

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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