

Professor

By Yehoshua November

So we enter the library once more
in search of the *self*,
as though it were not a word made up in the university,
where students in jeans and professors in jackets and scarves
long for eternal truths
and to be published,
to be read by other professors as they slip off
their coats and hang them on the backs of their office chairs
and dip into the years of lonely research
and the otherness of bus rides home.

Professor, who is it that owns truth,
where is the pool that reflects our grieving faces?
Did you have to give the lecture
on the imminent failure of marriage?

Once when we met in your office
and you turned to your shelf to draw down a book
that had changed your life,
while your back was toward me,
I concentrated all my energy on whispering *Hashem's* name,
all irony faded
and angels were swimming from your lamp.

From the book G-d's Optimism