

Repatriation

(on Chanukah)

I wonder what the Rhine smelled like
in the time before the pogroms.
Shadows of the mountains in the old place,
where we played at being Judah in the tall grass.
Chased out of our pale settlements, recreating old lives,
worlds apart, under the identical moon, but never the same.

Was it a righteous war, to reclaim what was theirs?
Rubens captured the moment after the triumph,
The Maccabee, looking to heaven,
crimson clad in the setting desert sun.
He was Flemish you know, Rubens that is,
a people rich with their own topographical strife.
The canvas was taken by the French two centuries ago,
and the French still hold it. Is that righteous?

Do all things have a right of return to the place of their birth,
the land where the dust and the dirt constitute
their own corporeal clay? Did we need to reoccupy The Temple,
pillaged though it was, unclean and desecrated?
We remember the trumpets crying to heaven,
echoing down the stony peaks,
the oil that burned, the eight-fold flame.
"Oh, deem not dead that martial fire,
Say not the mystic flame is spent!"
Merciful god, we cry out for a return
of all things that strive to be.

Yeshua even returned, in remembrance of this glorious tale.
It was at Jerusalem, the feast of the dedication,
and it was winter. David's city in all its splendor.
The hero had seen thirty winters,
and would not see many more,
and the shamash was naught but embers.