

Snow in Venice

I remember Venice now
In snow and ice and a woman who waited with me
For the vaporetto and we were
Without it. "You come from the land
of Israel, to where the swallows fly,
Me, too, always.

The floating station rocked beneath us
Like a cradle. "You are restless in your sleep
and restless in your wakefulness."
("Unpleasant and tiring is
This business of being fruitful and multiplying,
Even with an orange, we love the orange
Without the seeds.)

Who is she? Maybe one of the holy
Divorcees in the land with no divorce.
"Over there they make glass, necklaces,
Glass beads."

I saw only a mist. "It's not important."
A little farther,
Like the hope of a hope.

Yehudah Amichai, 1978

Draft translation by Miriam Shein, July 4, 2006