**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.