

“Geniza”

A scrap of parchment in the hand of Maimonides
drifts down to us quietly
through ten centuries of blood and dust
lands in the hands of a researcher
in Tel Aviv, New York, Budapest
whose eye has been trained to mend
desiccated fragments, resurrect
mummified inklings, perceive
the worth of such undertakings. Dust
to lust, one culture's erasure is another's
treasure. Here sacred suckles profane
and must be tweezed apart
so as not to alter both. Crate by crate
smuggled by steamer out of Egypt
tiptoed their way past gods and guards,
again nearly drowned in the sea.

The luck of history.

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