

6. Vaytshepl mayn Vaytshepl – Whitechapel my Whitechapel

Lyrics and music: Chaim Towber. Translation Vivi Lachs

Source: Chaim Towber with Johnny Franks Orchestra, 'Whitechapel' (Shellac, 10", 78 RPM, 1951). Digitised on the CD *Music is the Most Beautiful Language in the World Yiddisher Jazz in London's East End 1920s-1950s* (Playloud, 2018).

1

Vaytshepl mayn vaytshepl,
dos harts fun london yidisher,
du bist amol geven dem yidns kroyn.
Vaytshepl mayn vaytshepl
vu iz dayn glants negidishe
opgekumen aza vestu shoyen?

Du bist geveyzn azoy sheyn,
s'iz mir lib ayeder shteyn
dayn yeder vinkele iz mir bakant.
Ot do geshtanen iz di shil,
nekst, lehavdil, dzhelid il
do hot gevoynt der lokshn fabrikant.

Der pavilyen mit zayn prakht
Kh'fleg do geyn ayede nakht.
Vu zenen kesler faynman mit zeyer kheyn?
Un Velvl hot in mitn gas
farkoyft zayn svits un epl kvas.
S'vet nisht zayn mer dos vos iz geven.

2

Un fun pavilyens linke hant
ze ikh landes restaurant,
aktyorn, shrayber bay a yedn tish.
Geven iz a fresarnye dort,
a kibetsarnyes ferves ort
mir ligt in tam nor di gefilte fish.

Vaytshepl mayn vaytshepl
du ligst mir in zikorn ort,
fargesn dikh mayn vaytshpl iz mir shver.
Vaytshepl mayn vaytshepl
ikh ken dikh fun di yorn ort,
a griner ongekumen ikh bin aher.

Kh'ze tipn do farshidene
di heyse beygl yidene
mit mayn kale hob ikh do shpatsirt.
Yidish hot men nor geredt
Ot do geshtanen iz der "flet"
vu tsu der khupe hot men mikh gefirt.

1

Whitechapel my Whitechapel,
The heart of Yiddish London,
You were once the crown of the Jews.
Whitechapel my Whitechapel
Where are your sparkling riches
That are now withering away?

You were so beautiful,
I love your every stone
Every cranny is known to me.
Right there stood the synagogue,
Next to it, excuse the comparison, the jellied eels stand
There lived the lokshen maker.

The Pavilion Theatre in its glory
I used to go there every night.
Where are Kessler and Feinman with their charm?
And Velvl, in the middle of the street
Sold his sweets and apple kvas.
What was here no longer exists.

2

And to the left of the Pavilion
I see Landau's restaurant,
Actors, writers at every table.
There was a café there,
A kibitzer's favourite place
The taste of the gefilte fish stays with me.

Whitechapel my Whitechapel,
You lie in my memory
It's hard to forget my Whitechapel.
Whitechapel my Whitechapel
I've known you for so many years,
I was a greenhorn when I arrived.

I see the different characters
The women selling hot bagels
I walked here with my bride.
People only spoke Yiddish
Just here was the flat
Where I was led to the wedding canopy.

Khotsh ikh voyn itst in golders grin
tsit es mir tsurik ahin
vu ikh hob gelozt mayn yugent mayn gezind.
Mir feln dayne lidelekh,
vu zenen dayne Yidelekh?
zey loyfn tsu di reyses shpiln hint.

Vaytshepl mayn vaytshepl
du host mikh oysgetsoygn do
ikh fil zikh fremd in edzhver, stemferd hil.
Vaytshepl mayn vaytshepl
ikh shtey mayn kop geboygn do,
tsurik mayn mame vaytshepl ikh vil.

Vaytshepl mayn vaytshepl
ikh benk nokh dir azoy.

Although I now live in Golders Green
I am drawn back to this place
Where I left my youth, my family.
We miss your songs.
Where are your Jews?
They run to the races, playing the dogs.

Whitechapel my Whitechapel,
You draw me back here
I feel strange in Edgware, Stamford Hill.
Whitechapel my Whitechapel,
I stand here with bowed head
I want to be back in mother Whitechapel.

Whitechapel my Whitechapel,
I yearn for you so.