

# 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.

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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](http://stevensher.net).

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