



SIX  
FIGURATIONS

new poems by

*ted richen*

“Figurations are linked vignettes:  
terse, enigmatic and evocative  
examinations of the poet’s experience  
of life, love, art and dying.”

Larry Stark // *The Theatre Mirror*

“Richer’s works glimmer  
magically and movingly on the edge of  
performance, poetry and drama.”

Tim Dee // BBC Radio

Ted Richer

# SIX FIGURATIONS

## MORBID

1.

nothing wrong with me

...

I have no pain

...

I have no ache

...

am fast asleep

...

and wide awake

...

nothing wrong with me

...

only old

2.

nothing wrong with me

...

I had no pain

...

I had no ache

...

was fast asleep

...

then wide awake

...

nothing wrong with me

...

only old

## A SONG

1.

once

...

on the eve of a Day of Atonement

...

I heard a cantor in a House of Prayer

...

chanting the words

...

*and it is forgiven*

...

in a strange and sorrowful tone

2.

then he called to God

...

*Lord of the world*

...

*had Israel not sinned*

...

*how could such a song*

...

*have been intoned*

...

*before you*

3.

and then on the eve of the day

...

before me in a House of Prayer

## THE SCROLL

1.

When I was twelve

...

and inside the House of Prayer

...

a new Torah Scroll was being dedicated

2.

an old rabbi held it

...

in his shaking hands

...

and rejoiced with it

3.

but since it was so huge

...

and obviously very heavy

...

I hurried up to him to help him hold it

4.

then I was twelve

...

and inside the House of Prayer

...

when the new Torah Scroll was dedicated

5.

*once you hold the Torah*

...

*it is not heavy anymore*

## QUESTIONS

1.

at my deathbed

...

I will exclaim

...

*in this coming world*

...

*they will not ask me*

...

*why were you not God*

...

*they will ask me*

...

*why were you not Ted*

2.

in my deathbed

...

I will explain

...

*at that coming world*

...

*they will not ask me*

...

*why were you not him*

...

*they will ask me*

...

*why were you not you*

## HIDE-AND-SEEK

1.

I was once

...

playing hide-and-seek with my love

...

thus hiding myself well

...

and waiting for my love

...

to find me



2.

when I had waited a long time

...

I came out of my hiding place

...

but my love was nowhere to be seen

...

when I suddenly thought

...

a love had not been looking for me

...

not since the beginning

3.

thus I am like your God

...

*I hide*

...

*no one wants to seek me*

## LILITH

1.

Morning.

...

Lil appeared at my bed, again, and said--

...

"Come down to me."

...

I said: "Why do you want me to do that?"

...

"Always--it is you who comes down to me."

...

Lil disappeared.

2.

Evening.

...

Lil appeared at my bed, again, and said--

...

"Come down on me."

...

I said: "Why do you want me to do that?"

...

"Always--it is you who comes down on me."

...

Lil disappeared.

3.

Night.

...

\* Lil said--

...

"Come in."

\* = *optional extra line. Shakespeare had one 15-line sonnet. - TR*

DATES OF COMPOSITION // "Morbid" 5.24.16; "A Song" 5.26.16; "The Scroll" 5.31.16; "Questions" 6.2.16; "Hide-and-Seek" 6.4.16; "Lilith" 6.6.16.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR // **TED RICHER** is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and a Founding Faculty Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. In 2003, his book, *The Writer in the Story and Other Figurations*, was published in England by Apocalypse Press. He has published in numerous journals, including *AGNI*, *Literary Imagination*, *Harvard Review*, *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Leviathan*, *New York Quarterly*, *Free Inquiry*, *The Poetry Porch*, *Poetry Northeast*, *Clarion*, and *Daedalus*. Richer was subject of a BBC Radio 3 presentation by Christopher Ricks on Twenty Minutes. His work has been included in the anthology *Joining Music with Reason: 34 Poets, British and American, Oxford 2004-2009*, chosen by Sir Christopher Ricks (Waywiser, 2010). His collection *I Have To Write* is forthcoming from Pen & Anvil.

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AT NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER // At the time of publication of this chapbook, Pen & Anvil Press has received delivery of 674 of Richer's "figuration" poems, as well as thirty-two plays and eight short stories. We plan to make his complete works available to readers, in multiple formats as our resources allow. We invite persons interested in learning more about our plans to contact us by phone, email or post, especially if they have a wish to support us in this work: **press@penandanvil.com**.



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