

# The Children of the House of Study

By A. Margalit

Translation by Shlomit Naim Naor

The childhood is walking down the sidewalk  
With rosy lips and cheeks  
It salutes your existence  
As it is carrying a copy of the G`mara (1)  
Under its armpit.

The childhood is walking. The feet  
Are chasing after a dotted rusted old wheel  
Suddenly the wind blows and pushes  
And a soft hand gently taps the head  
Ensuring the Kippah (2) won't go with the wind.

The children are back from school  
And the air is dotted with beauty marks  
It`s dusk and dark the day has passed  
But they are still bent over their studies, indeed  
The thumb is digging in the air (3).

The childhood walks from here to there  
Guard passes guard (4)  
Tomorrow`s People of Israel  
Marches in a smaller format  
Only today its name is *Tashbar*\*.

The childhood walks on the sidewalk  
And everyone around is smiling,  
Like an angel of innocence and blessing  
Following close on the strides in silence.

The children are back from the house of study  
In storm thunder and haste,  
Before they enter home, on the doorstep,  
Fingers placed on the Mezuzah. (5)  
And childhood is on tiptoes:  
So much taller is the mezuzah.

The lights go off. *Tashbar*\* are going to sleep,  
A dream is woven between pupil and eyelid,  
A sweet endless dream.  
About the starry sky  
And about Joseph and his brothers  
And about their Bar Mitzvah,  
In only six years' time.

\* תינוקות של בית רבן children of the house of study

1. G'mara: A book of Talmud study
2. Kippa: skullcap
3. Traditional studying gesture
4. These words have connotations of the army, and of religious observance
5. The small box with sacred text inside that rests on the doorframes of Jewish houses. It is tradition to touch it, and then to kiss one's fingers.