

Passover Poetry

Where Is David, the Next King of Israel?

By Vachel Lindsay

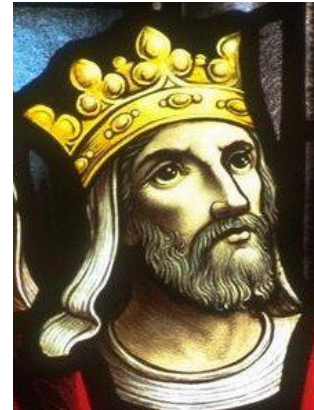
Where is David? . . . O God's people,
Saul has passed, the good and great.
Mourn for Saul the first-anointed —
Head and shoulders o'er the state.

He was found among the Prophets:
Judge and monarch, merged in one.
But the wars of Saul are ended And
the works of Saul are done.

Where is David, ruddy shepherd,
God's boy-king for Israel?
Mystic, ardent, dowered with beauty,
Singing where still waters dwell?

Prophet, find that destined minstrel
Wandering on the range to-day,
Driving sheep and crooning softly
Psalms that cannot pass away.

"David waits," the prophet answers,
"In a black notorious den,
In a cave upon the border
With four hundred outlaw men.



"He is fair, and loved of women,
Mighty-hearted, born to sing:
Thieving, weeping, erring, praying,
Radiant royal rebel-king.

"He will come with harp and psaltry,
Quell his troop of convict swine,
Quell his mad-dog roaring rascals,
Witching them with words divine —

"They will ram the walls of Zion!
They will win us Salem hill,
All for David, Shepherd David —
Singing like a mountain rill!"

Why Is This Night Different?

By Ray Shankman



Why is this night different now that we are older and our
children are with us each one of us crosses the same
desert helping the stragglers lifting the forlorn and
lost helping life into life helplessness into
healing hope we are here together
hearing each story as if it were our own
committed to keeping the story alive
the journey going

Passover Seders are like the Night Sky

By Nicholas Gordon

Passover Seders are like the night sky:
A moment of moments long past and just gone;
Starlight years old next to planets nearby
Shining as though joined in one joyous song.
Over our heads is a book of the ages
Vividly chanting the stories of old,
Even as under our fingers are pages
Resplendent with light come from cauldrons now cold.
So may we gaze at the past in the present,
Each prayer a jewel in a darkness undone,
Destined to light on our eyes in a moment
Embracing all slaves out from Egypt as one.
Rejoice, then, in this living graveyard of light,
Singing the words, that they last one more night.



Passover Celebrated That Glorious Day

By Nicholas Gordon

Passover celebrates the glorious day
After the Lord passed over our first born,
Striking out in freedom on that dawn
So long ago with God to lead the way.
Over 3,000 years have passed since that bright day:
Vicissitudes have died, and new ones born;
Each night of terror brings a brave new dawn,
Recalling us to our eternal way.

Joseph's Coat

By George Herbert



Wounded I sing, tormented I indite,
Thrown down I fall into a bed, and rest:
Sorrow hath chang'd its note: such is his will
Who changeth all things, as him pleaseth best.
For well he knows, if but one grief and smart
Among my many had his full career,
Sure it would carry with it ev'n my heart,
And both would run until they found a bier

To fetch the body; both being due to grief.
But he hath spoil'd the race; and giv'n to anguish
One of Joy's coats, 'ticing it with relief
To linger in me, and together languish.
I live to shew his power, who once did bring
My joys to weep, and now my griefs to sing.

The Telling

by Brenda Spigelman Ajzenkopf

Why is this night unlike all others
Are questions the youngest must say
We recline, we pray, we ask the Almighty
Please deliver us from Egypt
this day.

Bitters and herbs are ours to consume
To remember the Exodus then
We eat, we drink, we cross the waters
Are pursued by Pharaoh and his men.

The Haggadah reading commands that we tell
How our ancestors toil,
how they cry
We plead, we bend, we climb with Moses
And receive the
tablets at Mount Sinai.

Elijah is here my father sings out
All bear witness as he flies
We tremble, we hide, we wait as he nears
We peer down through his ancient eyes.