

Nowadays the Blue Is Hidden

The blue was taken from a snail found in the Sea.
The snail comes up once every 70 years.
– Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 26a, Menachot 44a

I:

There is a street in Paris (11th arrondissement) called “The Street of Tailors.” I visited my friend who lives near the street of tailors. We went to eat at a café around the corner. The first day we passed the street of tailors, I asked him, “What is this street?”

“Don’t know,” he said.

The next time we passed it, I asked again, “Where does the name – street of tailors -- come from?”

“It once was a street of tailors,” he said.

We passed it again the next day, “What is the street of tailors?” I asked.

“I heard that there was a street of tailors there, then the Germans took Paris, on June 14, 1940, and they all disappeared.”

II:

A street of tailor artists, fifty years of ghosts, they have not changed the name of the street. A chasid on the sixth floor ascends and descends silently to make the evening prayers.
The street of tailors.

He knows fabrics but is a failure at freedom. Fingering the coat he peers over his glasses, “Nice merchandise,” he says.
Expert in drapes and Torah. hands stained with experimental dyes, he mixes a perfect blend for a priestly tunic. Expatriates tell jokes in a café, they order intestines all around, it smells like an insult. Later they fuss and pass the street of tailors.

III:

The tailors sewed in secrecy to recreate the lost blue thread, mystery blue, a deceased mollusk carried it into the deep where it gave birth, in salt, to the sea.

James Stone Goodman

Sources

Speak to the Children of Israel and bid them that they make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of each corner a thread of blue (tekhelet).

--Numbers 15:38-39

Tekhelet was taken from the hilazon, a snail found in the Sea between Tyre and Haifa.

-- B.T. Shabbat 26a

The hilazon comes up once every 70 years.

-- B.T. Menachot 44a

Nowadays we only have the white [fringes], the blue has been hidden.

-- Numbers Rabbah 17:5, Midrash Tanhuma Shelakh

Tekhelet [blue] resembles the sea, the sea resembles grass, and grass resembles the heavens.

-- TJ Ber. 1:5, 3a