Dayyenu

It would have been enough
Had the red day dawned in the desert,
Sheep and goats, children
Awake, ready for another day of trudging
Under the hot sun,
Bread, snatched flat,
Eaten with relish by
Hungry nomads, timidly tasting
Freedom in the tasteless, yeastless wheat.

Freedom would have been enough,
Each man the master of his tent,
Content to reach a place to plant
Olive trees, vineyards,
Just another desert people
Living and dying, a man’s son
No more or less than heir
To his tent, his trees,
One generation after the next.

It would have been enough.
We did not ask for the stone tablets,
The exhortations,
The rage of the stuttering prophet.
We did not ask to be beaten
Into a placeless nation,
Destined to walk the earth
Not as anonymous nomads,
Eyes fixed on a flock of sheep,
But the often cursed first bearers
Of the weight of awareness.

It used to be enough
To bow before the images of gods,
Capricious and vengeful like mortal men,
The best advice to slip beneath their radar.
Mana was given to us
When we were children,
Thoughtful only of full bellies
And warmth in the freezing night.
Now, in the light of the covenant
We, the children of a stiff necked people
5,000 years in the making
5,000 years of walking
To this place in this season
Bear the awful weight of maturity,
Responsibility for Tikkun Olam.

Shards of broken light lie at our feet.
It is not enough to step nimbly around them
On the way to the oasis.
We must kneel on the sharp slivers,
Study each translucent, shape-shifting piece
Like the pieces of an infinite jigsaw puzzle
Of Infinite beauty.
Our hearts ache with desire
For one more glimpse to shore up memory:
The soul’s sight of the final form,
Flashed from time to time
In the iridescence of a single fragment.

This divine gift, divine burden
Was thrust upon us when God spoke
To Moses out of the burning bush.
This is what Moses said for us,
For our sons and daughters
And their sons and daughters,
Who never asked him to say it:
Hi Nei Ni: I am Here.
For us, he Did speak when he asked
“Who am I that I should do this?”

We are an ordinary people
Called to be an extraordinary people.
It is more than enough for us.
It is too much for us.

And yet, it is enough for us.

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