

## **5 And Death Came to the Wooden Horse Called Michael**

Natan Zach, one of Israel's major poets, wrote the poem towards the end of the 1950's. There are two principal characters in the piece: Michael, the wooden horse (Soos Ha Etz) a symbol of imaginary jounies in human time; Death (Ha Mavet). The Poet appears as a minor character supporting the arguments of Death, as does the Choir of Angels. The Human Choir seems to be more ambivalent. The wooden horse, **not** a man, stands for humanity and its attempt to flee the manifold faces of death. Death is not a metaphysical entity; it is a concrete death as well as the eventual dying out of emotions, hopes, and faith. Death, therefore, in one of its faces, is almost human. Death emerges victorious. The poem ends with a choir of Fortune-Tellers urging the Poet to tell his foresaken love the tale of the wooden horse Michael, "and how the shadow has overpowered him" as it has us all.

**Josef Tal**