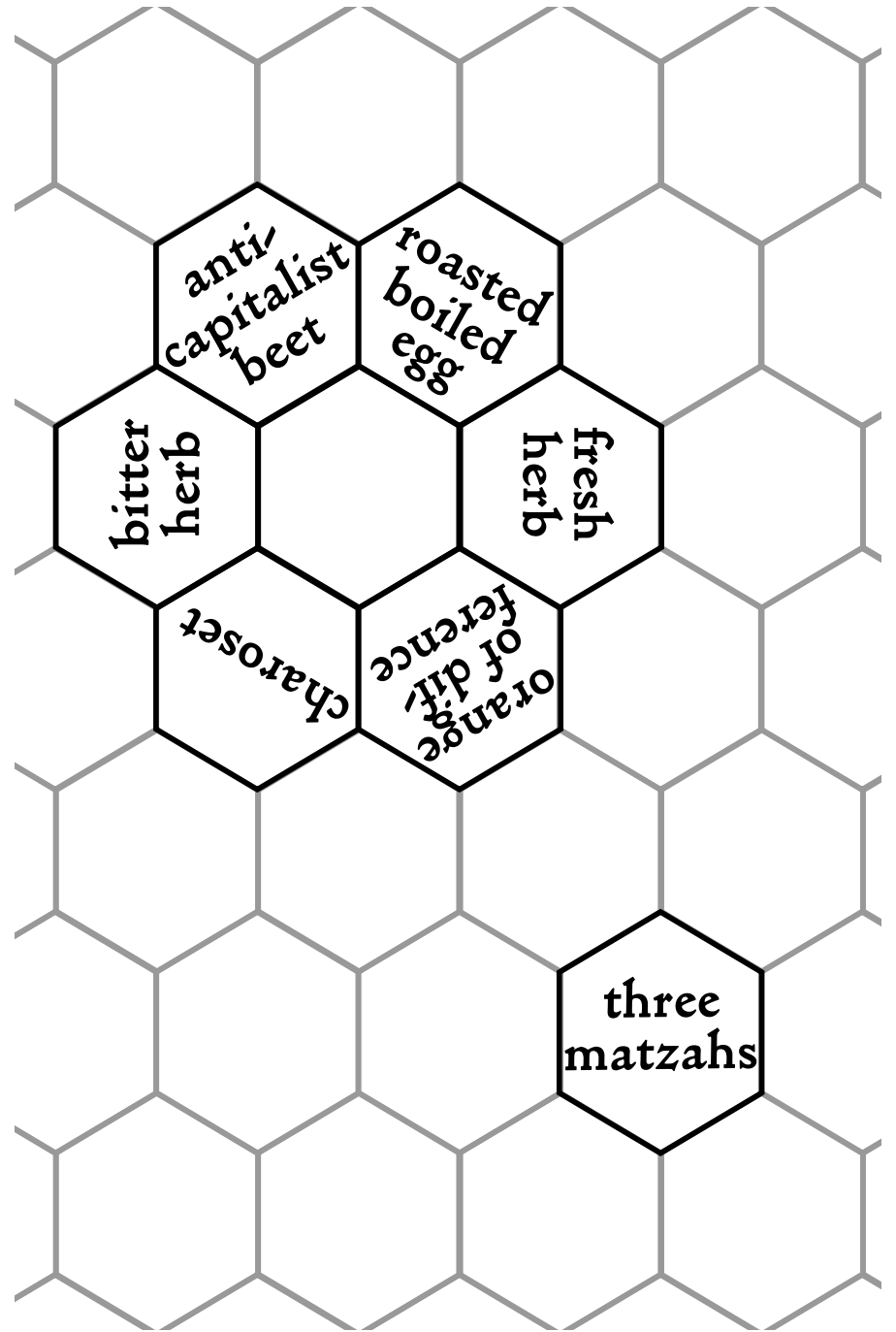
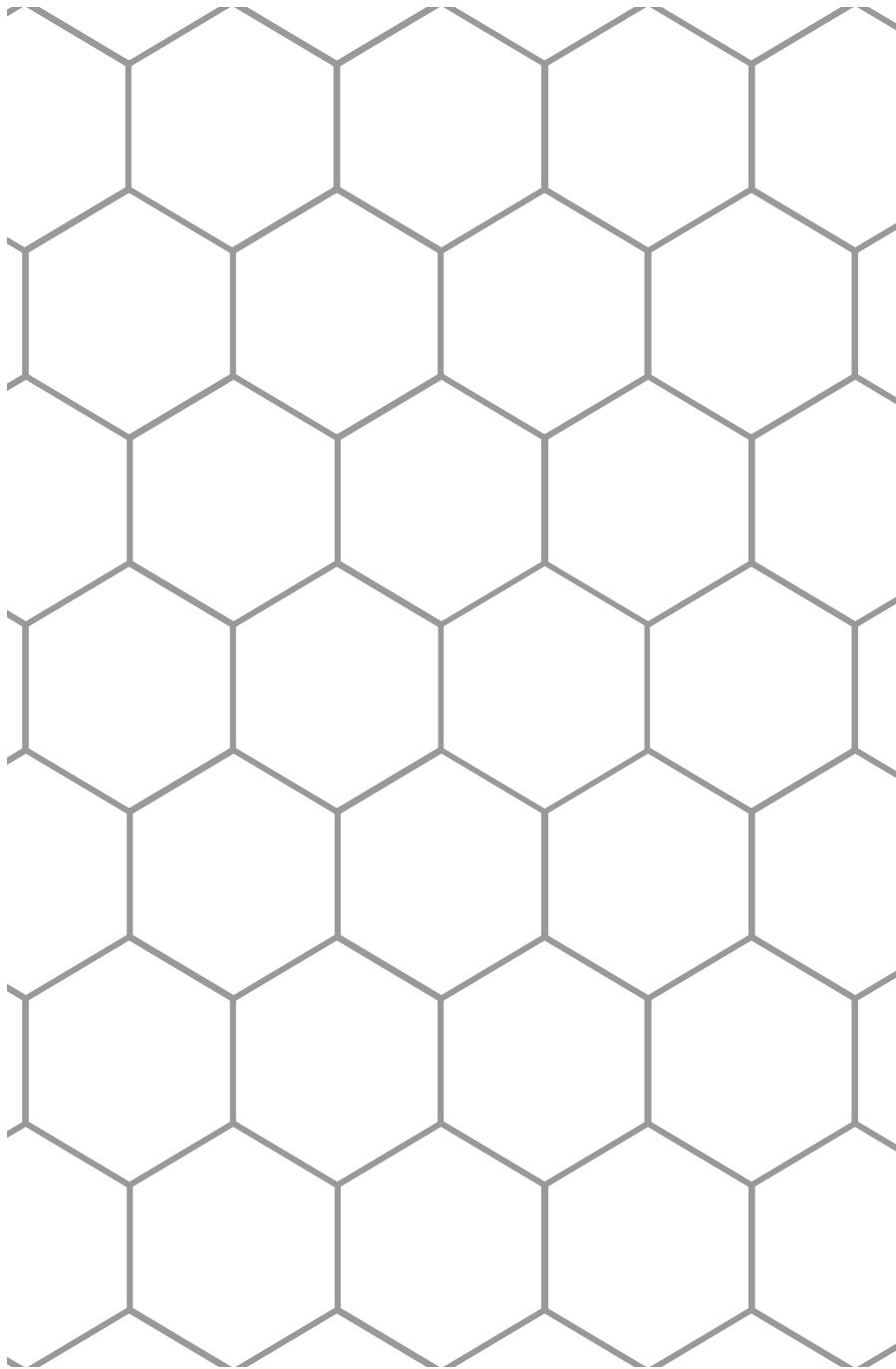


הגדת סוֹקֵל



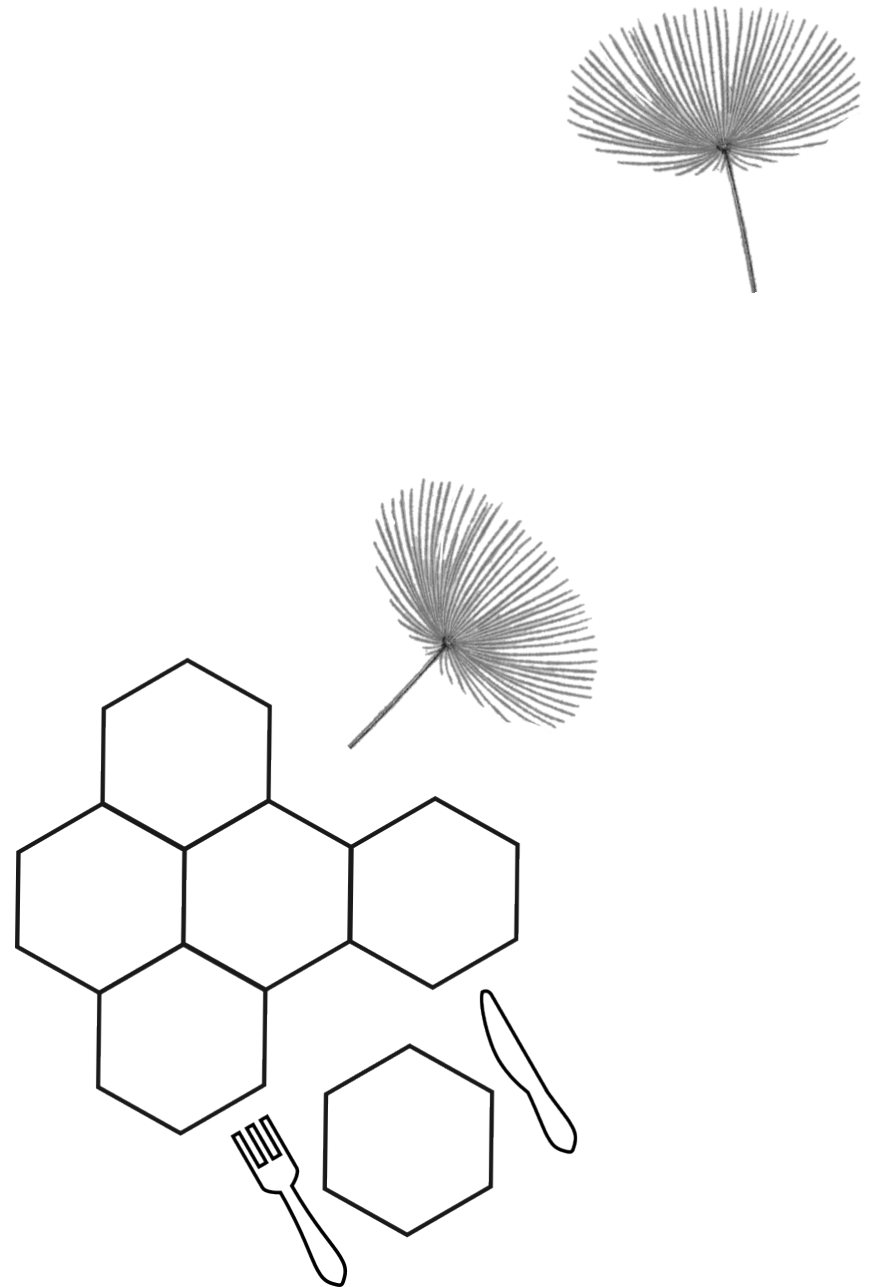
the
SoCal Haggadah



Setting the Table. Setting Intentions.

“**M**ay our Seder be Joyous and Soulful. May it have moments of loudness and moments of quiet. May it make space to feel the pain of our oppression and that of others. And may it create space to celebrate the liberation we have won, and the liberation we will win. May our seder lean on the past and branch out into the future. But may it be rooted in the present. May it be diasporist. May it be revolutionary. And may it not last too long because the food is getting cold and we don't want to delay the revolution any longer.

Jewdas



Call and



We tell the story of our ancestors' enslavement and deliverance.

We tell the story to remind ourselves that many are still oppressed.

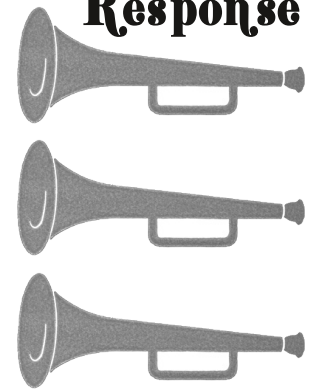
We tell the story to connect ourselves to history and ritual.

We tell the story of the liberation from slavery in Egypt.

We tell the story to remind us that we are still not free.

We tell the story in our own rewritten Haggadah.

Response



So that we are able to celebrate our own freedom.

So that we continue to fight for their justice here and now.

So that we nourish our sense of who we are and where we came from.

So that we remember it is possible to win in our struggles today.

So that we continue the struggle for revolution.

So that we take authorship over our own stories.

The Agenda

Blessing over Wine	קדש
Washing of Hands	ורחץ
Fresh Herb	כרפס
Breaking of Matzah	יחץ
The Story	מגיד
Washing of Hands	רחצה
Eating of Matzah	מוציא מצה
Bitter Herb	מרור
Hillel Sandwich	כורך
The Food	שלחן עורך
Afikoman	צפון
Blessing	ברך
Songs of Praise	הלל
Closing	נירצה



Blessing over Wine

קדש / *kadesh*

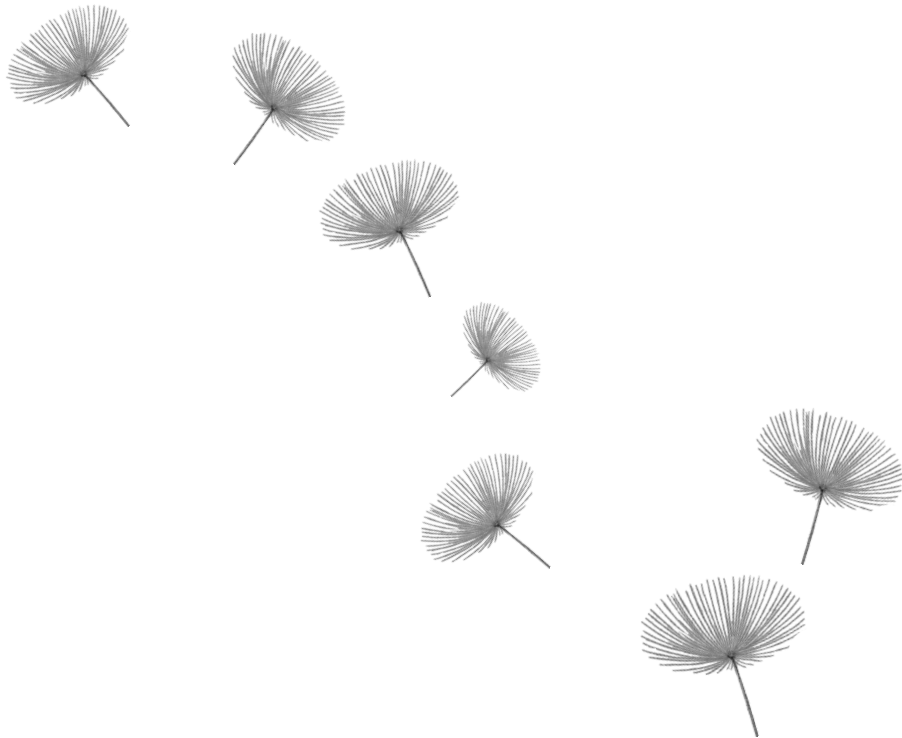
{ Fill the first cup of wine. Hold it aloft and recite: }

ברוכה את יי אלהינו, רוח
העולם, בוראת פרי הגפן

Brucha at adonai eloheinu, ruach
ha'olam, boreit pri hagafen.

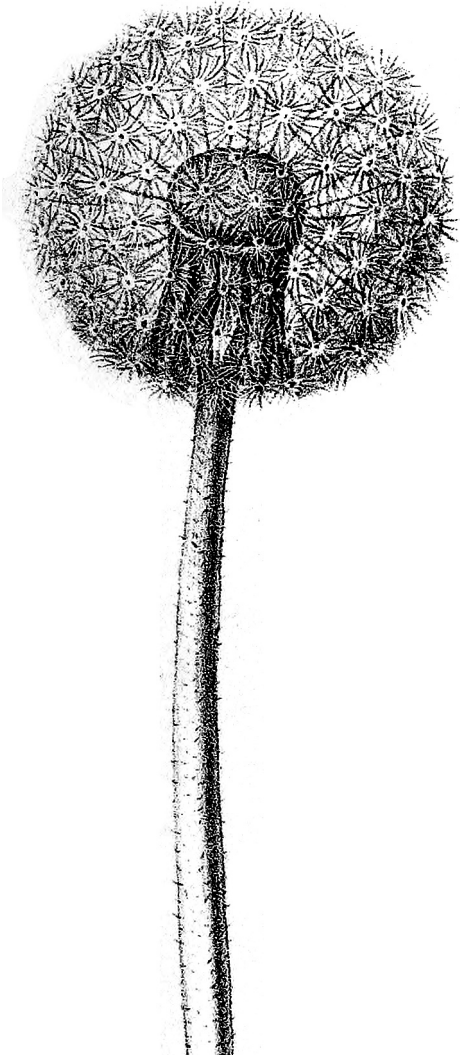
**Blessed are you our lord god, spirit
of the world, who brings forth fruit
from the vine.**

{ Drink the wine of liberation! }



In this spark of time,
I take a breath of joy,
for this glorious new constellation of the universe.

Think what worlds we
might build tomorrow!



Washing of Hands

יְחַטֵּא / *urchatz*

The first hand washing takes place in silence. In this silence we reflect on those who have been silenced because their acts, their love, or their simple existence challenged the workings of power, and in this silence we listen to them.

{ Wash your hands in silence. }

Fresh Herb

*{ Dip less than an olive's worth of
fresh herb into the salt water and recite: }*

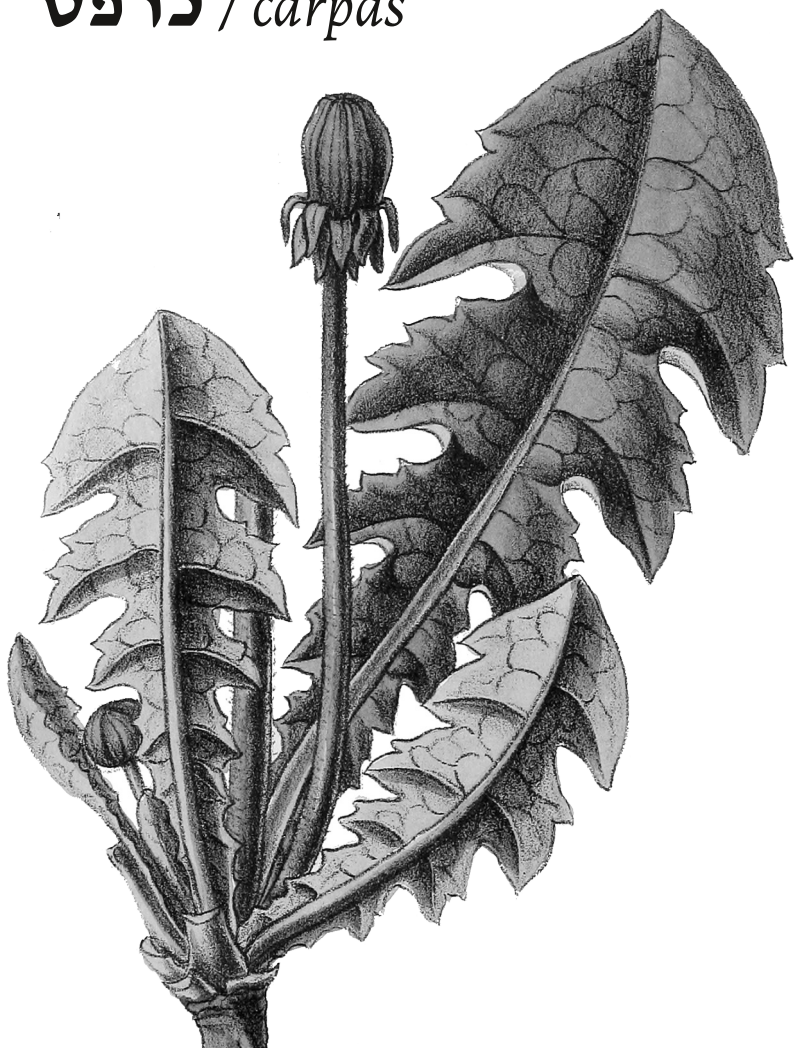
כרפס / *carpas*

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו, או
טבע, בורא פרי האדמה

Brucha atah adonai eloheinu, oh
teva, borei pri hadama.

Blessed are you our lord god, or
nature, who who creates the fruit of
the earth.

{ Eat the salted herb! }

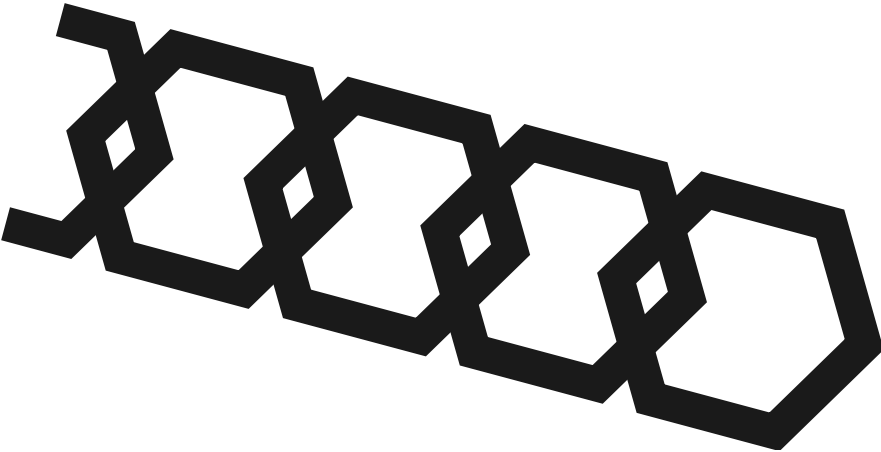
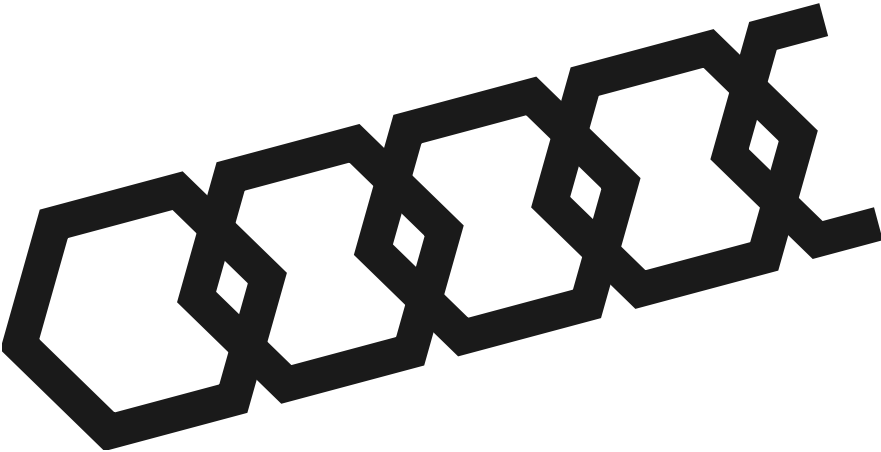


Breaking of the Matzah

יָחַץ / yachatz

{ Break the middle matzah into two pieces. }

{ Remove the smaller half. It is now the afkoman. }



Na ishte një herë Eendag, lank gelede
 كان يا ما كان، في قديم نذڨ HOD7 حجيتك ما جيتك
 الزمان، وسالف العصر والأوان
 Lh̄nũĩ t̄ zh̄
 ৮১১ ni ৮১১ বহুত দিনৰ আগত Ello
 yer **The Story** a una vez Biri
 var idi, biri yox idi
 Bazen behin ek je chhilo raja Ur wech
 e oa Имало едно време Això era una
 vegada 很久很久以前 Bio jednom jedan
 Bylo nebylo Der var engang Er was
 eens Iam estis Elasid kord Einaferð
 var tað Noong unang panahon Olipa
 kerran Il était une fois Es war einmal
 οὐκ ἔστιν οὐκ ἔστιν οὐκ ἔστιν μια φορά κι
 έναν καιρό Oiko va'ekue petei ພຣີ ພຣີ
 ພຣີ ພຣີ ພຣີ किसी ज़माने में
 Egyszer volt, hol nem volt, volt egyszer
 egy Einu sinni fyrir langa löngu Pada
 zaman dahulu kala Tokaro-yâ Fadó,
 fadó in Éirinn C'era una volta 昔昔
 Ondanondu kaaladalli Ерте ерте
 ертеде, ешкі жүні бөртеде χna χna
 옛날 옛적에 Rakú z'éepo waarí-vó
 oswááipu nwúlw'eéne saána هه‌بوو نه‌بوو

илгери-илгери Avia de ser Reiz sen
 senos laikos Viena kartą Et war eemol
 Си беше еднаш Pandu oridathu Pada
 zaman dahulu कोणे एके काळी Mmadikhu
 ga khaare Darba, fost l-oħrajn एका देशमा
 Det var en gang Un còp èra داسي کار وو
 روزگاری، روزی، چي Za siedmioma górami,
 za siedmioma rzekami Era uma vez
 Gver gver ngue du A fost odată, ca
 niciodată că dacă n-ar fi fost, nu s-ar
 mai povesti Давным-давно In the
 days o lang syne Latha bha seo Jednom
 давн **מגיד / magid** o Paivapo
 Kde bolo, tam bolo Pred davnimi časi Sheeko,
 sheeko, sheeko xariir Había una vez
 Napo zamani za kale En gång för
 länge sedan Noóng unang panahón
 முன்னொரு காலத்திலே அந்நகரம் ఒక
 రోజు గాలకొర్రునొంగనామాణొ Bir varmış,
 bir yokmuş. Давним-давно ایک دفعہ کا
 ذکر ہے Ngay xưa ngày xưa ʾאז
 היתה נא אמשר maith yn ôl
 Once upon a time...

{ Uncover the middle matzah. Lift the seder plate. }

This is is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All those who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come join our seder. Now we are here. Next year we will be in the land of revolution. This year we are slaves. Next year we will be free.

It is our suffering that brings us together. It is not love. Love does not obey the mind, and turns to hate when forced. The bond that binds us is beyond choice. We are brothers. We are brothers in what we share. In pain, which each of us must suffer alone, in hunger, in poverty, in hope, we know our brotherhood. We know it, because we have had to learn it. We know that there is no help for us but from one another, that no hand will save us if we do not reach out our hand. And the hand that you reach out is empty, as mine is. You have nothing. You possess nothing. You own nothing. You are free. All you have is what you are, and what you give.

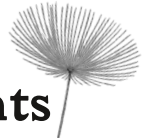
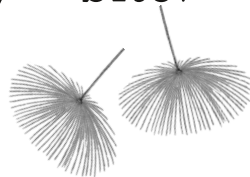
{ Cover the mazahs. Put down the seder plate. }

Ursula K LeGuin



Why, on all other nights
do we eat either alone, or
with others, but tonight
we always eat together?

Why, on all other nights
do we eat food for itself,
but tonight we seek
hidden meaning behind
each and every bite?



Why, on all other nights
do we eat either in silence
or with conversation, but
tonight we must speak?



Why, on all other nights
do we look back on our
day but tonight we look
back at the sweep of our
collective history?



We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and we were freed from there with the strength of a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Had our ancestors not liberated themselves from Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would all still be slaves. And even if we were all wise, and all of us understood the ways of the world, and all of us had studied Marx, it is still incumbent on each of us to tell and retell the story of all our collective past struggles for liberation. For it is praiseworthy to recount the history of struggle.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya would say: I am now like a seventy year old man and I did not understand why the story of exodus needed to be told at night until Ben Zoma explained it to me. As it is written, "So that you may remember the day on which you left Egypt all the days of your life." The days of your life would imply just the days, but all the days of your life includes the nights. And the sages add, the days of your life would have only included this world. All the days of your life includes the days after the coming of the revolution.

The Wise Comrade Asks . . .

**How do we bring
about the revolution?**



This is a good comrade with whom you should build collective power. Show them the work that needs to be done. Guide them up the ladder of engagement, from activist to organizer. And don't forget to listen to them because we are going to have to figure this shit out together.

The Wicked Comrade Asks . . .

**What would the re-
volution do for me?**
then posts alt-right memes.



Fuck them. They're a troll who not only separates themselves from the community by asking "for me" but has no intention of engaging in good faith. Don't fall for the Liberal Enlightenment trap of Rational Discourse. Focus on building & strengthening our collective power.

The Simple Comrade Asks . . .

What is the use of taking on such great, unsolvable, struggle?



This comrade is still a comrade and you should be patient with them. Tell them of the history of the class struggle, and of everything that we have achieved. Show them what is at stake here and now. And remind them that, as we read in Pirke Avot, “It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.”

The Comrade Who Does Not Know How to Ask

remains silent.



This is probably because certain people are dominating the conversation. We all know who they are. Remind them to take a step back. It is up to us to actively create the space for the community and voices we want to see and hear. Ask the silent comrade if they want to speak. Invite them to participate, and don't forget to listen.

{ Cover the mazahs. Raise the glass of wine. }

This is what has stood by our ancestors and us. For not one alone has risen against us to destroy us, but in every generation the fasicts rise against us to destroy us; and Love and Solidarity, blessed be they, save us from their hand!

{ Uncover the mazahs. Put down the glass of wine. }

The class struggle, which always remains in view for a historian schooled in Marx, is a struggle for the rough and material things, without which there is nothing fine and spiritual. Nevertheless these latter are present in the class struggle as something other than mere booty, which falls to the victor. They are present as confidence, as courage, as humor, as cunning, as steadfastness in this struggle, and they reach far back into the mists of time. They will, ever and anon, call every victory which has ever been won by the rulers into question. Just as flowers turn their heads towards the sun, so too does that which has been turn, by virtue of a secret kind of heliotropism, towards the sun which is dawning in the sky of history.

•••

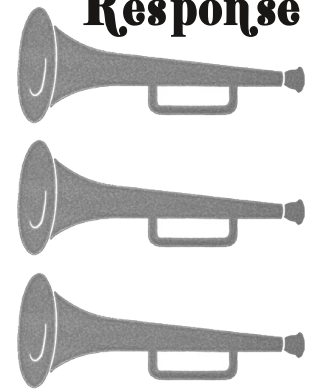
The only writer of history with the gift of setting alight the sparks of hope in the past, is the one who is convinced of this: that not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

Walter Benjamin

Call and



Response



**Pray for the
dead.**

**Fight like hell
for the living.**

**Pray for the
dead.**

**Fight like hell
for the living.**

**Pray for the
dead.**

**Fight like hell
for the living!**

Our ancestors were immigrants. They traveled from one place to another. They had many reasons: economic, social, personal. They were both fleeing and seeking. They came both willingly and with regrets. Thus it is there, in a foreign land, that our story takes place. And so it is written: “Do not oppress the stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, as you were strangers yourself once.”

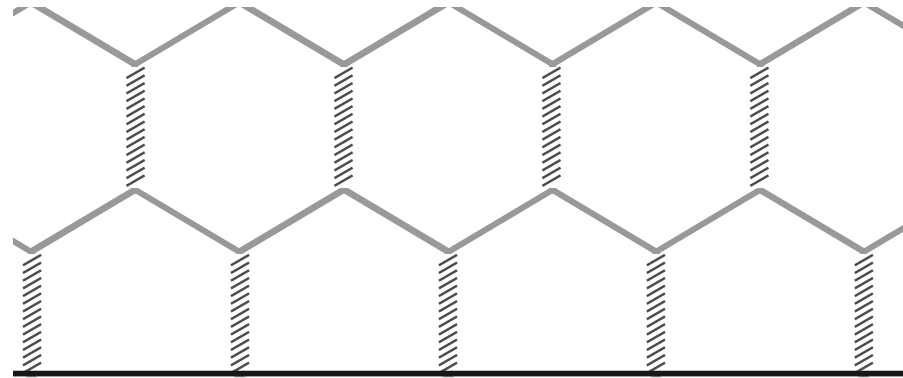
“To say that a life is grievable is to claim that a life, even before it is lost, is, or will be, worthy of being grieved on the occasion of its loss; the life has value in relation to mortality. One treats a person differently if one brings the sense of the grievability of the other to one’s ethical bearing toward the other. If an other’s loss would register as a loss, would be marked and mourned, and if the prospect of loss is feared, and precautions are thus taken to safeguard that life from harm or destruction, then our very ability to value and safeguard a life depends upon an ongoing sense of its grievability—the conjectured future of a life as an indefinite potential that would be mourned were it cut short or lost.

Judith Butler

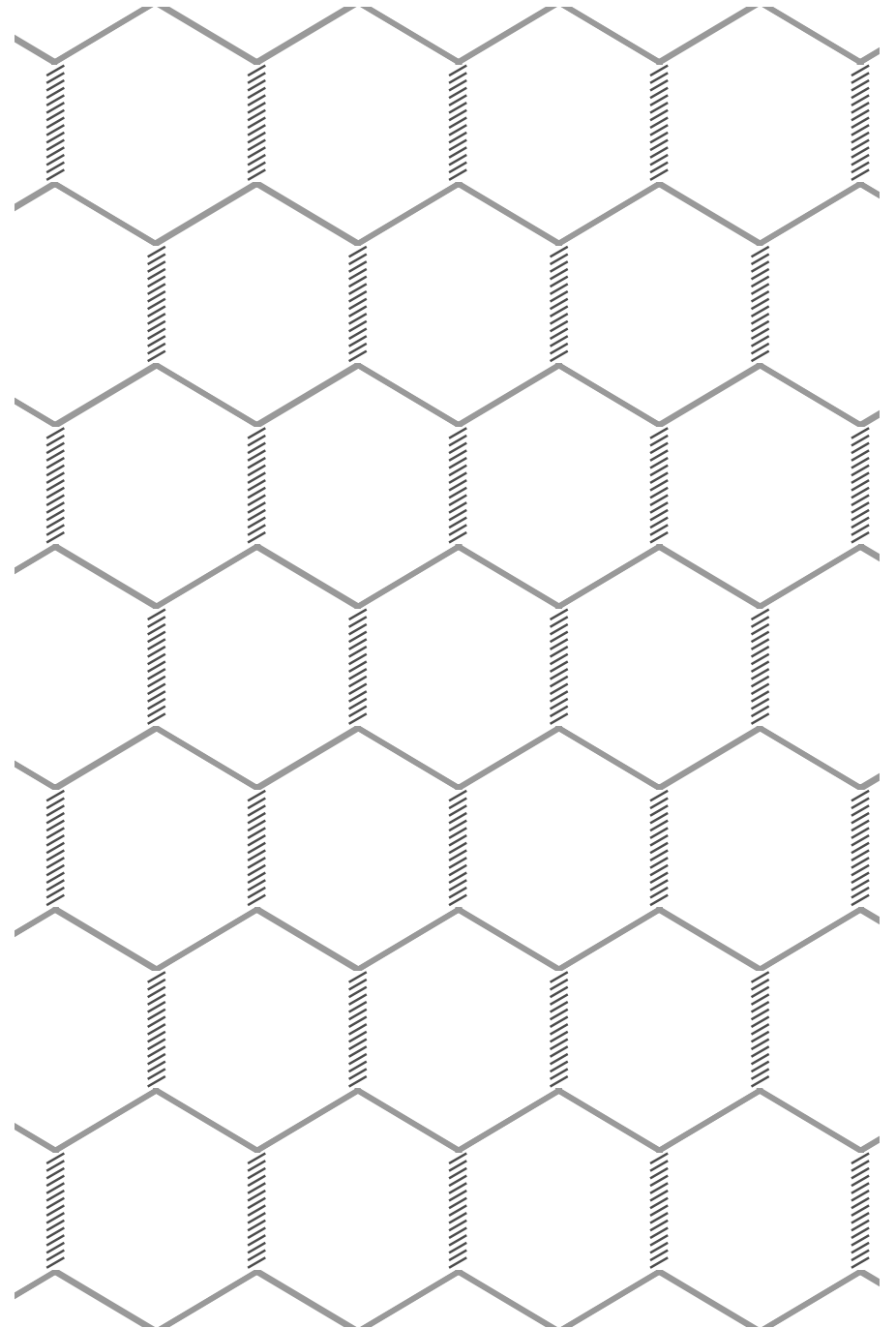
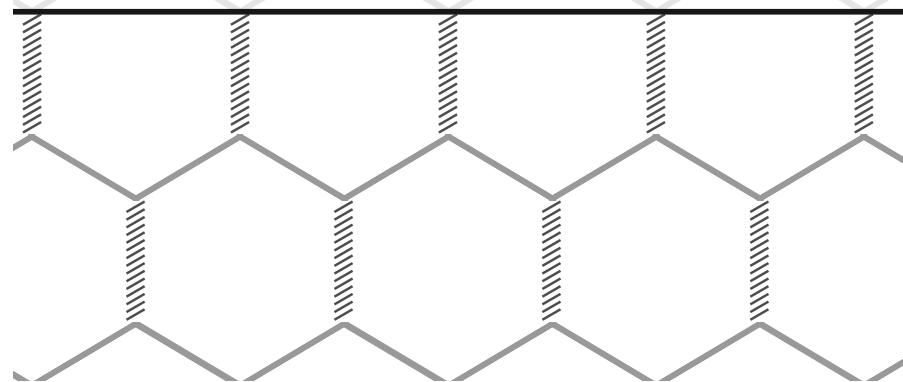
In the new land they worked and played and loved and grew. They built life and community. But then their spirit of diaspora collided with the totalizing force of the nation state. They were enslaved. This did not happen overnight. Little by little they fell under the lash—the Bible does not tell us where their new “friends” were while this was happening—until it was difficult for them to recall the feel and taste of freedom.

It is almost impossible to speak of, let alone clearly describe, what they faced. But this is precisely our task together here tonight.

{ Take turns giving examples of current struggle and oppression. Describe them, even though we all already know them far too well. }



They cried out unto the heavens in agony and in pain. They reminded each other of the promises that their ancestors had made to themselves when they had packed their belongings and crossed the border, promises of love and justice. They never stopped resisting.



The prophet Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” The prophet Karl Marx, paraphrased, wrote that historical materialism proves that the ends of capitalism and oppression are a given. As all prophets, they speak both true and false. The universe only bends toward justice if we force it to; it does not happen on its own. In messianic time, yes the revolution is inevitable. But we have an obligation to our friends and families, to our comrades, to our descendants, and to our ancestors to make the revolution happen today, in our time.

And so they organized. We know the names of some of those who set out the chairs at that first meeting—Moses, Aaron, God—but no doubt there were many more. The organizing was slow. There were sceptics. There was repression. There were long long meetings that went nowhere.

“Power concedes nothing without a demand.

Frederick Douglas

But the campaign went on. They analyzed the workings of power and focused their efforts on the best target. They escalated their tactics to increase the pressure. And they made sure to invite the people in and to empower them. And on a day no one expected, they won.

There was, however, no time to celebrate. They had to rush on to the next struggle without even enough time to grab snacks for a party.

“Freedom is a heavy load, a great and strange burden for the spirit to undertake. It is not easy. It is not a gift given, but a choice made, and the choice may be a hard one. The road goes upward towards the light; but the laden traveler may never reach the end of it.

Ursula K. LeGuin

*{ Spill a drop of wine for each plague to
commemorate the suffering it brought. }*

**Blood • Frogs • Lice
Wild Beasts • Blight
Boils • Hail • Locusts
Darkness • Slaying of
• the First Born •**

I had a vision, and I saw white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle, and the sun was darkened,—the thunder rolled in the Heavens, and blood flowed in streams—and I heard a voice saying, “Such is your luck, such are you called to see, and let it come rough or smooth, you must surely bear it.

Nat Turner

Call and



Enough with
racism!

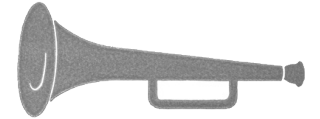
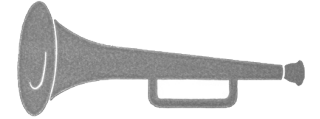
Enough with
patriarchy!

Enough with
fascism!

Enough with
capitalism!

*{ Take turns contributing your
own additions to the litany. }*

Response



Enough!

Enough!

Enough!

Enough!

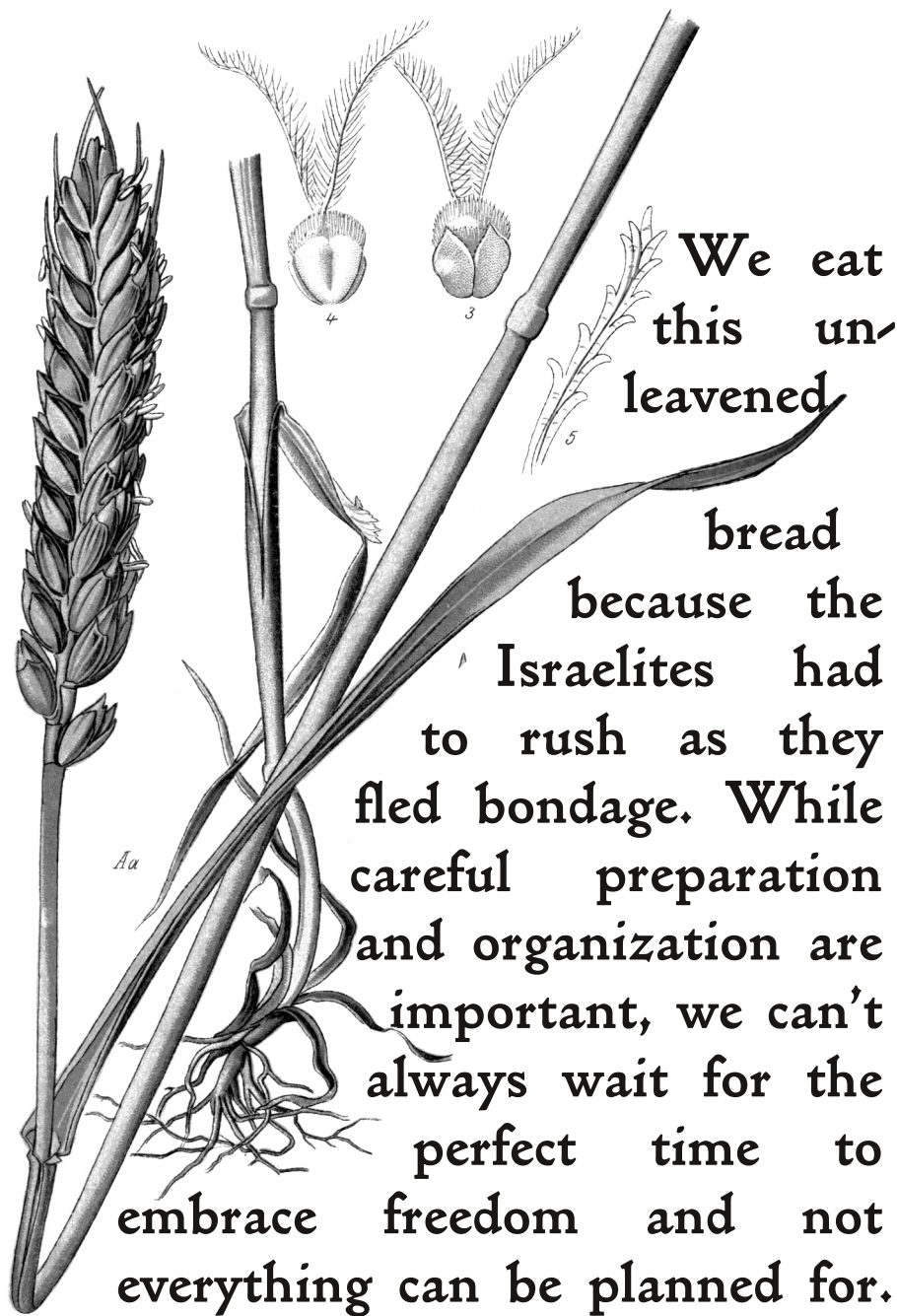
Enough!

Rabban Gamliel used to say: “Whoever does not discuss the following three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his duty, namely: Pesach, Matzah, Marror.”

The Israelites were called on to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood above their door to signal to God to pass-over their home and spare them from the death of the first born. Struggle sometimes calls for sacrifice and brave public acts, often without guarantee of success.

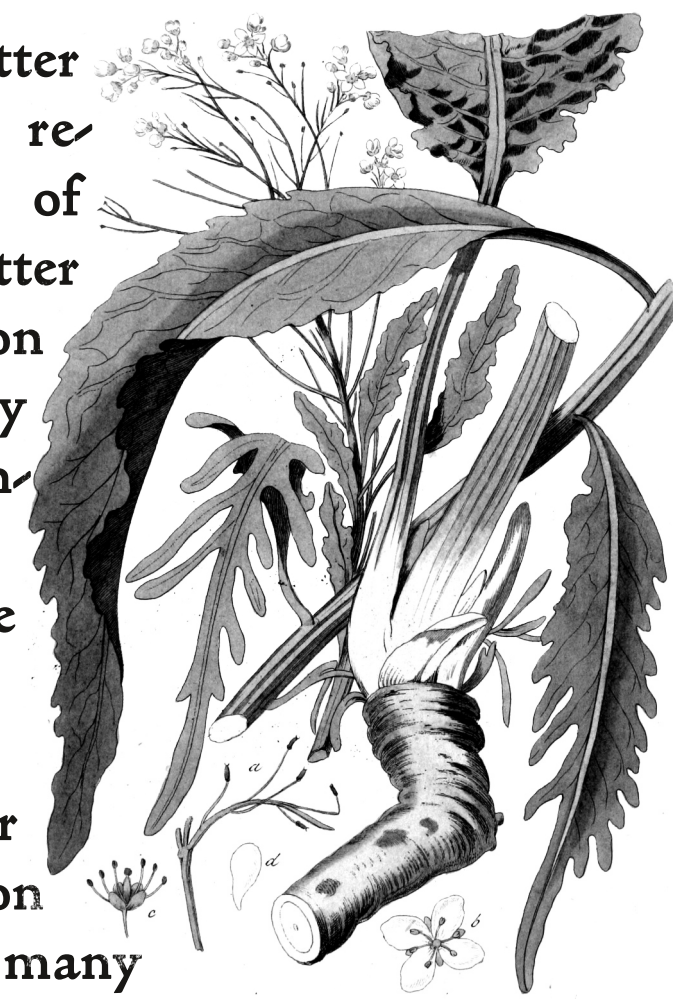


{ Point to each item as they are discussed. }



We eat this unleavened bread because the Israelites had to rush as they fled bondage. While careful preparation and organization are important, we can't always wait for the perfect time to embrace freedom and not everything can be planned for.

The bitter herbs remind us of the bitter oppression faced by our ancestors, and more importantly of the bitter oppression faced by many today. While this is a spiritual and religious evening, we shouldn't forget that we are talking about salvation from literal slavery.



In each and every generation, a person is obligated to regard himself as though they themselves actually left slavery. As it says, "You shall tell your children: We celebrate today how we struggled & left bondage." Not only were our ancestors redeemed, but we were also redeemed with them. As they say, "We were brought forth from there in order to conceive the land of Revolution."

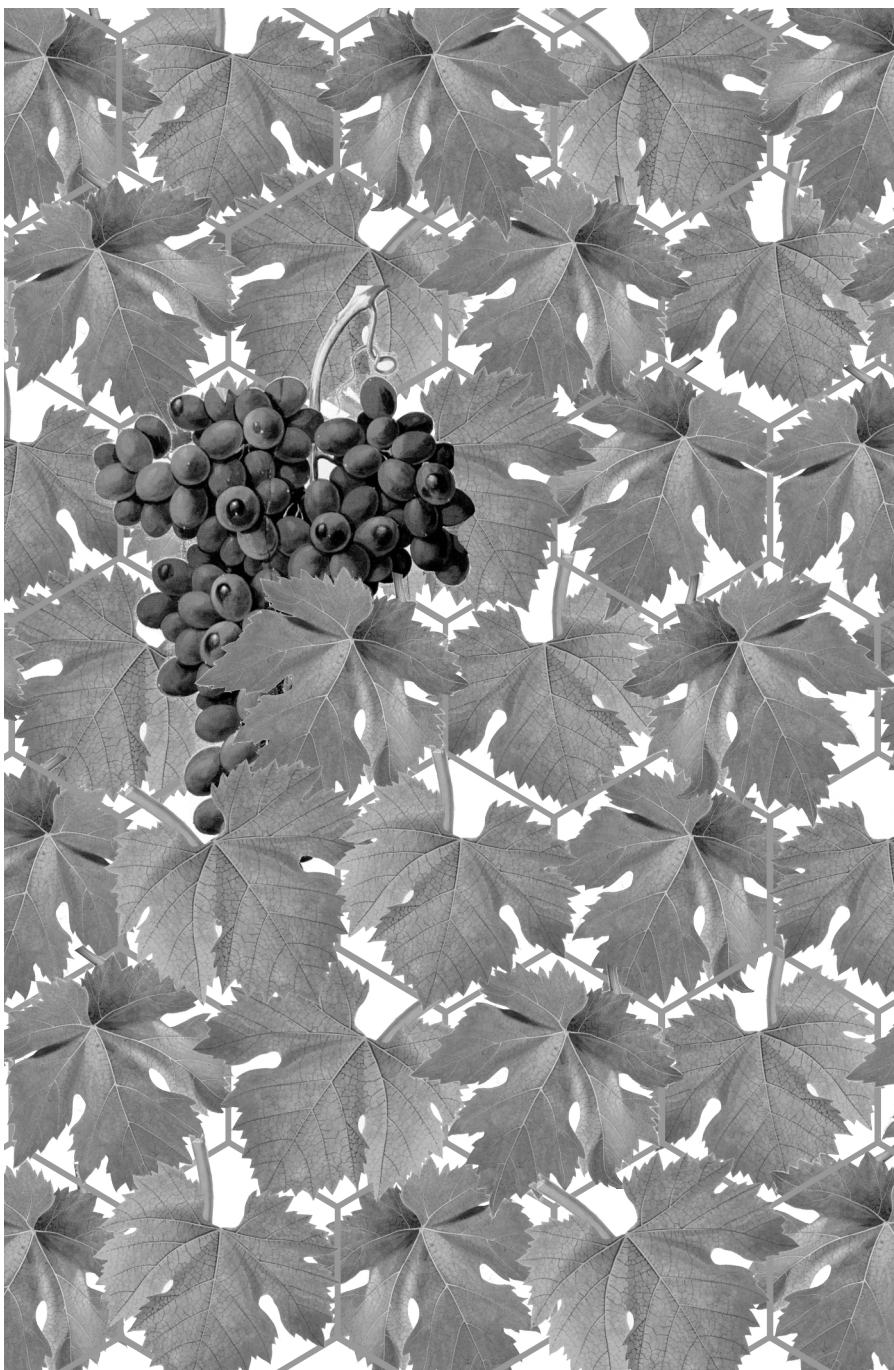
“What about identity? I asked.
He said: It’s self-defence ...
Identity is the child of birth, but
at the end, it’s self-invention, and not
an inheritance of the past. I am multiple ...
Within me an ever new exterior. And
I belong to the question of the victim. Were I not
from there, I would have trained my heart
to nurture there deers of metaphor ...
So carry your homeland wherever you go, and be
a narcissist if need be
The outside world is exile,
exile is the world inside.
And what are you between the two?

Mahmoud Darwish

We are at this seder because this evening has happened countless times in our past, because people told and retold this story, acted and reenacted this ritual. **A community gave us this seder.** We are not alone. We have the past, and the present. We aren't the only ones holding a seder tonight. All across the diaspora, around countless tables, people are reading together from their haggadahs. **The seder creates community.**

The seder tells us that we are not free unless the entire community is free. But, some of those sitting at a seder this evening will, tomorrow morning, get up—and with the full might of a nation state at their backs—perpetuate the oppression of the Palestinian people.

What is this community, what is this revolution, what is this future we are creating here tonight?



{ Fill the second cup of wine. Hold aloft and recite: }

ברוכה את יי אלהינו,
שכינה, בוראת פרי הגפן

Brucha at adonai eloheinu,
shekhinah, boreit pri hagafen.

Blessed are you our lord god, the
devine presence, who brings forth
fruit from the vine.

{ Drink the wine of salvation! }

Washing of Hands

רַחֵץ / *rachatz*

*{ Each participant recites
for themselves and then
washes their hands. }*



**I wash my hands
to transform myself,
as an act of care
for myself and others,
and to prepare myself
for the work ahead.**

“The strategic adversary is fascism ... the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us.

Michel Foucault

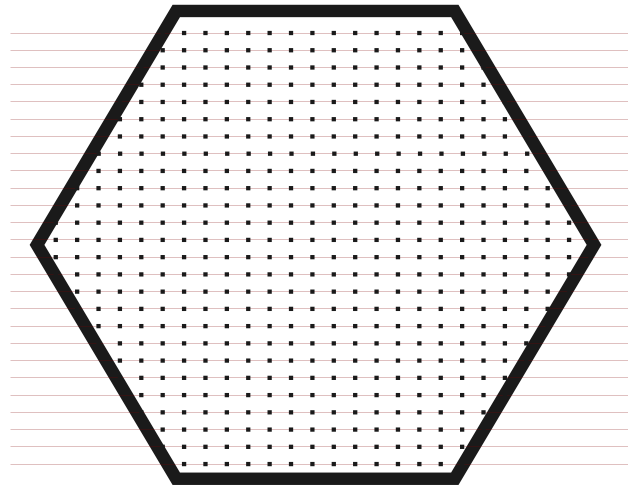
“For theory is the critique of daily life; it is the operation of each individual conducted in this daily life; it is a succession of renewed and corrected interventions in relations with people (which are also the effective terrain of alienation) and, what amounts to the same thing, it is also a series of interventions in society. Theory is an undertaking of revolutionary transformation that implies that the individual theorist accept his own un-interrupted transformation.

Jean Charles

The philosophers have
only interpreted the
world in various ways;

the point is to taste it!

Eating of Matzah



{ Hold the three matzahs aloft and recite: }

In this moment together,

**we honor the earth
we thank the worker
and we remember the hungry.**

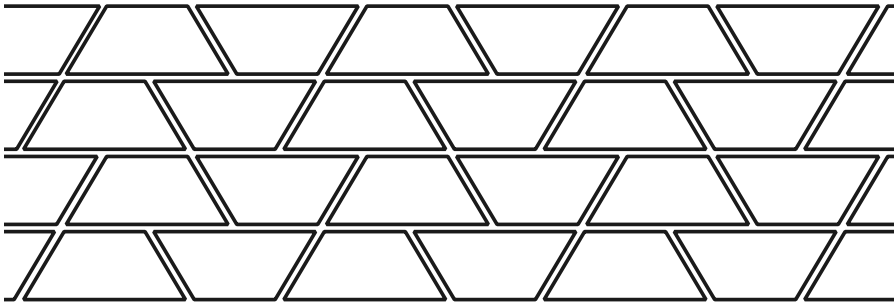
This sustenance blessed be.

{ Eat from the top two matzahs. }

מוציא מצה / motzi matzah

Bitter Herb

{ Combine bitter herb and some charoset. Recite: }



We face the world,

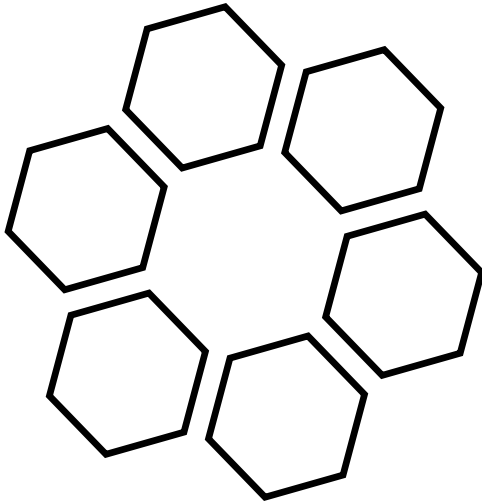
**in the fullness of its wonders
and horrors, without illusion.**

{ Eat the bitter herb and charoset. }

מרור / *marror*

Hillel Sandwich

{ With the bottom matzah, make a sandwich of the bitter herb and charoset; then recite: }



**We build this sandwich to
remember what has been
destroyed
and as a promise to rebuild.**

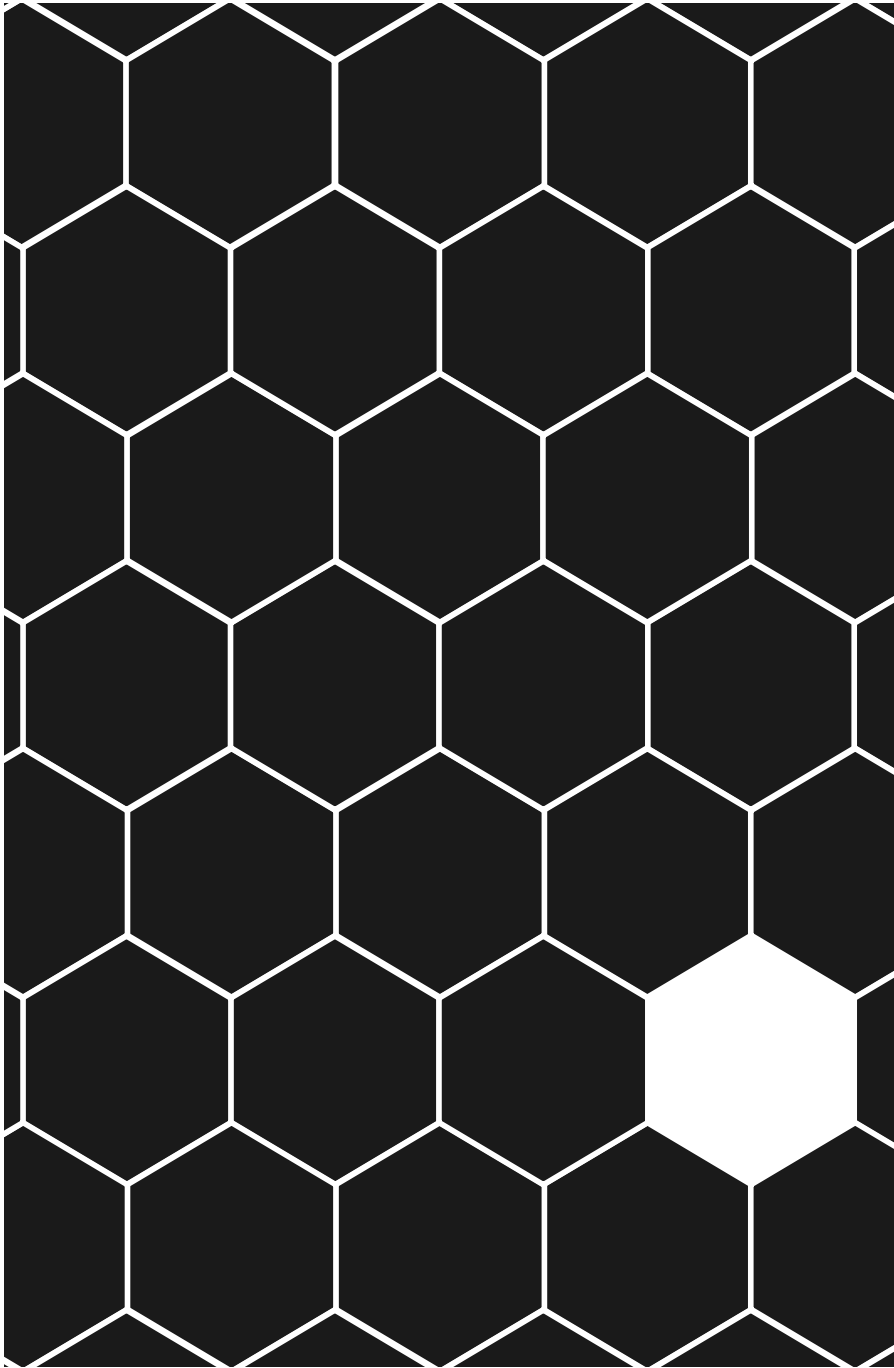
{ Eat the sandwich. }

כורֶיך / *koreich*

The Food
שלחן עורד / *shulchan aruch*

Eat! Food! Go!





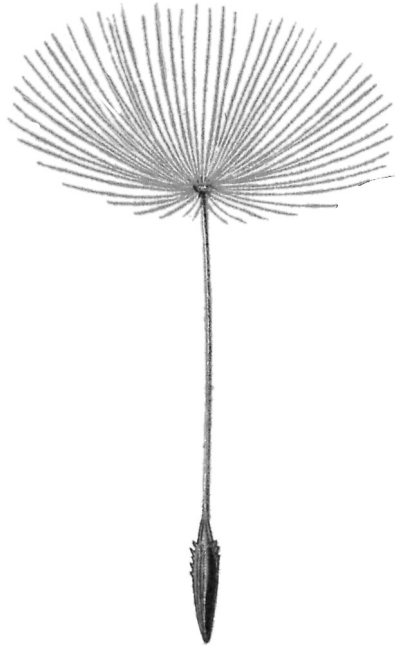
Afikoman
אפיקומן / *tzafun*

{ Find the afikoman. If needed recite: }

Snitches don't get riches!

{ Eat the afikoman with gusto! }

Blessing
ברך / bareich



{ Fill the third cup of wine, and another for the specter of communism. Open the door and recite: }

Everyday,

**I train my heart
to desire revolution**

**I teach my mind
to think of love**

**I shape my mouth
to speak resistance, and**

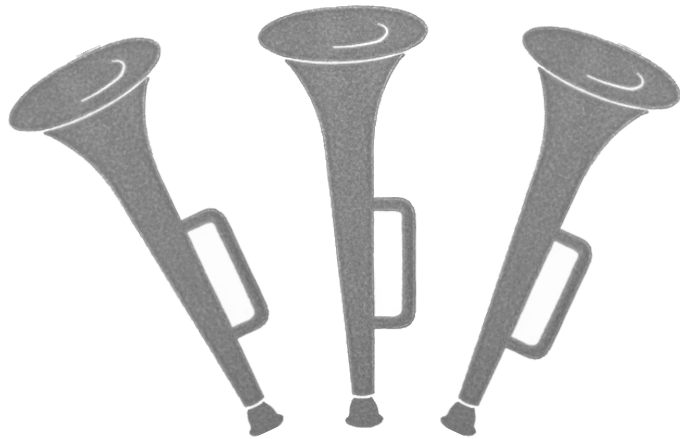
**I discipline my legs
to stand in solidarity.**

**Because we must practice
the world we wish to see.**

{ Drink the wine of redemption! Close the door. }

Songs of Praise

הלל / *hallel*



{ Fill the fourth cup of wine and recite: }

ברוכה את יי אלהינו, רוח
העולם, בוראת פרי הגפן

Brucha at adonai eloheinu, ruach
ha'olam, boreit pri hagafen.

**Blessed are you our lord god, spirit
of the world, who brings forth fruit
from the vine.**

{ Drink the wine of revolution! }

{ Sing songs! For example: }

The Internationale

Arise ye pris'ners of starvation
Arise ye wretched of the earth
For justice thunders condemnation
A better world's in birth!
No more tradition's chains shall bind us
Arise, ye slaves, no more in thrall;
The earth shall rise on new foundations
We have been naught we shall be all.

{ chorus: }

'Tis the final conflict
Let each stand in his place
The International Union
Shall be the human race.

We want no condescending saviors
To rule us from their judgement hall
We workers ask not for their favors
Let us consult for all.
To make the thief disgorge his booty
To free the spirit from its cell
We must ourselves decide our duty
We must decide and do it well.

The law oppresses us and tricks us,
The wage slave system drains our blood;
The rich are free from obligation,
The laws the poor delude.
Too long we've languished in subjection,
Equality has other laws;
"No rights", says she "without their duties,
No claims on equals without cause."

Behold them seated in their glory
The kings of mine and rail and soil!
What have you read in all their story,
But how they plundered toil?
Fruits of the workers' toil are buried
In strongholds of the idle few
In working for their restitution
The men will only claim their due.

We toilers from all fields united
Join hand in hand with all who work;
The earth belongs to us, the workers,
No room here for the shirk.
How many on our flesh have fattened!
But if the norsome birds of prey
Shall vanish from the sky some morning
The blessed sunlight then will stay.

Bella Ciao

Una mattina mi sono alzato,
o bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao!
Una mattina mi sono alzato,
e ho trovato l'invasor.

The world is waking outside my window
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao
Drags my senses into the sunlight
For there are things that I must do

Wish me luck now, I have to leave you
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao
With my friends now up to the city
We're going to shake the Gates of Hell

And I will tell them - we will tell them
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao
That our sunlight is not for franchise
And wish the bastards drop down dead

Next time you see me I may be smiling
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao
I'll be in prison or on the TV
I'll say, "the sunlight dragged me here!"
Stamattina mi sono alzato
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao

Di Shvue

Brider un shvester fun arbet un noyt
Ale vos zaynen tsezeyt un tsheshpreyt,
Tsuzamen, tsuzamen, di fon iz greyt,
Zi flatert fun tsorn, fun blut iz zi royt!
A shvue, a shvue, af lebn un toyt.

Himl un erd veln undz oyshern
Eydes vet zayn di likhtike shtern
A shvue fun blut un a shvue fun treern,
Mir shvern, mir shvern, mir shvern!

Mir shvern a trayhayt on grenetsn tsum bund.
Nor er ken bafrayen di shklafn atsind.
Di fon, di royte, iz hoykh un breyt.
Zi flatert fun tsorn, fun blut iz zi royt!
A shvue, a shvue, af lebn un toyt.

Solidarity Forever

When the union's inspiration through the
workers' blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere
beneath the sun;
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the
feeble strength of one,
But the union makes us strong.

{ *Chorus:* }

Solidarity forever! { ×3 }

For the union makes us strong.

Is there aught we hold in common with the
greedy parasite,
Who would lash us into serfdom and would
crush us with his might?
Is there anything left to us but to organize
and fight?
For the union makes us strong.

It is we who plowed the prairies; built the
cities where they trade;
Dug the mines and built the workshops,
endless miles of railroad laid;
Now we stand outcast and starving 'midst the

wonders we have made;
But the union makes us strong.

All the world that's owned by idle drones is
ours and ours alone.
We have laid the wide foundations; built it
skyward stone by stone.
It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to
own.
While the union makes us strong.

They have taken untold millions that they
never toiled to earn,
But without our brain and muscle not a
single wheel can turn.
We can break their haughty power, gain our
freedom when we learn
That the union makes us strong.

In our hands is placed a power greater than
their hoarded gold,
Greater than the might of armies, multiplied
a thousand-fold.
We can bring to birth a new world from the
ashes of the old
For the union makes us strong.

Closing

נירצה / *nirtzah*

Next Year Revolution!



Post Matter

Why is this haggadah different from all the others? *or, why make yet another one?*

The short answer is because we needed one. But haggadahs are no place for short answers. So ... do you know the old joke about the Jew who went to sea? They were caught in a shipwreck and marooned all alone on an island. Finally, many years later, a mighty ship with an unfurled sail showed up to rescue them and bring them forth from the island. Before leaving, the old Jew offers to give the captain and crew a tour of the island and show how they had been living all this time. They show off the hut they built, their favorite fishing spot, the best tree for taking nap under, the clever tools they had fashioned, and so on. "And these," proudly gesturing to a cluster of modest but sturdy structures, "are the three synagogues I built." The captain and crew are a bit confused. Why three? "Are you very religious?" they ask. "Not at all," the old Jew replies, "I usually only attend services during the high holidays." So why three? "This first one, this one here, is the synagogue I go to when I do attend. That one over there, well, I used to go there but I got into an argument," they continue as a flash of true anger passes over their face, "and I won't be going back there again." And the third? Did you quarrel with them as well? "Oh no!" they exclaim with just a hint of smug self righteous satisfaction, "That's the synagogue that I would never *ever* go to!"

So when I say we put this together because we needed one, it's not because we didn't have any haggadahs on our bookshelves. We have traditional haggadahs and alternative ones; very old and very

new; texts full of dense commentary and simplified ones for children; beautifully printed and bound editions and lovingly mimeographed and stapled exemplars; at least four languages and in general just plenty of options. But, like the Jew on the island, we still needed to build our own.

Partially, of course, we wanted texts and references that resonated for our own time and place. Ursula K. LeGuin and Walter Benjamin are touchstones for us. You probably have your own. There is nothing universal about this haggadah. That's also why we followed the long standing tradition of naming haggadahs after a place (e.g. Sarajevo, Amsterdam, Washington), to emphasis that it's is a product of context. We created this when we lived in Southern California and, even though we all live elsewhere now, this haggadah is still of then and there. Plus, I also like how easy it is to accidentally refer to it as the "so called" haggadah.

But this is not just an exercise in localization. Even the most traditional seder, one that follows the text to the letter, has plenty of room to for additions as the participants contribute *ex tempore* commentary that forges connections to their present. After all, connecting past to present is at the core of the seder. And it's also not that we went beyond addition and into subtraction. I mean, we did. We took out most of the bits with god and all of the bits with odious ethno-nationalism, which together are quite a lot of the bits to be honest. But the point wasn't to just end up with a haggadah "light", one that is striped of all the religiosity we happen to not like, keeps the rest, and then leaves the whole evening nothing more than a thin morality play that confirms what we already want to be true. Because it's precisely the evening as a whole that is important.

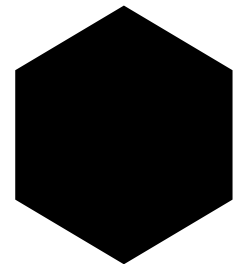
Focusing on the written text of the haggadah, looking at it primarily as a story, misses something very important. It treats the haggadah as a narrative that is read when it's actually a magic spell that is enacted. It is a magic spell in that it is a manual for the performance of a ritual, the ritual of the seder as a whole. And we really do mean magical ritual in the most literal sense. Everyone knows

what it takes to cast a spell. You draw your sacred circle. You put in your magical items. You follow the steps and say the magic words of the spell. Sitting around the table together is our circle. The seder plate and everything on it are the magical items. The order of the seder are the steps, and the words of the haggadah are the spells and incantations.

We realize that this runs somewhat counter to how haggadahs—including this one!—often present themselves. Alternative haggadahs in particular like to frame themselves as telling the story of liberation. Telling the story is supposed to serve as a reminder, bear witness, and be a celebration of the past. They hope to raise awareness and morale. To do this, to emphasize their new exegesis, they go about their work like a musician playing a variation on a theme. But we, to tap into the power of the traditional haggadah while creating our own magic, looked for a contrapuntal line to the original. And, to be clear, that power does not come from any inherent truth or true tradition but entirely from the thick accretion of years, community, and reenactment. What this meant in practice was that we had to move according the rules of magic-logic. That's why we were careful to follow the structure of the haggadah closely. We grappled with the purpose of each step of the ritual, what its role and function was in the proceedings. We meditated on what the spells invoked and manifested. And we tried to carefully craft not just the text of the haggadah but the experience of the participants who would perform it.

And it was important to get it right because this magic is powerful. For us, the seder is a ritual that prepares us for revolution. It's an act of communal magic that, if successful, fundamentally transfigures us. Through the creation and manipulation of a symbolic structure we hope to change our collective consciousness. But, the truth is, like many great conjurings, we're not actually entirely sure ahead of time what form the result will take. The future revolution is behind a veil that only a leap of magic can pierce.

Magic is dangerous like that.



Sources

Images:

- The cover image comes from “Pflanzen der Heimat” (plate 65). Otto Schmeil. Leipzig 1913.
- The falling spores come from “Köhler's Medizinal-Pflanzen” (plate 135). Hermann Adolph Köhler, illustration Walther Otto Müller. 1887
- The trumpets come from Gerd Arntz's isotypes
- The dandelion seed head, leaves, and sprout come from “Flora Homoeopathica” (plate 62). Edward Hamilton. 1852.
- The beets come from “Icones Plantarum Medico-Oeconomico-Technologicarum”. Ferdinand Bernhard Vietz. ~1810.
- The horseradish comes from “Flora Batava” (plate 303). Christiaan Sepp. 1822.
- The wheat comes from “Flora von Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz” Otto Wilhelm Thomé. 1844.
- The grapes and grape leaves come from “Zbirka ampelografskih upodobitev Vinzenza in Conrada Kreuzerja” (plates 124 and 110). Primož Premzl. <1872
- The watering can comes from “Watering can”. Félix Leblanc. 19th c.

Texts:

- The opening setting of intentions comes from “A Jewdas Haggadah”. Jewdas. Pluto Press 2019.
- The opening call & response, the text on washing our hands in silence, and some of the four sons, also rely heavily on “A Jewdas Haggadah”
- Ursula K. LeGuin. “The Dispossessed”. Harper & Row 1974.

- Walter Benjamin. “On the Concept of History”. ~1940. translated 2005, Dennis Redmond.
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 - Nat Turner. “The Confessions of Nat Turner”. as told to Thomas R. Gray. 1831.
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 - Jean Charles. “Arms and The Woman”. 1975. translated by Ken Knabb.
 - The Internationale was written by Eugène Pottier. 1871. This translation is by Charles H. Kerr. 1894.
 - This version of Bella Ciao was written by the group Chumbawamba. 2005.
 - Di Shvue was written by S. An-sky. 1902.
 - Solidarity Forever was written by Ralph Chaplin. 1915.
- Everything else was written by us, with obvious debt to the traditional haggadah where applicable, in 2019 and extensively revised in 2024.

