Hanukkah
By Hilda Morley

This season for us, the Jews—
a season of candles,
one more
on the seven-branched candlestick for
the seven days of the week,
but let it be seven
in the sense of luck in dice,
seven of the stars in
the constellations:
Orion, Aldebaran in the sky
lively
over Jerusalem
Let the fuel
last the besieged such as we are,
to nourish us.
Let the oil continue
for heat, for illumination,
flame crouching
in the lamp,
the glass smoky
(December upon us)
the light not fail.
The air has been mild
for days—
& the 7 rings through my life
despite the 8 of this week—
bushes
in the doorway of 7 Charles where I lived, 51,
crackle with dryness,
are bare still.
That house with the lucky
number brought me luck & misluck, both,
like the other
that added to 7, out of 4 & 3,
that seven
underlying the eight of this week,
the 8 just over, the 7 just under
a third of the years with Stefan:
I praise them
both today—
the lasting oil
in the seven-branched candlestick:
absence
of all fear—the smallest
drop of fuel enough to leap from.

new york, 1973