

# The Promise

*Tamar Stern*

Once, watching shooting stars,  
the neck arched,  
the darkness lit with shimmer,  
the sky pulsing with constellation,  
your hand in mine,  
we heard the echo of blessing,  
“You shall be like the stars of the sky.”

But how, on these unlit days,  
the bleakness of wintry dawns,  
the shivering nakedness of the trees,  
the moan of the wind,  
how, when you have dropped my hand  
to enter sleep,  
how, then, even on days that crumble,  
like our bones, into dust,  
how to listen for the whisper of blessing-  
“You shall be more, even more  
than the dust of the earth.”

*TAMAR STERN is a licensed clinical social worker and Coordinator of Children's Services at Jewish Family Services of Metrowest, NJ. Her poems are inspired by Jewish ritual, texts, and community.*