

IN EVERYTHING

In everything there is at least an eighth part  
that is death. Its weight is not great.  
With that secret and carefree grace  
we carry it everywhere we go.  
On lovely awakenings, on journeys,  
in lovers' words, in our distraction  
forgotten at the edges of our affairs  
it is always with us. Weighing  
hardly anything at all.

—LBA GOLDBERG (translated by Rachel Trvia Back)

GIFT

You teach your children  
what you've been taught  
about the generosity of limitations,  
the shortness of life, but also the future  
you could only find  
when you found life's limits,  
not the death you lived  
but death itself, the real-you death,  
divvying up your assets—  
your heart, your savvy, your love of interpretation,  
and interpretation of love  
as whatever fulfills your wish  
to be and to give  
everything that gives itself to you,  
that gave your children to you and you to them  
when the lines between you were cut or frozen  
and pain guaranteed and growing  
and love came roaring back.

—JOY LADIN

PSALM 23

מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד.  
A PSALM OF DAVID  
Mizmor l'david.

יְהוָה רֹעִי, לֹא אֶחְסָר.

ADONAI is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
Adonai ro-i lo ehsar.

בְּנֵאֻת דְּשֵׂא יִרְפִּיעֵנִי, עַל מֵי מְנַחֵחַת יִנְהַלֵּנִי,  
God lays me down in green pastures, leads me to still waters,  
Binot desheh yarbitzeini, al mei m'nuhot y'nahaleini.

נַפְשִׁי יִשְׁוֹבֵב, יִנְחֵנִי בְּמַעְגְלֵי צְדֵק לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ.  
renews my life, guides me in right paths—for that is God's way.  
Nafshi y'shoveiv, yanheini v'maglei tzedek l'ma-an sh'mo.

גַּם כִּי אֵלֶיךָ בְּגִיא צַלְמָוֶת  
Though I walk through a valley as dark as death,  
Gam ki eileikh b'gei tzalmavet

לֹא אִירָא רָע כִּי אַתָּה עִמָּדִי.  
I fear no evil, for You are with me;  
lo ira ra ki atah imadi.

שֵׁבֶטְךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתְּךָ הִמָּה יִנְחַמְנִי.  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.  
Shivt'kha u-mishantekha heimah y'nahamuni.

הִנְעַרְךָ לְפָנַי שְׁלֹחַן נֶגֶד צָרָי,  
You spread a table before me in full view of my foes;  
Ta-arokh l'fanai shulhan neged tzor'rai,

דִּשְׁחַנְתָּ בְּשֶׁמֶן רֹשִׁי כֹסִי רוֹיֵה.  
You anoint my head with oil, my cup is overflowing.  
Dishanta va-shemen roshi, kosi r'vayah.

אֵךְ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי,  
Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me  
all the days of my life,  
Akh tov va-hesed yird'funi kol y'mei hayai,

וְשָׁבְתִי בְּבַיִת יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים.  
And I shall dwell in the house of ADONAI forever.  
V'shavti b'veit Adonai l'orekh yamim.