

From *The Selected Poetry of Yehuda Amichai*

Jerusalem 1967

On Yom Kippur in 1967, the Year of
Forgetting, I put on
my dark holiday clothes and walked
to the Old City of Jerusalem.
For a long time I stood in front of an
Arab's hole-in-the-wall shop,
not far from the Damascus Gate, a
shop with
buttons and zippers and spools of
thread
in every color and snaps and
buckles.
A rare light and many colors, like an
open Ark.
I told him in my heart that my
father too
had a shop like this, with thread and
buttons.
I explained to him in my heart about
all the decades
and the causes and the events, why I
am now here
and my father's shop was burned
there and he is buried here.

When I finished, it was time for the
Closing of the Gates prayer.
He too lowered the shutters and
locked the gate
and I returned,
with all the
worshippers, home.