Poems

To a Bird
Bird on my window perching,
Returned from the land of the sun,
Blessed by this, thy coming
For now is the winter done.

Greetings you bring from Zion
From loved ones who wait for me there,
Ah, happy ones! Surely they know not ,
How heavy the burden I bear.

Singing, you bring me greetings
From the vale and mountain head;

Has God now remembered Zion
Or weeps she still over her dead?

My brothers have sown in tears
Weeping seed they cast;
Is the time of their labor ended
Shall they reap in joy at last?

-original Hebrew by Chaim Nachman Bialik

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Creator of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone.
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day
Among the trees and grass, among all growing things
And there may I be alone, and enter into prayer
To talk with the One I belong to.

May I express there everything in my heart,
And may all the foliage of the field – all grasses, trees, and plants –
May they all awake at my coming,
To send the flower of their life into the words of my prayer,
So that my prayer and speech are made whole,
Through the life and spirit of growing things,
Which are made as one by their transcendent Source.

May I then pour out the words of my heart before your Presence like water, O God,
And lift up my hands to You in worship, on my behalf, and that of my children.

-Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav (adapted)

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