

For My Two Sons, Max and David

The wandering Jew: the suffering Jew
The despoiled Jew: the beaten Jew
The Jew to burn: the Jew to gas
The Jew to humiliate
The cultured Jew: the sensitized exile gentiles with literary ambitions aspire to be
The alienated Jew cultivating his alienation like a rare flower: no gentile garden is complete without one of these bleeding hisbisci
The Jew who sends Christian and Moslem theologians back to their seminaries and mosques for new arguments on the nature of the Divine Mercy
The Jew, old and sagacious, whom all speak well of: when not lusting for his passionate, dark-eyed daughters
The Jew whose helplessness stirs the heart and conscience of the Christian like the beggars outside his churches
The Jew who can be justifiably murdered because he is rich
The Jew who can be justifiably murdered because he is poor
The Jew whose plight engenders profound self-searchings in certain philosophical gentlemen who cherish him to the degree he inspires their shattering aperçus into the quality of modern civilization, their noble and eloquent thoughts on scapegoatism and unmerited agony
The Jew who agitates the educated gentile, making him pace back and forth in his spacious well-aired library
The Jew who fills the authentic Christian with loathing for himself and his fellow-Christians
The Jew no one can live with: he has seen too many conquerors come and vanish, the destruction of too many empires
The Jew in whose eyes can be read the doom of nations even when he averts his eyes in disgust
The Jew every Christian hates, having shattered his self-esteem and planted the seeds of doubt in his soul.
The Jew everyone seeks to destroy, having instilled self-derision in the heathen
Be none of these, my sons
My sons, be none of these
Be gunners in the Israeli Air Force

Irving Layton, *The Shattered Plinths*. Toronto, Montreal, McClelland and Stewart [c1968]

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