

Published on Academy of American Poets (https://www.poets.org)

Home > Aleph, Bet

Aleph, Bet

In my favorite version, the man recites the alphabet over and over, and when asked, he says he is praying. He admits he lacks the words, but says perhaps if he provides enough letters, God can piece his purpose back together.

The word is *kavanah*, translates to *concentration* or *intent*, without which, the words lie inert. And with? Call it *all rise*. The urge made agent, leavens the lips, tongue, throat, and eyes. In other words, heart's *yes*, yeast, or likens to, likewise lives,

needs no light to grow. What say the brewer and baker? What of the grapes in the sun with the *yes* on their skin, the *blush* or *bloom*? And what of this *yes*'s twin, the, as they say, *opportunistic* pathogen? I don't believe I know. I'd like to ask

someone who knows, summon my strongest letters together and say: How long do you think you knew before you knew you knew? Or rather, how long do you think you think you knew before you dressed your *I guess* in the *yes* you said *I do* to, to know you know now?

Credit:

From *Shore Ordered Ocean*. Copyright © 2009 by Dora Malech. Reprinted by permission of the author and The Waywiser Press.

Author:

Dora Malech



Dora Malech is the author of *Say So* (Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 2010) and *Shore Ordered Ocean* (Waywiser Press, 2009).

Read more

Date Published:

2017

Source URL: https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/aleph-bet