

Wax Off

by Daniel Passamaneck

For a week I've put it off
but now no more. The time has come
to scrape the wax from my menorah.
Layers of color perhaps might remind me
of something uplifting -
Instead it's just wax,
inconveniently dribbled.
The job goes slowly. Patience ebbs,
harvesting more aggravation
every time I wield my skewer.
This whole thing is too much trouble
for a job I'll soon undo
with messy drips of new-bought candles
bringing back the bygone nights,
menorah glinting, crowned with flame,
light eclipsing wax-scrape rage
I won't recall this tiresome chore
when festive candles blaze again
But I don't care, it's irksome now,
digging dross from candlesockets
dredging clean the magen david
thirty-six angles of painstaking detail
it's delicate work but it has its own rhythm
I do not realize at first
that I've stopped feeling quite so nettled
clearing out the long-cold wax
gold, red, blue, a blended violet
big chunks snapping cleanly off
I find the work has calmed me down
scrapings pile up to show me
all the progress I have made,
and flames that burned with joy last year

return to me their bright potential.
Dunk it now in steaming water -
tiny specks of parrafin
float upwards to the placid surface;
down below, the naked metal
gleams in readiness again
as if ablaze within the bucket.
I am ready now as well:
Bring on the latkes, dreydels, gelt -
let's light candles.
Flame is clean.

