

# Tal Nitzan ~ I remember Etty Hillesum & The third child



*Tal Nitzan. Ills.: Joseph Sassoon Semah*

*I remember Etty Hillesum*

Did she still whisper  
“Why anticipate trouble”  
when transported from Westerbork  
to Auschwitz in Wagon Number 12,  
“They should be exterminated like fleas,  
those petty fears of the future”  
as her future rushed towards her  
to exterminate her?  
Maybe I should pause, retreat  
or at least recite  
“Why anticipate joy”  
as I hurry past the yellow squares of life  
that once were far and sealed  
and tonight open towards me  
to let me in and out as I wish  
while a silly hope for happiness

sways like a jug, too large,  
on my head

*"An interrupted life", the diaries of Etty Hillesum, 1941-1943*

*Translation: Tal Nitzan & Vivian Eden*

*The third child*

I'm your unknown child.  
I'm the negative  
between your two blue-eyed children  
who radiate against my darkness.  
I'm your forgotten, your vanished, I'm your  
kicked away.  
I kneel - while they close their eyes

and reach out their hands for the gift -  
as if begging for the blow  
that will not come.  
I feed on the cocoa trail they leave,  
on the rustle of wrappings.  
I shrink at night into the corner  
of their beds, where tiny stuffed animals  
encircle them  
like shelter against evil,  
lurking for the nocturnal ritual,  
when you step on my toes unseeing,  
and bend to smoothe their plump blankets.  
When you close your eyes  
(green like mine!)  
I'll creep under your eyelids and murmur:  
"Mommy".  
If you try to banish the nightmare of my face  
you'll find out, shamefully,  
you don't even know my name.

*Translation: Tal Nitzan & Vivian Eden*

Tal Nitzan was born in Jaffa, Israel, and has lived in Argentina, Colombia,

and U.S.A. (NY). She currently lives in Tel Aviv.

She is an awardwinning poet, writer, translator of Hispanic literature and editor.

Tal Nitzan published numerous poetry books.

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