
Troyes*

D.A. Feinfeld

Walking past the children
who shout, match fingers,
tag each other, I ask my face
in a drying puddle,

What's a Jew doing in a town
with streets named for dead Crusaders?
I feel the cobbles for a foothold,
a thousand years flow back
to an old winemaker saying:
*We are still here; He will not
let us go.*

The winemaker, Rabbi Salomon,
called Rashi, asked, *Why
does the teaching begin with chaos,
howl of light confined in cloud?
Perhaps with the first act:
making borders, dividing color
from color, we can see
and be seen.*

*City in Champagne, home of the 11th century Jewish scholar Rashi (Rabbi Salomon Itzhaki).

*Pay attention to the obvious,
he'd contend, filling his casks,
Probe deep into the glass, your sight
suddenly runs clear. If the wine is honest,
hold it to the light, bless it, and taste,
then look for me,*

but Rue du Synagogue holds only a church,
iron-gray in the evening, like Temple-stones;
from such black grapes the old man
pressed brilliant juice.

I walk north; on one narrow street find
a menorah bolted to one wall, arms flat
against the bricks, amid some carved words
in Rashi's tongue.

So there is mosaic in these tiles
that hide the face of a teacher
who saw, below the surface,
*We are still here; He will not
let us go.*



D.A. Feinfeld's poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Atlanta Review*, *The Hollins Critic*, and elsewhere. He is the author of two books, *What Do Numbers Dream Of?* (1997) and *Bestiary of the Heart* (2000).