

YEHUDA HALEVI



Y E H U D A A M I C H A I

Yehuda Halevi wrote, “In the East is my heart, and I dwell at the ends of the West.”

That’s Jewish travel, that’s the Jewish game of hearts between East and West,

between self and heart, to and fro, to without fro, fro without to, fugitive and vagabond without sin. An endless journey, like the trip Freud the Jew

took between body and mind, between mind and mind, only to die

between the two. Oh, what a world this is, where the heart is in one place and the body in another

(almost like a heart torn from a body and transplanted).

I think about people who are named for a place where they have never been

and will never be. Or about an artist who draws a man’s face from a photograph, because the man is gone. Or about the migration

of Jews, who don’t follow summer and winter, life and death as birds do, but instead obey the longings of the heart. That’s why they are so dead, and that’s why they call their God *Makom*, “Place.”

And now that they’ve returned to their place, the Lord has taken up wandering to different places, and his name will no longer be Place but Places, Lord of the Places.

Even the resurrection of the dead is a long journey.

What remains? The suitcases on top of the closet, that’s the one thing that remains.

translated by Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld