MARC CHAGALL
a poem written and read in Yiddish by
AARON KURTZ
accompanying booklet includes complete
Yiddish texts, English translations,
with Marc Chagall illustrations

Marc Chagall

Contents:
1 sound disc
text

Aaron Kurtz

University of Alberta Library
I WANT to tell you a story,
its beginning far away in time
in which we dwell.

Of a boy from the ghetto Pale
of Vitebsk, long ago,
and a white goat skipping along
as his playful shadow.

What kind of a story is it?
What manner of tale will you tell
of a goat as white as milk
whose coat was soft as silk?—
Let us listen to this legendary tale.

I

It is an old tale I would tell
of an old, drab ghetto town—
but a boy leaped over its walls
and wandered up and down
the earth in search of joy:
and whatever he saw asked,
drab or decrepit, sad,
he fashioned anew.

There went a pretty maiden,
his everlasting bride:
they and the goat together
walking side by side:
and he took the wrinkled face
of the old granny earth
into his young hands
and covered it with mirth.

A Poem
written and read
in Yiddish
by
AARON
KURTZ

ario veit azi ufrejfel az mishivet.
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And all he made was wondrous.
And all he wrought was well.
Such is the tale of the bride and the goat
and the ghetto lad I'll tell.

The story, ah,
the story of
the world and our enduring.
This story, oh, the story has
been told us in
a thousand-thousand colors of
a new happy Genesis in a sad Middle; told,
retold, untold
times—
scraped clean out
from its many hoary shells
by a Vitebsk Jew,
a king.

The young king
had
a father.—(Father, come
let us fly to Paris with Vitebsk!) The young king
had
a mother.—(Mother, come—
let us fly with Vitebsk deeper into Europe!
With Vitebsk and Paris we will—fly—further still—)

The young king
had
a cradle,
a cradle, a lullaby, a bride and a little goat.
So he took his father and his mother and
his cradle,
his bride and his lullaby and
his goat—
and with all of them went into the wide world.

She grasps his hair, he leans upon
her floating bridal-gown—
and they fly off on his winged hut
and carry off the town!

Lulinke my little goat,
lulinke my gold.
Pigments are but mirrors—
see yourselves, my folk!

I walk out on my doorstep
to see the town and mart.
I would hug the people closer,
I would move the huts apart!
Hungering
Jews, hungering goats.

Beggars hungering through the town,
among the tombstones
and in the House of Worship.

Hungering Babes in cold cradles—while the dream
dreams on
in the Shul courtyard
like a longing lover.

Warped and weary hats,
cramped and crooked shops
where honorable penury strolls Sabbath-holidays
in carefully pressed patches—and the dreamer dreams.
humming
his sad plaint amid the desolate shops.

Crooked chimney-sweepers sweep crooked chimneys
over crooked roofs of crooked huts along crooked streets—while the dream
dreams on
along a straight highway—from the sullen chimneys
to the joyous sky.

Toil-worn girls in tailor-shops,
in sweatshop attics,
gaunt lads in shabby shoemaker-shops
jab angry needles in the hard cloth
jab angry awls
and tarred
snarling strings rip through tough hides—
and the dreamer dreams,
humming
his triumphant song,
as a liberator singing in his dungeon cell.

Hungry winds rage
the arthritic limbs of the town;

hungry winds weep
over so much weeping, grieve
over so much sadness, wail
over so much woe.

Hungry winds brood.
Hungry winds warn:
"Why are you silent, Jews? Jews—
why are you still?"
And the dreamer dreams
in the Shul courtyard, amidst the desolate shops,
at the infirmary, in the bathhouse, in garrets,
in cellars, chimneys, in the town work-shops—he dreams,
singing
like a happy, longing grom.

On a thousand-colored team of a thousand winged goats
and gay cocks, there flew
a young Vinebek Jew
out over the walls of his town.

Those walls rushed away and were borne
through Paris-Berlin-Moscow-Rome-New York
and set themselves down in the East—
wherever there's an East in the world,
and from the East went Westward, and from the West Northward and Southward
they sped
with the ghetto-grief of his town upon them,
with all the songs of his people within them,
On a thousand-colored team of a thousand winged goats
and gay cocks, his luminous hands move
upon the walls of all drab cities,
upon all the dismal roofs of the world,
over the gates and portals of the world,
upon the dreary Shalos of the world,
upon the unwashed public baths of the world,
the generations-old graveyards of the world,
upon all, all windows of the world—
and whatever he touches, soars
like dawn in the Caucasus, in Mexico and Tel-Aviv,
and never more goes under.

In the interval between your Melech and Chagall
you can see your father in prayer-shawl and phylacteries at dawn
having his altercation with the Almighty, face-to-face,
through an East window of his gloomy hut,
while hot pearls roll down from
your mother's eyes as she stands before the early-morning flames
of the hungry oven, and you hear
the furious words of the Prophets
concerning the rich man's plunder of the poor.
Your mind wrestles with hostile perils of resolution
and you pursue fantastic journeys astride Mendele's ramshackle Mare
through Benjamin's high illusions of brotherly
worlds beyond the boiling Sambaton,
And across the seas you can see and hear
Zaidel Mendele's singing grandsons: the Pepperlets and Mottelets
with the Mare, with the covered wagon full of story books, armed
on tanks
at the world-hallowed walls of Stalingrad.
With them, too,
the ever-mocked, the suffering
Simon Elie the Jew, and his
Goat.

Did you ever hear the story...
What kind of a story is it?

S
ROLIK grew and the goat grew with him,
had the pox and the measles and holy hell together—Israel
the Goat, Israel
the Scapegoat.

The Goat
bears on itself the sorrowful men
of Vitebsk's shabbiness, of Jewish fate
in ghettos,
of baffled children with whom no one wants to play,
of poor maidens who remain unpleighted,
of market-traders who go home empty-handed,
of brides tricked by wandering dowry-seekers,
of abandoned dreams,
of a city filled with mourners,
of a community deceived,
of a people
who can no longer wait for their redeemer.
The white dove abandoned us at the Ark. Not so the Goat.
The Goat—together with groom and bride, wedding-kim and musicians—
went with us to wedding feasts,
went with us in hiding in time of pogroms,
and put to the mad dogs
together with Israel always—
The Tsig.

From primitive, hushed hamlets
to the turbulent Jewish town,
from flaming Mount Azazel to the cool Shad courtyard,
to Simon Elie, to Chagall—
there was ever the little goat—the Tsig.

Chad Gadjo, Chad Gadjo—one little goat,
Decalin Abo—whom Father did buy
for good-fortune’s sake.
Chad Gadjo, Chad Gadjo—beloved partner
in all our blessings and our miseries.

In the holocaust—
an orphan, confused.
In revolt—a soul
altogether patient
that stands and waits: it knows
it can rely on its townfolk. Israel,
Reb Israel—the Goat,
the Scapegoat!

In a cruel Srolik sleeps,
a snow-white goat its vigil keeps.
The goat no longer goes trading
with raisins and almonds laden—
it answers to a new call:
to transform tumbledown Vitebsk
into the fairest world of all.

When you grow up, my brothers, little brothers,
you must cherish the little fiddles
that followed us from Genesis, in the Wilderness and Babylon,
in the Exile, through massacre and wandering
from Jerusalem to Vitebsk and beyond,
which in our grief have ever healed and consoled us.

When you are liberated, my brothers, little brothers,
you must cherish the little fiddles
that followed us from Shepherd David’s tent to Chatzkele the fiddler.
they have beguiled our way with song,
they have beguiled our way with song,
and in our grief have ever healed and consoled us.

Chad Gadjo, Chad Gadjo—one lone goat,
one small goat—so many rivers of blood.
Yet the little goat swam through.

Chad Gadjo, Chad Gadjo—one lone goat,
one small goat—so many oceans of pluck:
so the little goat came through.

Tsjege-Migele, Kotinke,
voite pomeraetsiz—
the world is all be-shadowed,
so paint it to your fancy.
"Let us make Sabbath of the mid-week."
Reb Solomon surely may now make his Hasidah
with a light heart.
The Hasidah will no longer sever the Sabbath from mid-week.
Gay colors have bound
the Sabbath with the mid-week. Gay hues like sporting children
dance out the
Sunday-Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday-Friday-Saturday
in the Shal yad as upon May boulevards
in Vitebsk, Moscow, Paris and New York.

Lalinke my little goat,
lalinke my gold.
Fragments are but mirrors—
see yourselves, my folk!

VITEBSK plays a trysting-game
and the world delights.
Vitebsk paints a tale—and the world gapes in wonder.
And in the blue night
green poppies
glow
and in the blue dark
red cocks
crow.

Vitebsk and Paris—twins:
a barefoot Jewish village lass
and a princess of the salon.
And in the blue night
green poppies
glow
and in the blue dark
red cocks
crow.

OVER the town
birds are a-wing. Over the town
stars fly.
Over the roof-tops the sun promenades.
Over the roof-tops the moon glides.
Yiddish into English:

The town is a holiday in itself, the town will have a filling.

The wedding band is turning up in honor of the wedding.

The town has an excuse to put off care and worry.

Though a poor relation, a wedding feast is a welcome guest.

The wedding band is turning up in honor of the wedding.

The town has an excuse to put off care and worry.

The wedding band is turning up in honor of the wedding.

Over the rooftops, the hopes of all, over the rooftops, the hopes of all,

Over the rooftops, the hopes of all, over the rooftops, the hopes of all,
Chatzkele, Chatzkele, play me a hasuktkele!
The whole town now is flying in the air
as though the earth and life
were drunk with wedding-joy.

Now heaven opens bright,
the town is flooded with light,
stark want is scented with wine
and shabby shoes skip and shine.

A JEW walks the world
in crooked shoes.
A Jew leads his daughter to her wedding
in crooked shoes.

Stark want is the crooked road of a world of crooked heads,
so a people dances out its joys
in crooked shoes.
The musicians play at weddings
in crooked shoes.
The fiddles, though, are straight and lithe.
The bass-viol walks
with crooked shoes
but the feet Chagall has given it are straight—
straight as the bow is straight,
steadfast and firm
as its deep grandfatherly tones that sustain and confirm
the ever-young allegro-wisdom of
the fiddles,
that take no heed of crooked shoes
but are rapt in a heartfelt fervor of
young and old, rapt in deep fervor of
improvising worlds of green, blue, yellow, rainbow heaven-dreams
on earth—
as Chagall paints them.)

Now the wedding-musicians play upon their fiddles,
now the wedding-bard declaims his clever rhymes,
and the wedding-kin weep wedding-tears
from old and sorrowing times:

"Kaleh, Kaleh, don't cry.
You'll have tears enough by and by."
The women burst a-crying, the air is rent
with their accompaniment.

Play, musicians, play!

"Blessed be the coming! The voice of joy,
the voice of merriment, of groom, of bride."
Blessed be all who come together here!
Now let the bridegroom take her to his side.
The moon goes dancing on the chimney-tops
and in the streets the stars dance a quadrille.
The groom lifts up a brimming cup
and pledges all he can, and wishes all he will:

"Giloh, Rinoh,
Ditshoh, Chekoh"
—
Gladness and Song.
Mirth and Merriment.

Merrily
plays the band. The hut
has no ceiling
but its floor is the whole broad town. Play,
musicians, play!

Merrily
plays the band—plaintive psaens fly
from the fiddles, and dreams
like little birds
and the moon pins blue wings upon sad, sullen chimneys.
And the world
looks on and finds it hard to know
if it should stand in wonderment
or shame.

Lulinke, my little goat,
lulinke, my gold.
Pigments are but mirrors—
see yourselves, my folk!

EBETZ's Bonche
and Sholom Aleichem's Teeye
lead Mendele's Orphan-Girl to her wedding canopy.

Go forth,
my friend, go forth
to greet the Bride!
And all that in the fiddle lies
floods the town with happy threnodies.
The wedding-kin weeps. The Shul weeps.
But the town and stars go into a pinwheel dance
in the candle-lit Shul yard, and the moon
paints on the Shul windows vistas
of the morrow and the days after:
Gladness and Song.
Mirth and Merriment:
Golden legend of naked want. Madow
wedding kin, Madow, good-luck, Madow
groom and bride!

SHIR Hashirim Asher Mishirai Shirim Shir:
the song of songs which of all songs ever sung is the Song.
Song of songs—of a great love in revolt against
everything banal.
A song of songs
of a skyful of flying blue fish with red fiddles.
A song of songs of the sorcery

Shir Hashirim—
song of songs
of a world that is all day. Shir Hashirim—song of songs
of a world that is all musicians.

A song of songs of the immortal girl-wife
whom no laws can age or overwhelm. The song of songs
which of all songs is the Song.
All hues and colors reveal themselves to him in her: wells
with rainbows brimming, lakes and rivers with moons abounding,
birch-wooded White Russian forests full of summer,
redolent with her breath.
Canvas is sky to him, and sky is
his bride's attire. Hence he dresses all
brides
in her transparent maidenhood. Shir Hashirim—
song of songs
of a world that is all love.

The song of songs which of all songs is the Song.
He made his whole world know itself in her.

Her shoulders are
his wings, her face is his
palette,
her fingers—his brushes, her head is
the magic-mirror of
his fantastic treasure, and she is his eternal heaven-blue
fiddle.

Shir Hashirimporn 8 holam milenudet
b'alav mitshem.
Mit ratzot parshut.
Shir Hashirim
por 8 holam.
por 8 holam.
Shir Hashirim
por 8 holam.
por 8 holam.
Shir Hashirim
por 8 holam.
por 8 holam.
Shir Hashirim
por 8 holam.
His musicians he
decks out in her attire
and they appear as if
she had given birth to them all, and they play as if
she had filled them within and spun them about with melodies
that would take them an eternity of day and night
to play in full.
And they sit and they
play. (On all the roofs, on all the chimneys.)
And they stand and they
play. (In all the woods, in all the yards.)
And they lie and they
play. (In fierce gales, in calm snowdrifts.)
And they walk and they
play. (Uphill and downhill, head up and head down.)
And they fly and they
play,
and
they play and
they play,
golden, golden,
golden goals—
for a world in tumult,
for a people sorrow-laden, for a people in joy,
for men in anguish and in mirth of love, unending
ever playing—a wedding of legendary yesterday and visionary today—
playing, playing, ever to play,
ever to cease—as never ceases the
beating of
the hearts of the two billion living souls. As never ceases
the mating of
the pairs.
As never ceases the singing of all
who want eternally
to sing.

Yiddl with the fiddle,
Berel with the bass,
play me a merry riddle... .
from the mart to Montparnasse.

Yiddl with the fiddle
from the Beginning to the End—
so the fowls and steeds and sheep
all play in the band.

Yiddl with the fiddle,
the fiddle is his goal—
so the whole world plays
its fiddles big and small.

Yiddl with the fiddle,
Berel with the bass,
play me a merry riddle... .
from the mart to Montparnasse.

Lulinke my little goat,
lulinke my gold.
Pigments are but mirrors—
see yourselves, my folk!

Clocks fly away—with
time.
Earth flies
and we too fly with it. No one
walks like a man:
on the fluttering tail of our fancy. Our feet are sinking anchors which drag behind our thousand pairs of wings and we fly like madmen, because time flies faster.

and we fly on all our wings though we break our necks to catch up with it, yond, yond, yonder and beyond.

EARTH turns and he paints and repaints her in her turning
Hills leap up and he paints them in their leaping.
Hillocks skip over dales like young lambs, and he paints them in their flight.

Walls have ears; fields have eyes.
Candles burn upside down—
to the needs of some dark corner on the earth.
Candles burn upwards, candles burn downwards—
to light up heaven and earth for those who hover their lifetime in the Middle.
Boughs grow finished fiddles, trees finished candelabra.
The sky settles stars on white, slim candles which the air kindles with a deep transparent red, and the flamelets burn like burning darts from scintillating hearts.

A fiddler is a fiddle.
A drummer is a drum.
A cellist is a cello.
A man is what he makes and what he plays and every face is an informer.

A man is a beautiful dream. Dreams fly for sheer flying—about, above, below—
from our great rapture of their reign over all the earth.

"Toleh Eretz Belimoh"—the Earth is suspended on Nothing.
MERRIMENT: here reigns in grace that magic power which has come in its own fashion to remake the world with a light heart with a light hand.

NESSHOM YE SAIRE—the extra soul of the genius of difference. Nesshome Yessaire—holiday soul of a redecorated earth.

Nesshome Yessaire—exalted soul of a full, enamored human grace that dresses earth and man and all things as befits the honor of holiday: to dress up the goat and the cows the donkeys and the steeds.

To tune up the cocks as the musicians, to apportion menorahs, fiddles, flutes, to adorn the billy-goat in the green Spring, to outfit him with two chunks of sky—a pair of wings, to give him two feet like my own, in his hand a wine-glass with all the bouquets of blended wines—then to let him go, to let him lead—let the parade of everyday holiday begin with the lit-up walking streetlamps with human faces from one end of the world to the other end of the world.

WITH a jubilant sack full of jeremiana the Jew walks above the city, His jeremiana wail, but the Jew—goes singing, with the Chagallian painted ceiling across the ever-skipping globe,—eye to eye with his Creator's precious, well-adorned theme—the bewooded, grassy, lyrically-colored, the musical and betwined earth.
Playing and suffering
a Jew goes a-dancing,
playing and seeking
a Jew is on his way—
Benjamin with his Senderl, Menachem Mendel with his satchel,

A Jew trudges the forest musing
a tune.
The forest catches the tune, and there
it ever remains, and there for all eternity
shades.
And once a tune goes singing in the forest, there emerge
musicians from behind the trees
and there they stay, and will let the tune escape
no more,
for without the tune they can have no forest,
and without the forest
they can have no Spring,
and from this tune sing out an endless host of tunes

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And once a tune goes singing in the forest, there emerge
musicians from behind the trees
and there they stay, and will let the tune escape
no more,
for without the tune they can have no forest,
'tis there's a great outpouring of musicians in the forest, and the trees under which these musicians play feel light of heart, as do the squirrels, and the rabbits. The little goat, the calf that may wander in will forever there remain, for it senses a fine future for itself in the forest with homey musicians and tunes.

So the musicians play as if natives in the forest of Spring born to play for the eternally-enamored world

Hence, for the donkey in blue breeches and yellow satin shirt there is always holiday.
Hence, for the bear-cub with the little green cap there is always jamboree.
Hence for the colt with rapturous face it is an everyday jubilation to be a-wing in the skies.
And the calf and the goat—hoody kapten!—Al!—if they only let live!
Hence, the donkey will not part from his fiddle, hence the bear-cub will not yield his fiddle, and the colt, and the calf, and the goat—they do not budge without their fiddles.
They peer into the face of the grave bass-viol—modest lads devoted in a merry minstrel band—waiting for their father to give them the key.

Yiddel with the fiddle,
Berel with the bass,
play me a merry riddle... from the mart to Montparnas

The complete poem Marc Chagall by Aaron Kurtz is published by French-American Gallery, 122A East Park Ave., Long Beach, N.Y. It sells at list price for $5.00.
# FOLKWAYS RECORDS NUMERICAL LISTING

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<td>Features special and unique recordings not found in the standard categories.</td>
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<td><strong>CHILDREN'S INTERNATIONAL</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Includes international children's songs from various countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCHOOL EXAM SERIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recordings designed to assist in educational assessments and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LITERATURE SERIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Features music inspired or based on literary works, including novels, poems, and plays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELIGIOUS SERIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contains religious songs and hymns, reflecting various faith traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BROADCAST SERIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recordings created for public broadcasting, often used on radio and television shows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MUSIC INSTRUCTION SERIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Instructional music series focused on developing musical skills and techniques.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Pricing Information

- **12" Record**: $5.99
- **10" Record**: $4.25

**Price Schedule**

- Unless otherwise specified.

**Contact Information**

- **FOLKWAYS RECORDS**
  - 117 West 46th Street, N.Y.C. 36
  - Canada: 1407 MacKay Street
  - Montreal, P.Q., Canada

**Special Editions**

- Special 45s & 65s
- Master, 78 RPM, 10" Vinyl
- 12" Record, 33⅓ RPM
- 7" Record, 45 RPM
- 10" Record, 78 RPM

**New Releases**

- **Pete Seeger**
- **Bob Dylan**
- **Bob Marley**
- **John Lennon**
- **Paul Simon**
- **Elvis Presley**
- **The Beatles**
- **The Rolling Stones**
- **The Who**
- **Bruce Springsteen**

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