

If Moses had Entered the Land

by Steven Sher (September 2017)



Shattered Shades of Sky, Zlatko Music

We'd expect a steady stream of buses

packed with Hasids and their pious wives:
600,000 pilgrims on the 7th of Adar;
beggars extending boney hands
like turnstiles at the entrance to the tomb;
madmen babbling incoherent visions
or spitting indignation: Remove
your shoes; you stand on holy ground.
We'd expect a magnificent stone edifice
on a par with Machpelah,
an Herodian fortress amid a dusty city
topped by an Ottoman mosque
whose grandiose dome lays claim
to another site of holy contention—
his tomb off limits to the Jews
except on designated nights
after the locals have gone to sleep,
our presence less a provocation then,
the route through town secured
with armored vehicles and soldiers,
a caravan of bulletproof buses
drawn to blinding light,
that pillar of imagined fire

billowing into the night.

Brooklyn native **Steven Sher** is the author of 15 books including, most recently, [Uncharted Waters](#) (New Feral Press, 2016), and *The House of Washing Hands* (Pecan Grove Press, 2014). He taught at many universities/workshops for more than 35 years. He moved to Jerusalem in 2012. Find out more at stevensher.net.

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