

Reemerging

By Barb Richman



This poem was written for Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation's Elul Enlightenments in response to the poem "Shir Tishrei" by Rachel Shapira. The line "Come home quickly with the cool wind" is the theme for Adat Shalom's High Holidays 5782.

Reemerging

"Come home quickly."

Well, it wasn't. Face-to-face, that is.

16 months away from the white-tented canopy, the engraved wisdom encircling sacred space.

An eternity away from the *etz hayyim*, the *klaf*, the scribe's expert markings.

An infinity without voices raised together, mutual smiles, shared tears, comforting embraces.

Instead, a patchwork of faces, stitched together screen after screen, binding our close-knit community.

Scroll through: Names at lower left, *siddurim* in hand, smiles above. No knees, but no matter: Wherever we were, though distant, we were together.

We yearned for one another, but we sheltered for safety and harbored holes in our hearts. One day, one day, we murmured. One day, one day, we prayed.

Then, finally, the doors opened. But I wasn't ready. Not yet.

Weeks later, courage summoned, I emerge. Tentatively. Cautiously. Nervously.

Under the white canopy once more, my eyes scan the room. I know this space in my bones. Through simchas, sorrows, learning, prayer.

With fresh eyes, I slowly soak in every detail. Ah, yes, the beautiful woods, hewn with words of knowledge, insight, healing. Shadows play on the sails. A solar-fueled lamp burns eternally, shining all this time.

With damp eyes, I see longtime friends. Others aren't here. Yet or ever? I sigh. Each in our own time, I remind myself. Each as we are able.

Now, harmonizing voices. Laugh lines visible above masks. Enormous smiles apparent. What's okay? For some, the warmth of touch. Can we hug? Or just hesitate and nod?

Awkward acknowledgements aside, a community begins to reunite. A more grateful community. A wiser community.

Come home, indeed.

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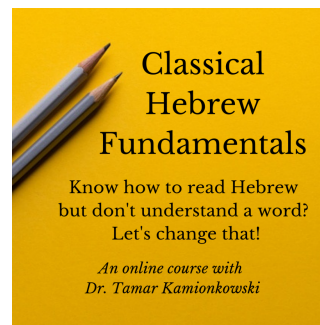
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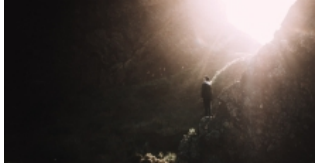


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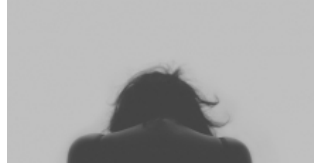
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