

Yehuda Amichai **Tourists**

Visits of condolence is all we get from them.

They squat at the Holocaust Memorial,

They put on grave faces at the Wailing Wall

And they laugh behind heavy curtains

In their hotels.

They have their pictures taken

Together with our famous dead

At Rachel's tomb and Herzl's Tomb

And on the top of Ammunition Hill.

They weep over our sweet boys

And lust over our tough girls

And hang up their underwear

To dry quickly

In cool, blue bathrooms.

Once I sat on the steps by a gate at David's Tower, I placed my two heavy baskets at my side. A group of tourists was standing around their guide and I became their target marker. "You see that man with the baskets? Just right of his head there's an arch from the Roman period. Just right of his head." "But he's moving, he's moving!" I said to myself: redemption will come only if their guide tells them, "You see that arch from the Roman period? It's not important: but next to it, left and down a bit, there sits a man who's brought fruit and vegetables for his family."

Translated by Glenda Abramson and Tudor Parfitt