

6/17 We've done everything inhumanly possible.

How is value transferred and transformed?

You hold in your palm four small bronze Roman coins. On the face of each coin you may still see and feel the contours of, the stamped portrait of some emperor, whose particular features time, and the usage of a million plebian thumbs has worn anonymous.

A friend sends you a link to an article in the online *Jewish Daily Forward*, about a long-running NYC salon of German-speaking Jews called the *Stammtich*. But before you can read the article, your eyeballs are seized by the words and pictures of an animated advertisement running across the top of the page, above the paper's masthead.

A jagged yellow shape, like a sun with multiple prominences explodes against a black background.

Then fades up white type:

MISSILE HITS ASHKELON – 67 HURT

The sunburst image is replaced by a shot of a bomb-ravaged public bus with a fragment of Hebrew lettering still visible on its side.

AFTER THE BOMB GOES OFF OR THE MISSILE HITS

A kind of gray haze envelops the bus, then gradually fades.

AND AFTER THE SMOKE CLEARS

The bus dissolves and up come the faces of two females. On the left, a woman

wearing a kind of stylishly-retro black gauzy hat, only her head and shoulders are visible. She appears to be smiling or grimacing. Is she in shock from the explosion? To her right, the face of what looks like a girl of perhaps eight wearing an expression you find entirely unreadable and whose lips seem oddly rouged. In any case she stares past the camera. In both hands she holds up what appear to be the straps of a garment – given the way the image is cropped, its impossible to say.

OHR MEIR & U'BRACHA IS THERE TO HELP PICK UP THE PIECES

Fades to black. Then up comes, in red:

HELP US HELP THEM

Your mouse passes over the ad and you realize it's a live link. Click. When the page loads, you read:

Dear friends,

Welcome to Ohr Meir U'Bracha,

The Terror Victims Support Center.

We assist families of terror victims in crisis.

We need your help.

Next to which, the same image appears, this time less severely cropped so that you see the girl does not hold something up but rather that she's grasping the handles of a stroller containing another smaller child.



Oy vay ist mir.

Sandbags by the millions atop the Mississippi River levees in Iowa and Illinois. Myriad crossed fingers that the National Weather Service's prediction of more rain is wrong.

Jeff Campbell a farmer from Oakville, Iowa was carrying sandbags in his truck when he spotted a school of pigs swimming away from a flooded "hog operation" and scrambling up onto the levee. One animal could go no further and, said Campbell, lay exhausted at the base of the levee, "like a pink sandbag."

Big, horrible marketplace bombing in Baghdad.

Annals of post-modern victimology, chapter whatever:

"Junta's Delays in Myanmar Are Less Costly Than Feared," headlines the *Times*. Another instance of the by-now routine downward revision of casualties in the

weeks and months following any sort of epic disaster.

...”doctors and aid workers returning from remote areas of the delta are offering a less pessimistic picture of the human cost of the delay in reaching survivors.

“They say they have seen no signs of starvation or widespread outbreaks of disease. The number of lives lost because of the junta’s slow response to the disaster appears to have been few.

“Relief workers here continue to criticize the government’s secretive posture and obsession with security, its restrictions on foreign aid experts and the weeks of dawdling that left bloated bodies befouling waterways and survivors marooned with little food. But the specific character of Cyclone Nargis, the hardiness of villagers and aid efforts by private citizens helped prevent further death and sickness, aid workers say.

““We saw very, very few serious injuries,’ said Frank Smithuis, head of the substantial mission in Myanmar for Doctors Without Borders. ‘You were dead or you were in O.K. shape.’”

Give me a lever long enough and I can lift... yo mama.

Vast floods continue in southern China. Quoth the BBC: “The National Meteorological Centre has forecast more downpours over the next two days in nine provinces – including already hard-hit Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan and Jiangxi.

“But the floods are not confined to the south – authorities have also expressed concern that the Yellow River, the country’s second biggest, could also burst. [Yo! Can a river burst? Also, also.]

That brings the risk of flooding to the central or northern provinces of Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan and Shandong.

“The destruction of crops risks inflationary price spikes in local food markets, and inspectors have been ordered to clamp down on unacceptably high price hikes...”
[Spikes, hikes, why not just enjamb the lines?]

Naah. Of course it's not possible. And if it were, it would be unthinkable: China and the U.S. at weather war? Dueling laser satellites? Trade negotiations carried on by other means?

Or, even more beyond all pales, are they bombing themselves? Never, though, in all your lifetime, have you known anything like this moment.

No age like unto...

6/18 Sous le pavage, les pavés.

Tu me prend pour Lacan?

The journey from Golden Venture to now.

Est-ce que ce monde est sérieux?

Sous l'eau, le feu.

Peking, duck!

Assholics Anonymous.

Bill *Hi, I'm Bill and I'm an asshole.*

[chor.] *Hi, Bill!*

You to me

Are sweet as roses in the morning

And you to me

Are soft as summer rain at dawn, in love we share

That something rare

The sidewalks in the street

The concrete and the clay beneath my feet

Begins to crumble

But love will never die

Because we'll see the mountains tumble

Before we say goodbye...

Chanté Unit 4+2 kan ya makan.

And Zimmerman, in the same year of '65, sang:

Ain't it hard to stumble

And land in some funny lagoon ?

Ain't it hard to stumble

And land in some muddy lagoon ?

'Specially when it's nine below zero

And three o'clock in the afternoon...

A longform prosepoem sounded in realtime.

Resounded.

Retumbar.

HEY NOW, HEY NOW, ...In this Jerusalem there are no contracts, equities, or useful sets of numbers, only faubourgs, spokes straining tired hubs, rods, staffs, pistons and a piquant sauce to die of. Rods, staffs and pistons sing: *the food is for the man who owns it, not the man who is hungry.* Blow them to the fire base, blow them out the keyhole, blow them back to '64, blow them back to me.

Wrote you once upon a time in the year nine oh.

Ground degree zero.

E.B. is living at P.'s loft for the time being and you've got to return P.'s mic stand, borrowed for the *Beaky* reading. E. wants to borrow your hand truck, but he's busy with a job so you wheel it on over. Two birds, no three. Detour up to 27th for some ATM cash. When the wheels hit pavement cracks, the handtruck, mic stand bungeed to it, makes a satisfying clang.

Just north of 27th on Seventh, beneath the scaffolding surrounding the Chase

branch, a cluster of three cops looking jocular. But that's odd – one seems to be sitting on the sidewalk. Get closer and you see he's not sitting, rather half squatting, his right knee pressing down onto the lower back of a man lying prone, hands cuffed behind him, head turned, cheek flat against the concrete. Cop's black and huge. Subject's black and wiry, no shirt. Mid-twenties if you had to call it. A tide, literally, of pedestrians surges by, including you, but freakily, few others seem to register the tableau vivant.

Sure, there's a lot going on. A couple of sidewalk vendors, a newsstand and Halal food cart. And this. Look over your shoulder. These four figures seem fixed amidst the flow, almost spray, of human activity around them.

Your business at the ATM takes a good five minutes between one thing and another. When you emerge, another of the three cops, a white guy this time, has got his knee in the fellow's back, but otherwise the scene's unchanged. Guide the wheels of your red handtruck around the arrested moment. Cop number three is black too. Subject can't be comfortable. But he's not struggling. The firmness though, of the cop's pressure makes you think he thinks this guy'll spring up and bolt given any leeway at all.

Cross 27th and look back again. Their group's an island in the stream. Port Authority police car parked on the far corner. No one in it. But these guys had regular NYPD appliqués on their sleeves, at least two of them did. Too far away now to recognize the insignia of the other. So maybe there is or isn't an association between this car and those cops.

Drop off the handtruck on 26th, shoot the breeze with P. and E. up in the loft. Half an hour, forty minutes. Heading home, at the corner of Seventh you almost turn north, just to check. No, it's not possible they're still there. Forget it, you tell yourself,

but you're really not certain. Surely they've gone by now, to a precinct – somewhere. Or has a faultline opened up between the realm of the damned for eternity and our little world of novelty and hectic motion?

All around

I see the purple shades of evening

And on the ground

The shadows fall and once again you're in my arms

So tenderly

The sidewalks in the street

The concrete and the clay beneath my feet

Begins to crumble

But love will never die

Because we'll see the mountains tumble

Before we say goodbye...

Front moves through. Rain.

