**The Silver Platter**

**By Natan Alterman**

The Earth grows still.  
The lurid sky slowly pales  
Over smoking borders.  
Heartsick, but still living, a people stand by  
To greet the uniqueness  
of the miracle.

Readied, they wait beneath the moon,  
Wrapped in awesome joy, before the light.  
— Then, soon,  
A girl and boy step forward,  
And slowly walk before the waiting nation;

In work garb and heavy-shod  
They climb  
In stillness.  
Wearing yet the dress of battle, the grime  
Of aching day and fire-filled night

Unwashed, weary unto death, not knowing rest,  
But wearing youth like dewdrops in their hair.  
— Silently the two approach  
And stand.  
Are they of the quick or of the dead?

Through wondering tears, the people stare.  
“Who are you, the silent two?”  
And they reply: “We are the silver platter  
Upon which the Jewish State was served to you.”

And speaking, fall in shadow at the nation’s feet.  
Let the rest in Israel’s chronicles be told.