

## A STAR OF DAVID FELL FROM HEAVEN

*Keith Gottschalk*

*[For Ilan Ramon 1954–2003]*

*“Over there,  
in that arched blue, on the edge of the air,  
I once lived. My window was fragile.  
Maybe what remained of me  
were little gliders”*

—Dan Pagis: Footprints

this lance of fire  
this blowtorch of plasma  
these crematoria hands of mach 19  
tore one wing off an angel:

we fell off Jacob’s ladder.

so, this diary,  
this cloth star of David:  
orphaned.

tell Dan Pagis it’s all in our  
Draft Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts  
& the Return of Astronauts:

(Dear Colonel  
we regret that  
your visa for heaven has expired)

*“As to the yellow star: immediately  
it will be torn from your chest  
and will emigrate  
to the sky.”*

As to the blue star: immediately  
it will be torn from your chest  
and will repatriate you  
to earth.

tumbling,  
we fluttered sixty kms down  
we stumbled  
onto the earth  
next to Palestine.

## NOTES

In 2003 space shuttle Columbia disintegrated, killing all on board. By a fluke of the laws of aerodynamics, the Israeli astronaut's blue star air force emblem & diary survived intact, and fluttered 60 kms. down to ground. By a fluke of geography, they fell to earth outside a small Texas town called Palestine.

Dan Pagis escaped a Nazi extermination camp in Bucovina to become one of the most famous Israeli poets of the 1940s and 1950s. The second quotation comes from his poem *Draft Reparations Agreement*. The Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts is also a real treaty.