

The Song of the Loon

וְלַיְלָה כְּיוֹם יֶאֱרֵךְ כְּחַשְׁמַל כְּאוֹרָה

V'laila kayom ya-ir kachashaycha ka-orah

Light shines like day; darkness is as light.

(Psalm 139:12)

Perek Shira is an ancient *midrashic* text that assigns a verse to each creature and hears the particular call of each aspect of Creation praising its Creator in song. One day, after vacationing on a lake in upstate New York, my beloved students, Wendy and Susan called me to ask, "Does the loon have a song in *Perek Shira*?" When I said, "no," they suggested a text. I went immediately to the Internet to listen to a recording of the loon's call.

Wendy described that call as mournful yearning. Susan said that although that was true, the mournful, yearning call of the loon led her to joy. Not many birds sing in the dark, but loons call to each other all through the night. The loons teach us to know the radiance of night, and to let even our darkness shine.