Forgetting Someone

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Translated by Chana Bloch

Forgetting someone is like
forgetting to turn off the light in the backyard
so it stays lit all the next day.

But then it's the light
that makes you remember.

—

This poem was from Amichai's 1980 collection, "From A Great Tranquility: Questions and Answers."

Death of My Father

My father, suddenly, left all the places

For his strange, distant spaces.

He went to call his God to allow
That He will come and help us now.

And God, like taking troubles, is coming soon,
He hung his coat on the hook of the moon.

But our father, who went out on this endeavor
God will keep him there forever.

מוֹת אָבִי

אָבִי פִּתְאֹם, מִכָּל הַחֲדָרִים
יָצָא לְמֶרְחַקָּיו הַמּוּזָרִים .

הָלוֹךְ הָלַךְ לִקְרֹא לֵאלֹהָיו,
שֶׁהוּא יָבוֹא לַעֲזֹר לָנוּ עַכְשָׁיו.

וֵאלֹהִים כְּבָר בָּא, כְּמוֹ טוֹרֵחַ,
תָּלָה אֶת מְעִילוֹ עַל וַו-יָרֵחַ.

אַךְ אֶת אָבִינוּ, שֶׁיָּצָא לְהוֹבִילוֹ,
יַחֲזִיק הָאֱלֹהִים לָעַד אֶצְלוֹ.

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This poem was from one of Amichai's collections, "My Father's Death." It was translated with the help of Benjamin and Barbara Harshav's Yehuda Amichai: A Life of Poetry 1948-1994.