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## VILNIUS GHETTO

JUDITA VAIČIŪNAITĖ

*Translated by M. Gražina Slavėnas*

*At six o 'clock in the morning,  
when the milk shops and newspaper  
stands are still closed,  
at six in the morning,  
in streets and alleys  
of the Vilnius ghetto  
dandelions unfold,  
dusty golden  
flowers of the street  
blossoming into yellow Jewish stars.  
They sprout in cracks,  
under crumbling brick,  
underground tunnels,  
awesome archways,  
deep smoke-blackened passages  
with a clinging acrid  
odor of fish and garlic, i  
in the rubble of backyard cellars  
dandelions unfold  
their golden halos  
at six o 'clock in the morning  
and their golden splendor also streams  
into a tightly sealed-off courtyard  
where the forgotten shadow  
of a Jew still prays.  
Or, perhaps, whispers a curse.*

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