

CULTURE & HISTORY

Passover by Primo Levi

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Source: Primo Levi

PASSOVER

Tell me: how is this night different

From all other nights?

How, tell me, is this Passover

Different from other Passovers?

Light the lamp, open the door wide

So the pilgrim can come in,

Gentile or Jew;

Under the rags perhaps the prophet is concealed.

Let him enter and sit down with us;

Let him listen, drink, sing and celebrate Passover;

Let him consume the bread of affliction,

The Paschal Lamb, sweet mortar and bitter herbs.

This is the night of differences

In which you lean your elbow on the table,

Since the forbidden becomes prescribed,

Evil is translated into good.

We will spend the night recounting

Far-off events full of wonder,

And because of all the wine

The mountains will skip like rams.

Tonight they exchange questions:

The wise, the godless, the simple-minded and the child.

And time reverses its course,

Today flowing back into yesterday,

Like a river enclosed at its mouth.

Each of us has been a slave in Egypt,

Soaked straw and clay with sweat,

And crossed the sea dry-footed.

You too, stranger.

This year in fear and shame,

Next year in virtue and in justice.