

DIANA YAROS

Midrash from My Namesake

*... and Dina, the daughter of Leah,
went out to see the daughters of the land.
(Gen. 34:1)*

This is the story of a woman with a purpose

This is the story of Dina
who went out to meet the daughters of the land

She came upon Shechem who was startled
to meet a woman who carried herself with
such determination and strength
her face radiated with the joy of it.

Now Shechem was empty inside
He wanted what Dina had
He wanted Dina
So he raped her and took her to his house
to keep her for himself.

When Yaacov, Dina's father,
and her brothers heard of this
They were angry
And they sought revenge for the insult they
thought
was theirs
They brought Dina home.

Dina sat.
She felt dead inside, hopeless, purposeless
Then she was angry, vengeful
Then she was empty.

Then after several new moons
On the eve of the new moon
her eyes fell upon the sandals
half hidden in a corner of her tent
sandals that she had made at the beginning of
her journey.

Her eyes sent a message to her heart
and a spark was ignited
She felt the surge of energy move down to her
feet
she wiggled her toes, and giggled,
stood up, and put on her sandals

They felt familiar, slightly worn, already
stained with sand from many places.

Now Dina hadn't spoken since she was raped.
She was silenced.
She was silent.

Her brothers spoke
her brothers acted
her brothers were behaving as Shechem
taking their vengeance on the women and
children

Dina took her drum and went out of her tent
to sit alone under the stars
and the encouraging smile of the new moon

She walked for a time watching the moon
emerge from darkness
She felt her anger stronger with each step
rising from the earth
resonating in her body

She was angry with Shechem and his father
Hamor
She was angry with her brothers
and with her father Yaacov
for the men took
and did not ask her what she wanted
She was not given a choice
She was silent in their story.

The anger sitting as bile in her gut began
to rise upon into her throat.
Her hands began to beat the drum,
and Dina found her voice.

The sounds she made were strong and free
they reverberated through the desert mountains
until the whole community could hear her.

They heard Dina's story
they heard about how she had left on a journey
of her longing to do this.

They heard about how she was stopped

how she was silenced
they heard her rage
and they heard her grief.

Dina chanted and drummed for a long time
The night got darker, the stars brighter
until the fire of purpose was strong again
in Dina's soul.

and she remembered.
She remembered her desire to go out and meet
with the women of the land
Would she let Shechem and his like stop her?
Should she stay in her father's tent until he
decided who should have her?

She felt the cool leather straps of her sandals
well moulded to her feet
She glanced at the moon beginning a new cycle


and she knew that she had a purpose
she knew that no man would stop her
She wouldn't be a part of Yaacov's story
nor her brothers', nor will you find her there
any more
She would make her own story.

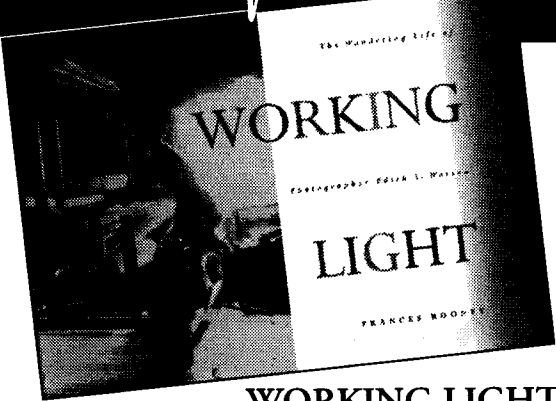
and Dina daughter of Leah, a woman
of Israel
went out to meet the women of the land.
She was filled with joy.

and there you will find her still
where it is her particular pleasure to meet
other women who also journey towards
their heart's desire.

Kol Simcha (voice of joy
My heart's desire my heart's desire
Ani m'kabbelet I receive)

Diana Yaros is a psychotherapist living in Montreal. She is currently involved in creating new rituals and songs based on traditional Jewish forms.

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