

Journalism

by Steven Sher (May 2014)

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When I see them in the alley
reading the morning papers,
unable to wait to get them home,
I hear again my father's slap
of newsprint on the kitchen table.
We were a three-daily family
back then. My father scanned
the headlines of one tabloid
before opening the fold.
I grabbed another and turned
straight for the back page,
the sports, absorbed
as I ignored the meal. My sister
liked the comics; my mother,
the crosswords. But she waited
until we had devoured our sections
and abandoned the table.
Reading was as much a part
of breakfast as the orange juice

and the toasted bagels, so we
believed in the great bold
declarations of the times
as if we'd seen them with
our own eyes. But now,
when lies prevail, when gossip
and exposure measure
the greatness of a man
and truth is afraid to face
the light of day, no one
trusts the journalists.
Each day the same old lies
about the Jews—the same
death sentence proclaimed.
Lies about our history and
world conspiracies. Lies
about the settlers. Lies about
the intentions of the Islamists,
their “religion of peace.”
Lies about those scandalous
leaders who keep reappearing
in the public nightmare.

Lies from the pulpit, lies
from the Mount. Lies
spray-painted, fresh graffiti,
on the city's white stone walls
like blood upon the altar.
O the sanctity of lies.

Brooklyn native Steven Sher is the author of 14 books including, most recently, *The House of Washing Hands* (Pecan Grove Press, 2014) and *Grazing on Stars: Selected Poems* (Presa Press, 2012). He has taught at many universities/workshops for more than 35 years. He moved to Jerusalem in 2012. Find out more at stevensher.net.

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