

Thanks to Eve Siclar for the copy of the Yiddish lyrics and English translation (below), as published in *PEARLS OF YIDDISH SONG*. Adrienne Cooper sings this song on the album *FIRE* by the *Flying Bulgars* (as heard on 4/17/2011 "Beyond the Pale" broadcast from WBAI).

DRAY NEYTORINS [Three Seamstresses]

Words by Y.L. Peretz (1852-1915); music by M. Shneyer (1885-1942)

Published by M. Kipnis in 1918. Translated in *PEARLS OF YIDDISH SONG*, compiled by Eleanor Gordon Mlotek & Joseph Mlotek

Di oygn royt, di lipn blo,
Keyn tropn blut in bak nishto,
Der shtern blas, badekt mit shveys,
Der otern opgehakt un heys --
Es zitsn dray meydlekh un neyen!

Di nodl - blank, di layvnt - shney,
Un eyne trakht, ikh ney un ney!
Ikh ney bay tog, ikh ney bay nakht,
Keyn khupe-kleyd zikh nisht gemakht!
Vos kumt aroys az ikh ney?

Nit ikh shlof un nit ikh es...
Ikh volt gegebn oyf Meyer Bal-Nes,
Efsher volt ikh nit gemit;
An almen khotsh, an alter yid,
Mit kinderlekh a shok!

Di tsveyte trakht: ikh ney un shtep
Un shtep mir oys nor groye tsep!
Der kop -- er Brent, di shleyf, zi hakt
Un di mashin -- klapt tsu tsum takt:
-- Ta-ta, ta-ta, ta-ta!

Ikh farshtey dokh yenems vink,
On a khupe, on a ring,
Volt geven a shpil, a tants,
A libe oyf a yor a gants!
Nor dernokh, dernokh?

Di drite shpayt mit blut un zingt:
-- Ikh ney mikh krank, ikh ney mir blind:
Es tsvikt di Brust bay yedn shtok --
Un er hot khasene di vokh!
Ikh vintsh im nit keyn shlekhts!

Et, fargesn vos a mol!
Takhrikhim vet mir gebn kool,
Oykh a kleyntshik pitsl erd,
Ikh vel ruen umgeshtert,
Ikh vel shlofn, shlofn!

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Three Seamstresses (translation of DRAY NEYTORINS)

Their eyes red, lips blue, cheeks bloodless, foreheads pale, covered with sweat, their breath short and hot, three girls sit and sew.

The needle gleams, the linen is like snow. One girl thinks: I sew and sew by day and by night. But I have yet to sew my wedding dress. What's the point of my sewing? I neither sleep nor eat. If I could give alms for charity, perhaps I'd find a widower or an old man with children who'd marry me.

The second girl thinks: I sew and tread and tread till my braids turn gray. My head burns, my temples throb and the machine beats in rhythm. I understand that man's wink. Without a wedding, without a ring, it would be a game, a dance, a year-long affair. But what then?

The third girl coughs blood and sings: All I sew is illness and blindness. My breast is pierced with every stitch and he's getting married this week. I wish him no harm. Forget the past. The community elders will provide a shroud and bit of earth where I will rest undisturbed. I will finally sleep, sleep.