



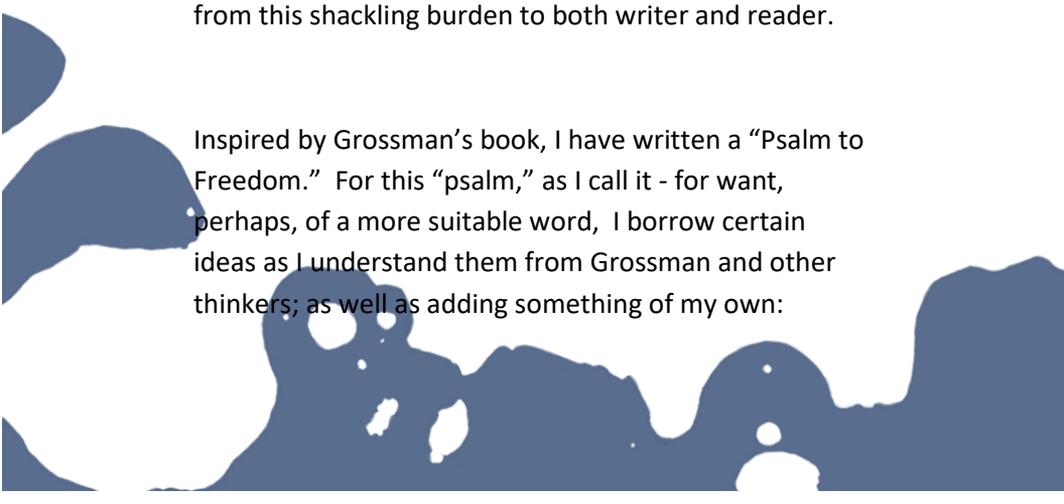
A Psalm To Freedom

by **Richelle Shem-Tov**

Some years back I picked up a thin paperback book at the Ben-Gurion airport bookstore. It was David Grossman's "Writing in the Dark: Essays on Literature and Politics." It slipped easily into my bag and impressed me as a good read for an over-night flight. Indeed it was, leaving a profound impact on me and who I am. I could not put it down. I have since read it again and again.

In this collection of essays, Grossman laments the paralyzing despair - personal and national – often felt by those who live over a long period of time in an area of violence and conflict such as ours. He then makes a powerful statement about the liberating effect of writing. He contends that even if writing cannot necessarily bring about change, it can bring release from this shackling burden to both writer and reader.

Inspired by Grossman's book, I have written a "Psalm to Freedom." For this "psalm," as I call it - for want, perhaps, of a more suitable word, I borrow certain ideas as I understand them from Grossman and other thinkers; as well as adding something of my own:



BLESSED be the free of spirit, who despite suffering and violence, are able to liberate themselves and perhaps those around them from despair, apathy, cynicism and hatred.

BLESSED be those with the gift to create, in words or paint or music or any other creative form, thereby freeing their own souls and those of all who read, see, hear and appreciate.

BLESSED, too, be those who through their daily chores, done with care and dedication, discover joy and liberation as they contribute to the flow of all life.

BLESSED be those who rejoice in the beauty of life, be it of nature or man-made, thereby helping to lift themselves and others up and out.

BLESSED be those who free their souls through love of those dear to them and all living things.

And perhaps most BLESSED of all be those who care for the stranger, for the other, even those who might be conceived as threatening.

Such souls will truly be free

Written by Richelle Shem-Tov 3/2012

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