



# TZADDIK: HOLIDAYS

## SUKKOT vulnerability & action

### THINK

Sukkot invites us out into the world. For a week, we eat, sleep, and live in a *dirat arai*, a temporary dwelling, whose roof reveals the stars, and through whose walls the winds of early autumn may pass. It's a holiday in which we get in touch with the beauty of this world, as well as come to understand the vulnerability of those who pass through the seasons without a firm roof above their heads. We become more cognizant of the blessings in our lives, and we acknowledge those members of our communities for whom the lack of a stable home is not just a temporary situation. Our recognition of their plight can make us more sensitive human beings, and hopefully compel us to community action on their behalf.

When we build a sukkah we take the barren space outside and transform it into a dwelling, a place of relative comfort and security. At the same time, we take the activities of the home and bring them out into the world. The ritual of the sukkah captures the two-fold function of service: That we bring our entire selves to the task of working on behalf of the security of others, and in so doing, hope for personal transformation in the process.

**DO** whether sitting in a sukkah or taking a walk outside, consider the following questions:

What feelings and images of vulnerability – whether personal or from your community or from the news – are you carrying in your heart?

How can you attend to the needs of others who don't have permanent roofs over their heads? Is there something that's holding you back?

How far back do you have to go to get to a time in which members of your own family lacked the security and comfort of a home? Is there a family story that captures such a time?

### FEEL

“On Sukkot” by Seth Landman

I'm trying to remember the past  
and I remember  
the ceiling was a living thing  
becoming a meteor  
living for a little while  
in the sky  
under which I was crowded  
in with loved ones  
it was a little cold  
and I had a sweatshirt  
and somewhere the sun went down  
over the whole sea and I  
took a deep breath  
the truest of all things is a kind of sorrow  
after all  
you could be alone out here  
your spine and your eyes  
your mouth and your heart  
sorrow is fine  
so you hold it loosely  
and remember to remember  
in case of distraction  
in case of material loss  
in case of lingering depression  
in case of ongoing despair  
in case of hunger  
in case of existential loneliness  
in case of rain  
in case of violent assumptions  
in case of environmental destruction  
in case of emotional negligence  
in case of disappointment  
in case of meanness  
to go into the awe within you  
the place you make  
to find it

Seth Landman is the author of two collections of poems, *Sign You Were Mistaken* (Factory Hollow Press, 2013) and *Confidence* (Brooklyn Arts Press, 2015). He lives in Northampton, MA.

