

ADAM & ADAMAHA: People and Landscape

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"Pilgrims had a stake in the solidity of the world they walked; in a kind of world in which one can tell life as a continuous story, a sense-making story... The world of pilgrims – of identity builders – must be orderly, determined, predictable, ensured; but above all it must be a kind of world in which footprints are engraved for good... Modernists strove to make the world solid by making it pliable, so that identity could be built at will. They...turned the space in which identity was to be built into a desert. And a desert does not hold features well. The easier it is to emboss a footprint, the easier it is to rub it out. A gust of wind will do. And deserts are windy places."

Zygmund Bauman, "From Pilgrims to Tourists – or a Short History of Identity", 1996

"My roots are in two disparate landscapes"

Leah Goldberg, Pine, in Selected Poems, 1976

Go forth from your country,
and from your relatives,
and from your father's house,
to the land which I will show you.

(Genesis 12, 1)

לך-לך מארצך
וממולדתך
ומבית אביך,
אל-הארץ, אשר אראך.
(בראשית י"ב, א)



The desert is a reproach to mankind. It is criminal waste in a world that cannot feed its population. Even for Israel, this barrenness is a reproach. The majority of Jews who come to this country go to Tel Aviv or Jerusalem. I am against big cities. They bring out the worst in men.

It is my belief that every human being is a compendium of good and bad qualities. I think man's capacity to wreak evil, to harm himself, is far greater than his ability to do good. Cities by their anonymity and their impersonality are a nefarious influence on the individual. They remove him from a sense of direct responsibility towards his fellow man. How can you remember to be your 'brother's keeper' in the Biblical sense if you live in an apartment house where nobody knows anyone else? I remember going to New York once with the intention, among other things, of looking up a fellow Israeli who was there at the time. I asked everyone I met about this man but couldn't trace his whereabouts. Then one day in the skyscraper I was living in I bumped right into him. 'I've been searching everywhere for you,' I told him. And he said 'I've been looking for you too.' It turned out we were living in the same building and had been doing so for weeks without either of us knowing it! That is city life for you.

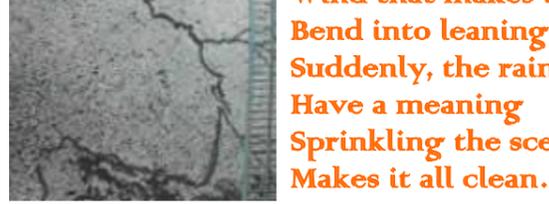
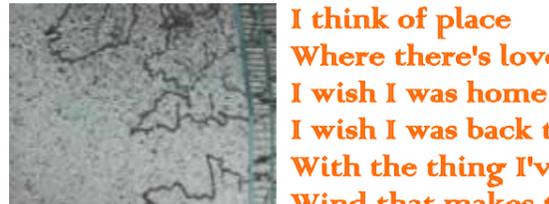
David Ben-Gurion, "To the Negev", 1968

The Negev offers the Jews their greatest opportunity to accomplish everything for themselves from the very beginning. This is a vital part of our redemption in Israel. For in the end, as man gains mastery over Nature he gains it also over himself. That is the sense, and not a mystical but a practical one, in which I define our redemption here.

Israel must continue to earn its nationhood and to represent the Jewish people with their awesome past. It must be worthy of itself, which is no small achievement. It is one to be attained in the desert.

When I look out of my window today and see a tree standing there, that tree gives me a greater sense of beauty and personal delight than all the vast forests I have seen in Switzerland or Scandinavia. Because every tree here was planted by us. It was nursed to life by the water we brought to it at such cost and effort. Why does a mother love her children? Because they are of her creation. Why does the Jew have affinity for Israel? Because here again everything remains to be accomplished. It is his privilege and his place to share in this creative act. The trees at Sde Boker speak to me in a special way, in another language than any other trees anywhere. Not only because I helped to grow them but because they constitute a gift of man to Nature, and a gift of the Jews to the cradle of their culture.

"It is easy for us who travel into remote countries, which are seldom visited by Englishmen or other Europeans, to form descriptions of wonderful animals both at sea and land. Whereas a traveller's chief aim should be to make men wiser and better, and to improve their minds by the bad, as well as good, example of what they deliver concerning foreign places. (GULLIVER'S TRAVELS into several REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD, BY JONATHAN SWIFT, D.D., DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S, DUBLIN. CHAPTER XII.) [First published in 1726-7.]



Love of the Land

By Yehuda Amichai

The land is divided into sections of memory and of hope. Its inhabitants mingle with one another, As they do when returning from a wedding or funeral.

And the land is not divided into war and peace zones. And he who digs a trench to lie in during the time of war, Will return and lie in the trench with his beloved at times of peace. If he lives until peace returns. And the land is Beautiful. Decorated by the surrounding enemies as well, In armor which shines and sparkles like the sun. Like a shimmering necklace on a person's neck.

And the land is its own package And she is tied well with everything within, And she is tied tightly, And the strings sometimes hurt.

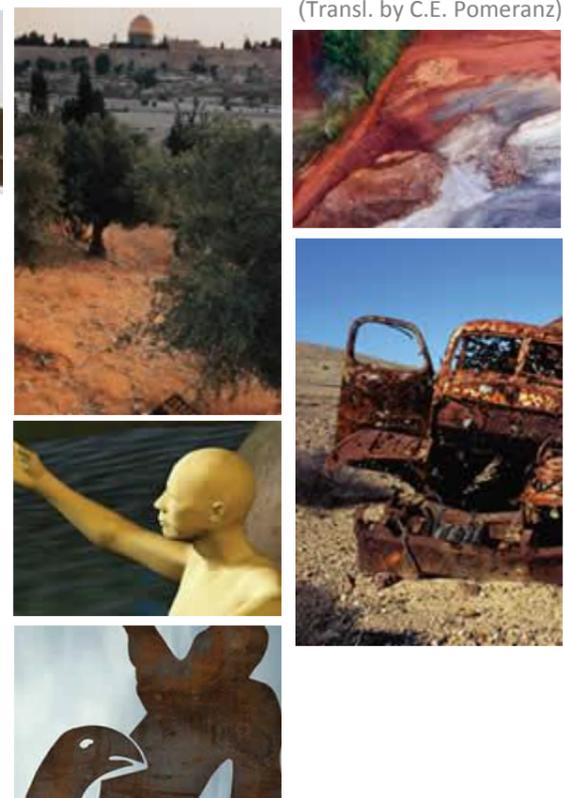
And the land is very small. And I can contain her within me. The current of the land sweeps over me as well, as I rest. And the height of the Kineret is always on my mind And thus I can feel her with my eyes shut; The sea valleys and mountains. And I am able to remember all that happened within her, all at once As a man whose life flashes before him at the time of his death.

(Transl. by C.E. Pomeranz)

THE WIZ (1975)

Joel Schumacher, Sidney Lumet

"When I think of Home
I think of place
Where there's love overflowing.
I wish I was home
I wish I was back there
With the thing I've been knowing.
Wind that makes the tall trees
Bend into leaning
Suddenly, the raindrops that fall
Have a meaning
Sprinkling the scene
Makes it all clean..."



הגורן הירוק
האג'נסי
לרשות
הארץ
לרשות
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ONWARD
ISRAEL
START UP YOUR FUTURE