolable autumn,
And rain with no end or beginning
And no candle in the window and no light in the world
Three mothers are singing

Says the first, I have just seen him
I shall kiss his every little finger and nail
A ship is passing in the silent sea
And my son is hanged from the topmast sail

Says the second, my son is tall and silent
And for him a holiday gown I am sewing
He walks in the fields, he is coming back
He bears in his heart a lead bullet.

And the third mother, her eyes wander,
No one was as precious to me as him
How can I shed tears for him and I don't see
I don't know where he is.

Then the tears bath her lashes
And maybe not rested, and maybe
He measures with kisses, as a devoted monk,
Your worldly path, my God.

(rythmical translation)

Singing mothers, ever singing mothers.
A thunder's fist pours, a strong silence
In the wide empty squares were marching in rows
Long and red bearded street lights.

Dire autumn, weary inconsolable one,
And rain with no end or beginning
Candleless window, and a world with no light,
And three mothers are singing

And the first mother says, he was here just now
I shall kiss his every little finger and nail
A ship passing by in the dead silent sea
And my son is hanged from the topmast sail

And the second one says, my son is silent and tall
And for him a holiday gown I am sewing
He walks in the fields, he is coming back
He bears in his heart a lead bullet.

And the third mother, her wandering eyes,
No one was as precious to me as him
How can I shed tears for him, and I cannot see
I don't know where he was or now is.

Then the tears slowly bath her eyelashes down
And maybe not rested, and maybe
He measures with kisses, as an old faithful monk,
Your own worldly path, my God.
Around the campfire

The night was deep and lungful, 
As always in Nissan, the month.

And a group of nameless youngsters sat there, 
As a flaming column, shifting in the wind.

No more, but in the stubborn nation’s history, 
This night was engraved on a slate.

The burden, plain as earth, 
They carried without looking back.

No horns sounded, 
No one to pat their heads on a winter night.

No. Two sleeves tied in a knot, 
Only the sweater embraced their necks.

Shoes thumping satchels, 
A meal of olives and dates, 
And bended aluminum cups, 
And friendship and silent sacrifice.

What more can we say, from these plain simple things, 
Myths are created, that’s the essence.

What can we sing about them, what can we sing, 
They do it much better than us.

They write their own songs 
And even their books.

That is the Palmach, it never leaves, 
any duty for an outsider.

Here is the way it should be said, 
Young men, know only this, 
Among this generation’s big holidays, 
None is more beautiful than your own humble day.

On the brink of freedom, the nation in front, 
Bows and weeps. Understand it.

Around the campfire

אומתו לא מתה ויאם
ולא נעלמה תダー
יוד ל המוות ונמוס
כдум בצנים, ירחי

ишנה ש דעת נעיים ייבי שם
 الشريف מnpcס צרכ
שה חוקים גובים תורה
da שילוב בשתיו יבר ימח
ופתור על נליג לוש
לא ויהי רבбав האמה ייקשה
אנות לילה מטר על ת

את עלונה המשוער
שה מצא בלה אחותה
dא תשקוף המורה
לא ת סווגו בלח בזרה
לא בשתיו הקשורים לatron
רח הדורות מעריקים

ushed יש עעד נעניים ייבי שם
שמר מnpcס צרכ
שה חוקים גובים תורה
da שילוב בשתיו יבר ימח
ופתור על נליג לוש
לא ויהי רבбав האמה ייקשה
אנות לילה מטר על ת

את עלונה המשוער
שה מצא בלה אחותה
dא תשקוף המורה
לא ת סווגו בלח בזרה
לא בשתיו הקשורים לatron
רח הדורות מעריקים

This was the first to grind
A small meal of olives and dates, 
And bended aluminum cups, 
And friendship and unspoken sacrifice.

What more can we say, from these plain simple things, 
Myths are created, that’s the essence.

What can we sing about them, what can we sing, 
They do it much better than us.

They write their own songs 
And even their books.

That is the Palmach, it never leaves, 
any duty for an outsider.

Here is the way it should be said, 
Young men, know only this, 
Among this generation’s big holidays, 
None is more beautiful than your own humble day.

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Bows and weeps. Understand it.