images: rosza daniel lang/levitsky poetry: perets markish translation: adapted from anna elena torres prose: mariame kaba

vu s'iz farbrent

און עס גיט זיך דער וואַלד אין די הייכן אַ טראָג, און מיט הענט – דעם קאַיאָר, און מיט גראַבלעס – דעם טאָג.

נאָר אַ שטרעק טאָן די האַנט און אַ צי טאָן דאָס מױל פונעם הוילינקן לײַב, פֿון דער הוילינקן הויט –

אָט־אָט גיסט זיך שוין יבער די וועלט ביזן ראַנד מיט זאַלבונג פֿון שײַן און מיט גאָלדן געטראַנק.

אַ געפֿאָך, אַ געפֿלי, אַ געצוויטשער באַפֿאַלט און עס פֿילט זיך מיט פֿרײד און געזאַנג אָן דער װאַלד.

ס׳פּרוּווט די קלײנינקע פֿליגעלעך – צום פֿליען אַ שוואַלב און דער קלונג פֿון קאַיאָריקן שמיד װעקט דעם װאַלד.

מיט אַ ציטריקן ווינט און מיט ליכטיקן שאָרך לײגט זיך צו, רירט זיך אָן און װעקט אַף דער קאַיאָר.

אָף שפּיצן פֿון בערג ונ אַף שפּיצן פֿון װאַלד.

עס טריפֿט דער קאַיאָר ווי אַ גאַלדענער זאַלב

daybreak drips like a golden salve on mountain peaks and forest peaks.

with quiverly wind and bright rustle

lies down, touches and wakes up the dawn.

small birds try — a swallow almost soars and dawn's blacksmith peals rouse the woods.

a waving, a winging, a twittering strikes

anointing with beauty and golden drink.

and with hands, lifts the dawn and with shovels — the day.

any minute now the world already streams over its border

the forest feels joyous, replenished by song.

just to reach out the hand and tug at the mouth

of the bare body, of the bare skin -

and the forest lifts itself up high and fast,

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a society that doesn't rely on force or that doesn't lock people away

we aren't even going to know the world in which we're going to be living

and there were already ten — and already countless and the valley already flooded and flow-filled...

the child shoveled itself out, and there were already two.

only from the far horizon, from the ignited daybreak, comes crossing towards me a child.

even i also left the bright valley. now the valley sleeps, there's no one there now.

and i am here too, i'm also fated

to be upon earth at joy of daybreak.

from the dawny gleam like golden hay

it's become easier for people to imagine a world without prisons than without police

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abolition is about changing everything

און איך בין דאָ אויך, און אַך מיט איז באַשערט

צו זײַן אַף אַ פֿרײד פֿון קאַיאַר אַף דער ערד.

בין איך אויכעט אַרױסגאַן פֿון ליכטיקן טאַל.

נאָר פֿון װײַט האָריזאַנט, פֿון צעהעלטן באַגין,

איז געגאַנגען צו מיר אַף אַנטקעגן אַ קינד.

פֿון קאַיאַריקער שײַן װי פֿון גאַלדענעמ הײ

מע שלאָפֿט נאַך אין טאַל, ס׳איז נאַך קײנער ניטא.

. האָט זיך אויסגעפּיקט ס׳קינד, און אַט איז עס שוין צוויי

– און אָט איז עס שוין צען – און אָט איז שוין קיין צאָל

...און אָט איז שוין פֿאַרפֿלײצט און פֿאַרפֿלאָסן דער טאָל

the process is still painful, but it can put you on a path toward healing

מע גײט זײ אנטקעגן פֿון גאַר פֿון דער װײַט און זון ביז די קני, און זון איבער שוועל.

– מע גייט זיי אַנטקעגן מיט ליכטיקן גאַנג און זון ביז די קני, און ביז האַרץ און געזאַנג.

ָס׳איז פּאנימער העלע, ווי פֿאַנען קאַיאָר און אלץ איז פארשטענדלעך און זוניק און קלאָר.

און ווינט צום באַדינען, און ווינט צום באַפֿעל,

. און ס׳שטראָמט פֿון אים זאַפֿט, און ס׳שטראַמט פֿון אים העל

און קיינעם געמיטן, און קיינעם געפֿעלט!

און זונענזאַפֿט גיסט זיך, און זונענזאַפֿט קוועלט, און ס'ווילט אף די הענט איצט זיך נעמען די וועלט.

- אַ טאָג װי אַ קאַװן צעשניטן אַף העלפֿט

און מאַכנעס נאָך מאַכנעס אין פֿר״ד קומען אָן. ַמע הערט ניט קײן פֿאָך און קײן פֿלאַטער פֿון פֿאָן.

not the passiveness of punishment

accountability is an active thing you take on and do

and sun-sap pours forth, sun-sap gushes, and now it wants to grab the whole world in its hands.

a day like a watermelon sliced open juice streams out, bright streams out.

faces bright as the flags of dawn, all is knowable and sun-lit and clear.

and wind to serve, wind to command,

no-one shunned, no-one absent!

multitudes upon multitudes arrive with joy. you hear no ripple of air, no flutter of flag.

people come about it walking brightly and sun up to the knees, and song up to the heart.

and sun up to the knees, and sun over the threshold.

people come about it from the farthest points

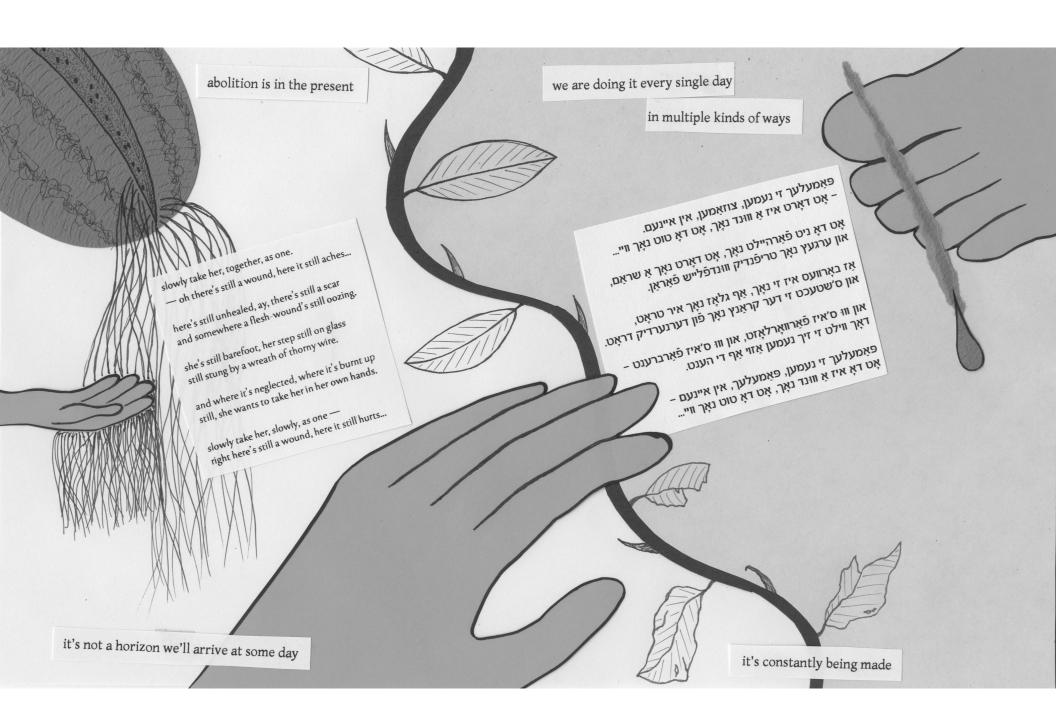
the wounds will always be there

in our transformed world

the harm caused never disappears

we'll have to handle people who cause horrible harms

no one can make you accountable



ווו סיאיז פֿאַרברענט vu si'z farbrent where it's burnt up

ראַזעלע זושוק האַלעווי

rosza daniel lang/levitsky

the text for this piece comes from two writers, talking to each other from one police state to another, across six decades. they echo each other in their acknowledgement that we do not know what a liberated world will look like, but that it must embody radically different ways of addressing harm. people will still harm each other, accidentally or deliberately, in a transformed society. the difference is how we will respond to and transform that harm, to support healing for those harmed and changed patterns of behavior for those who harm. all of us are, and will be, in both of those positions.

across the tops and bottoms of each page are the words of Mariame Kaba, a leading Abolitionist organizer, thinker, and writer. her work includes both organizing to abolish the Prison Industrial Complex - the interwoven structures of the state, industry, and non-profit organizations that use surveillance, policing, incarceration, and other forms of confinement and control as solutions to economic, social, and political problems - and practicing Transformative Justice - a body of approaches for dealing with harm outside of the state, and beyond the punishment paradigm that drives the carceral system. Kaba's work is widely available online: starting points include transformharm.org and mariamekaba.com.

this text was assembled from several interviews and articles, and approved by MK.

in the centers of the pages are parts of a long poem by Peretz Markish, a Yiddish modernist poet active mainly in Warsaw and in the USSR. the poem, "der fertsikyeriker man" ["The Forty-year-old Man"], in Anna Elena Torres's description, "moves from Expressionist scenes of war and revolution to visions of borderless space, radical temporality, and erotic liberation," distilling Markish's Yiddish anarchist poetics. Markish began writing it in 1922 (the year the Bolshevik army crushed the Kronstadt soviet to end its anarchist sailors' rebellion) and worked on it until Stalin had him arrested in 1949. he was executed, along with twelve other members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, on August 12, 1952.

i was introduced to Markish's writing, and "der fertsikyeriker man" by anarchist scholar and Yiddishist Anna Elena Torres. the translation here is hers (by permission), mainly from her article "The Horizon Blossoms and the Borders Vanish: Peretz Markish's Poetry and Anarchist Diasporism" (Jewish Quarterly Review 110:3, Summer 2020), which is a wonderful introduction to Markish. a few lines are from earlier versions included in her dissertation; the four stanzas from "even i also" to "flow-filled" are my own translation.