

# Patria

by Jeffrey Burghauser



*For Israeli Independence Day, 2021*

Maneuvering through disarray & heat,  
I neared the Hammurabi-grey,  
Disheveled *Tahana HaMerkazit\**  
To catch the bus to Haifa Bay.

Back then, the Second Intifada bound  
The town to measures none begrudged:  
As I approached the entryway, I found  
A soldier placed amid a smudged,  
Unplanned cement geometry.

Serenely stoned on all the fumes of spring,  
On youth, on being near the source  
Of sentimental songs (of everything),  
He tossed me a contented, hoarse  
Fraternal sigh. And having sung the crass  
Refrain of Clio's lullaby  
("Are you a Jew?"), permitted me to pass  
Sans further question after I  
Responded jauntily: "Of course!"

So many years ago! One hopes the boy  
Has prospered, having sired heirs

Prepared, not just to *take*, but to *enjoy*  
Possession of his Kevlar prayers  
And psalm-shaped shells. The Truly Wise demand,  
Though softly: Let a people be  
A PEOPLE. Scholars cannot understand,  
For it's a simple poetry:  
The poetry of *MINE & THEIRS*.

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\* Central Station