

From *The Bible and You, the Bible and You, and Other Midrashim*
In *Open Close Open*, 2000

by Yehudah Amichai

Three sons had Abraham, not just two.
Three sons had Abraham: Yishma-El, Yitzhak and Yivkeh.
First came Yishma-El, "God will hear,"
next came Yitzhak, "he will laugh,"
and the last was Yivkeh, "he will cry."
No one has ever heard of Yivkeh, for he was the youngest,
the son that Father loved best,
the son who was offered up on Mount Moriah.
Yishma-El was saved by his mother, Hagar,
Yitzhak was saved by the angel,
but Yivkeh no one saved.
When he was just a little boy, his father
would call him tenderly, Yivkeh,
Yivkeleh, my sweet little Yivkie—
but he sacrificed him all the same.
The Torah says the ram, but it was Yivkeh.
Yishma-El never heard from God again,
Yitzhak never laughed again,
Sarah laughed only once, then laughed no more.
Three sons had Abraham,
Yishma, "will hear," Yitzhak, "will laugh," Yivkeh, "will cry."
Yishma-El, Yitzhak-El, Yivkeh-El,
God will hear, God will laugh, God will cry.

Yishma—he will hear
Yitzhak—he will laugh
Yivkeh—he will cry