

# The Door Standing Open

*four songs of spiritual torment for low voice and piano*

Music by Joelle Wallach

based on poems by Robert Mezey

*In accord with the poet's usage, pronouns referring to God are not capitalized in these songs.*

## I On the Equator

page 1

How rarely your mercy visits me,  
My king, my father;  
... most of my days, I am your wandering son  
Who has cast his lot like a prophet  
In the desert of his days.

And your deliverance that comes to me then,  
My father, my king,  
Is like a well that the wanderer came on at last,  
When he had almost prayed for death from thirst  
And the heat that shrivels the body.

... at times it is so sweet,  
... like a miraculous dream that you give  
To the blind man in his agony, at night.  
He dreams that his eyes are open and that he sees  
The face of his wife and the dark gold of her hair.

But at times you make sport of me,  
My father, my king, and I draw back  
... grow small with loneliness, like the blind man  
awakened

from his dream.

I gaze at my coming days, and I descend  
Into the black abyss....

*from Uri Zoi Greenberg*

## II Like a Girl

page 6

Like a girl who knows that her body drives me to begging,  
God taunts me, Flee if you can! But I can't flee,  
For when I turn away from him, angry and heartsick,  
With a vowel on my lips like a burning coal:  
I will not see him again —

I can't do it.  
And I turn back  
... knock on his door,  
Tortured with longing

As though he had sent me a love-letter.

*from Uri Zoi Greenberg*

## III Vetus Flamma

page 8

That love which once was nearest to my heart  
... pressed against my arm and forehead too,  
Is gone and you went with it. We are two.  
You have your legends, I, an empty heart;  
And in the quieted pounding of that heart;  
I hear what future I awaken to.  
Night falls each dawn and stays a week or two,  
And all there is to eat is my own heart.

I nurse a broken love, your broken word,  
And cannot even recollect your name,  
But keep the smallest remnant of your word  
To ornament my door with what I lost.  
Unaging ghost, you never said your name —  
You only came to wrestle, and I lost.

## IV With My God the Smith

page 11

Like chapters of prophesy my days burn, in ... revelations,  
... my body between them's a block of metal...,  
... over me stands my God the Smith, who hits hard:  
The wounds that Time has opened in me, open their  
mouths

to him

... release in a shower of sparks the intrinsic fire.

This is my just lot — until dusk on the road.  
... when I return to throw my beaten block on a bed,  
My mouth is an open wound  
And naked I speak with God:

You worked hard.

Now it is night, come, let us both rest.

*from Uri Zoi Greenberg*