

VOICES ISRAEL
GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025





VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

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Dates for your Diary

**Interview with Rachel
Korazim - Tuesday January
28th at 7pm on Zoom
More details on page 18**

**Voices Israel AGM on Sunday
March 23rd at 7pm on Zoom**

**Reuben Rose and Bar Sagi
Awards on Sunday April 27th
– on Zoom**

This month's Essays

**Wendy Blumfield on page 15
and Klarina Priborkin on page
16**

Aphorism of the Month

**The greatest poets will go to
where no traveler has ever
been.**

**from Simon Constam, author
of Daily Ferocity, on
Instagram**



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

It really is no exaggeration to say that for the last year and a few months the war that Israel has been forced to fight has dominated every aspect of our lives. We have prayed for the release of hostages and those who have suffered serious injuries. We have grieved with family members, friends and acquaintances who have lost loved ones. We have run to our bomb shelters far more times than we can remember. We have seen our children and grandchildren traumatised by sirens during the day and at night. And we have worried constantly about the long-term damage the war has done to all of the citizens of our beloved country. Of course, our poetry has reflected our emotions and the experiences we have suffered. Many of our poets have written little else, other than war-themed poems. And we're not alone. So many Israeli poets and Jewish poets around the world have done just the same. There is now a whole new October 7th literature, books of stories of real-life tragedies, rescues and miracles and books of poetry. One such book **Shiva: Poems of October 7** has been widely acclaimed and our member Dina Yehuda has reviewed the book for our Newsletter – see page 9. And I'm ever so pleased to tell you that Voices Israel has arranged a Zoom Interview with one of the editors of **Shiva: Poems of October 7 - Rachel Korazim**. More information of how to connect on Zoom to watch this interview and to ask questions to Rachel will follow soon – see further details on page 18. This is a great opportunity to discover the works of other poets in Israel and around the world who have been writing war poetry. Please do join us.

For the last month or so the ceasefire agreed with Hezbollah has allowed life in the North of Israel to resume with some semblance of normality. Our own Upper Galilee Voices Israel Group has been able to meet in person again, at the home of Reuven and Yehudit Goldfarb in Tzefat, rather than having to rely on Zoom meetings. Tzefat was hit heavily and constantly by rocket and missile fire but thank God, is now not under immediate threat. But I'm terribly saddened to tell you that one of our members, Miriam Botzer of Tzefat, has suffered an unbearable loss. Her son, Eliezer Botzer z"l, a composer and musician, was tragically killed in an accident on the way home from IDF reserve duty. Eliezer leaves a wife and eight children. Our thoughts and prayers and love are with Miriam and her family. We hope that God will give Miriam and her husband Aharon the strength to be able to continue the wonderful and vitally important work they do for Jewish youth and for Israel, through their organisation Livnot U'Lehibanot.

On a much happier note, I'm delighted to offer congratulations to the winner of the **Reuben Rose Prize**, our member **Judith Robinson**, and to the other prize winners, and all those who received honourable mentions – see the full list of prize winners on pages 6 and 7. The awards presentation evening will be on Zoom on Sunday April 27th at 7pm (Israel time), an event shared with the **Bar Sagi Competition** winners. The submission period for the Bar Sagi poetry prize for youngsters aged 12-18 has begun. Poems can be submitted until 14th February 2025. We ask you to spread the word among English teachers you may know, schools you are familiar with and any friends and acquaintances who have contact with teens who might like to submit their poems. Details for submission to this year's competition can be found on our website [here](#).

Please God, we should all have a safe and successful month to come. Let's hope that 2025 is a much better year for all of Israel.

Kind regards,



Julian Alper,
President, Voices Israel.

P.S. See page 19 regarding paying your 2025 membership fee.

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MEETING DATES, TIMES AND PLACES - JANUARY 2025

SOUTHERN Meeting via Zoom Sunday, January 12 at 5:00 PM Coordinator: Miriam Green miriamsgreen@gmail.com	TEL AVIV Meeting via Zoom Thursday, January 30 at 7:00 PM Coordinator: Mark L. Levinson Mobile: 054-444-8438 nosnivel@netvision.net.il	JERUSALEM Meeting via Zoom Wednesday, January 22 At 7:30 PM Coordinator: Avril Meallem Tel: 02-567-0998 aemeallem@gmail.com	UPPER GALILEE Wednesday, January 8 at 10:30 AM at the home of Reuven and Yehudit. 128 Keren HaYesod Artists Quarter, Tzfat Coordinator: Reuven Goldfarb Tel: 04-697-4105 Mobile: 058-414-0262 poetsprogress@gmail.com
HAIFA Tuesday, January 21 at 7:00 PM at Judy Koren's home Contact Naomi Yalin for details Coordinator: Naomi Yalin Mobile: 054-794-3738 naomiyalin@gmail.com	NETANYA/SHARON Monday, January 27 at 7:00 PM at Susan Olsburgh's home 2/6 Zalman Shazar, 3rd floor Ramat Poleg Coordinator: Susan Olsburgh Mobile: 054-919-3575 olsburgh.susan@gmail.com	GLOBAL GROUP 1 Meeting via Zoom Thursday, January 23 At 19:30 Israel time Coordinator: Shoshana Kent Mobile: +972-52-808-9365 y2nosh@gmail.com	GLOBAL GROUP 2 Meeting via Zoom Sunday, January 19 At 19:30 Israel time Coordinator: Judy Koren Mobile: +972-54-741-7860 koren.judy@gmail.com

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Voices Israel is pleased to extend a warm welcome to our new member:

➤ **Douglas Naimer** of Toronto

REFUAH SHELEIMAH

We wish *refuah sheleimah*, best wishes for a full and speedy recovery, to Ruth Fogelman. Please keep Ruth (Rut bat Chana) in your thoughts and prayers. **Ruth will be pleased to hear from you** – e-mail her at ruthfogelman@yahoo.com or send a WhatsApp message to +972 (0)55-272-4492.

SAD NEWS – ELIEZER BOTZER ע"ה

It is with much sadness that we have received news of the passing of Eliezer Botzer, Miriam Botzer's son. May his memory be for a blessing. The funeral and shiv'ah have already taken place. Our thoughts are with Miriam and her family at this terribly difficult time.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

December Newsletter

Hi Julian,
thank you for the newsletter I received, I feel honoured to have my small contribution included in this very impressive and professionally produced document. It is humbling to be included with some great poetry.
Like my Zaida, Ben Tzion used to say, "you are judged by the company you keep".
I am blessed (and my Zaida is smiling)
Thank you
Raymond Isakow

ESRA BOOK SHOP HAIFA

ESRA (English Speaking Residents Association) has opened a SECOND-HAND ENGLISH BOOKSHOP in HAIFA. All are welcome to visit and explore the wonderful collection of books of all genres. Voices poets may like to donate one copy of their collections to expand our poetry shelf. It would draw attention to your great work. Members who have access to Haifa are welcome to donate or just visit. 5 Rehov Kiryat Sefer - adjacent to Kiryat Sefer Circle on Moriah, Ahuza.
Opening hours: Sun-Thurs: 10-1; 15-18 oclock. Friday: 10-13 oclock.



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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS

- To - **Judith Robinson**, the winner of this year's Reuben Rose Poetry Competition.
- To - **Gary Corbi, David Silverman, Iris Dan, Naomi Yalin, Miriam Webber, Fran Levin and Pesach Rotem**, who all merited honorable mentions in this year's Reuben Rose Poetry Competition.
- To - **Isaac Cohen**, for his many successes this last month.
- To - **Shulamit Bat Or** who has had two poems published on The Deronda Review's web page *POEMS FOR ISRAEL, OCTOBER 2023 AND AFTER* – you can read the poems [here](#).
- To - **Pessy Krausz** whose poem "Grandmother's Gaza" was published in the ESRA Magazine – you can read it here: [ESRA Magazine, December 2024](#) on page 96.
- To - **Julian Alper** whose poem "Laughing Dave" was published in the ESRA Magazine – you can read it here: [ESRA Magazine, December 2024](#) on page 92.
- To - **Eli Ben-Joseph** who has had a poem selected for publication in the arc 31 journal of the IAWWE (Israel Association of Writers in English).
- To - **Judy Koren** whose poem "Cindarina" has been published in the iprint journal *Penstricken*; an online version of the magazine is readable at <https://penstricken.com/one/> (p.69).
- To - **Mara Lee Grayson** whose work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. And whose poem "Cross-Country Hydatidiform" has been published in The Pedestal Magazine – see [here](#).

REUBEN ROSE POETRY COMPETITION

The judges for **35th Annual Reuben Rose Poetry Competition** have completed their work, and we're delighted to announce the winning entries.

First Prize — "A Stream in Late Autumn" by Judith R. Robinson — USA

Second Prize — "Unknowable" by Evie Groch — USA

Third prizes, in random order:

- "Your Office" by Jamie Wendt — USA
- "In Visible Light" by Elaine Mintzer — USA
- "Skimming Stones Toward an Imagined Island" by David Allard — UK

See Honorable mentions on the next page.

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Honorable mentions, in random order:

- "Silence" by Gary Corbi — USA
- "At Shabbat Dinner, an Old Friend Asks Me, 'What Makes a Poem a Poem?'" by David Silverman — USA
- "Insomnia" by Iris Dan — Israel
- "Six Hostages" by Laurel Benjamin — USA
- "In the Safe Haven of Maale Hacarmel" by Naomi Yalin — Israel
- "... but for the grace of God..." by Miriam Webber (aka Rumi Morkin) — Israel
- "Ode to a Young Mad Hatter" by Fran Levin — Israel
- "Unsettling" by Elisa Subin — Israel
- "Kindness" by Pesach Rotem — Israel
- "My Father's Synagogue" by Pearl Abraham — USA

Thank you to our judges, Dina Yehuda, Judy Koren and our International Judge, Nancy Shiffrin for all their hard work. And a special thank you to our hard-working Reuben Rose Poetry Competition Administrator, Mark L. Levinson, who has once again organised the competition with great efficiency and diplomacy.

All the winning poems can be read [here](#).

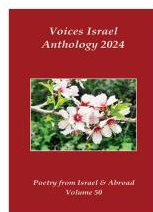
SPECIAL OFFERS

Johnmichael Simon is offering his **chapbook design services** to Voices Israel members and friends.

If you would like to possess a beautifully presented and published collection of your own favorite poems, please contact Johnmichael for details of this special offer at johnmichaelsimon@gmail.com.

BOOKS

ESRA Magazine Review



Voices ISRAEL ANTHOLOGY 2024 Volume 50

Reviewed by Dr. Morton Leibowitz

It is my privilege, once again, to be called on to review the annual Anthology of Poetry published yearly by Voices in Israel.

This present collection of poetry is outstanding. Some of the poems touch on the war, but all of them are relevant to living, and more specifically to living Jewishly and, in many cases, living in Israel.

Out of curiosity, this year, I asked ChatGPT, a large language model of artificial intelligence, to explain the power of poetry. I quote here just one paragraph of the response and will then pick one poem from the present Anthology to illustrate the point.

“Transcendence of Language: In poetry, language often transcends its literal meaning, creating a bridge between the known and the unknown, the concrete and the abstract. This transcendence allows poetry to explore spiritual, philosophical, and existential questions in profound ways.”

A very dear friend of ours experienced a tragedy recently. After spending an extraordinarily joyous Shabbat with her two sisters who also live in Israel, she received the news that on the way home there was a fatal road accident and her oldest sister was killed. The deceased was widely known for her outgoing, supportive and charitable personality and was mourned by many.

Two weeks later, on the Shabbat that we read Parsha Eikev, our friend asked us to join her and her husband for a modest Friday night meal and, if I could, to please prepare a few words about the week's Torah reading. Parsha Eikev reminds the Jewish

people of the sin of the Golden Calf and how Moshe, in his frustration and anger, shattered the first Tablets inscribed by God.

In agreeing to say a few words, I knew I would have to talk about the recent tragedy and find the correct words to help this mourning family at a time of grievous loss. At that time, I was reading the Anthology of Voices in Israel and an hour after the phone call I found myself reading “Light” a poem by Dina Yehuda.

I exaggerate not, when I say that tears came to my eyes. In four seemingly simple paragraphs the author, Dina Yehuda, has captured the essence of loss. Captured it in language that exceed boundaries of belief or creed. She speaks of the shards of light that remain after someone dear passes and how those shards live on, forever. In a religious sense they live on awaiting the ultimate salvation, in the secular sense they live on in our memories, transmitted through the generations and continue to shine captured by memory and transition.

I reiterate the sentence quoted above from ChatGP, “This transcendence allows poetry to explore spiritual, philosophical, and existential questions in profound ways.”

I apologize to all the other writers whose works in the Anthology are worthy of extensive contemplation and analysis. I strongly urge all readers of this review to consider a one-year membership in Voices of Israel which includes the current volume, monthly newsletters, and information about poetry meetings and workshops. ■

For membership information:
www.voicesisrael.com/join

LIGHT

By Dina Yehuda

*The first tablets
written with God's hands
were filled with light
white fire on black fire
they were easy to carry*

*but when the people danced
around the golden calf
the light left the tablets,
they became too heavy to bear.*

*When we die
our spirit leaves the body
and we become
light.*

*We are shards of the tablets,
reminders of the first
broken covenant
shattered but not gone
we remain
hidden in God's ark
in the Holy of Holies*

To submit your poems for consideration for the 2025 Anthology use this address:
www.voicesisrael.com/anthology/submitting-to-the-anthology.
Submissions must be made by 15th March 2025.

POETRY

ESRA
MAGAZINE

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Shiva: Poems of October 7 – Book Review by Dina Yehuda

Editors and Translators: Rachel Korazim, Michael Bohnen, Heather Silverman

"I think we ought to read only the kind of books that wound or stab us. If the book we're reading doesn't wake us up with a blow to the head, what are we reading for?But we need books that affect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us." **Franz Kafka**



Shiva, an anthology of Hebrew poems (with English translation alongside) written in the months after October 7th, does just that: It breaks your heart. From the introduction: "The poems...were collected during the first six months following October 7th, or in the Jewish calendar, from Simchat Torah to Pesach and "are in deep conversation with all layers of Hebrew text" and that gives this anthology much of its richness and depth.

Throughout the anthology, the writers wrestle with God, with Jewish tradition and writings throughout the ages. The poems relate to the *Parashat Hashavua* (Torah reading portion each Shabbat) and to the Hebrew cycle of the year from Simchat Torah and Genesis (read on the first Shabbat after October 7th).



From the first poem, "Darkness over the Surface of the Abyss" by Tzur Gueta, the poems ask the most eternal and important questions: "Who can tell me the meaning of the verse, "The earth was chaos and confusion"? *Breishit* (Genesis) was the first Torah reading after October 7th, thus the questions regarding darkness, chaos and God's role in Creation resonate so strongly.

In her moving poem, "Sea Fragments", Osnat Eldar alludes to the heart-rending story of six-year-old Romi Suissa whose parents were murdered on October 7th. Romi protected her three-year-old sister until the police arrived. "I have a baby here. Are you from Israel?", Romi asked the police. That question, Eldar writes, "cracks the foundational covenant". In Eldar's other poems, "Leaving an Ark" and in "From Songs of the Exiled from Her Dwelling Place" she continues the theme of the broken covenant as well as the broken fragments of the first tablets." There is a brilliant ambivalence in the persona of the narrator who is exiled and takes "from the ruin of houses / a basin, an ark and a curtain/ Tablets and their broken fragments."

The editors and translators have done an excellent service for the non-Hebrew speaking reader. They explain the context and the allusions which are essential to appreciating the poems. For example, much of the power of Roni Eldad's haunting poem, "What Do You See", would be lost to the reader without knowing the references to the beginning of Jeremiah (1:11), where

God explains that soon "evil will break forth from the north" and to the midrash of Rabbi Hanina ben Teradyon whose students asked, "What do you see?" The poem ends with "We will never sleep again. The darkness of God has woken us up."

Rachel Sharansky Danziger, using a similar theme in "By Day" writes: "There is no way to silence the dead / I lie down and my heart is awake" alluding to the verse in Song of Songs 5:2, "I am asleep but my heart is awake" but giving it a very different dark twist.

In "We Knew Them All", Elchanan Nir alludes to the poem by Dan Pagis, "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Freightcar". Pagis writes, "Here in this carload / I am Eve / with Abel my son / if you see my other son / Cain son of man / tell him that I

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Nir begins his poem with: "We are here in the shelter" and continues "Night is falling and the dead are coming to us...They have no faces, some are slashed in unknown places. And we are shocked, retreating to the protected spaces whispering: If you see him tell him."

Here too, the editors do a fine job of giving the reader essential information needed to grasp and appreciate all the subtle layers and nuances. In "Strong as Death", Shlomit Naim Naor writes,

"God is hiding in a cellar bereft of prayer" and ends with "Gaza is like death". Only with the help of the editor's notes does the reader see the deeper meaning: The title of the poem is a reference to Song of Songs 8:6 "Love is as strong as death." The Hebrew word for 'strong' is also the word for Gaza, so we understand that "Gaza is like Death." The strength of the poem is in its poignant and tragic play on words. See the contrast, Naor is saying. We are no longer in the Song of Songs.

One of the most painful poems for me to read and which I believe will stay with me for a long time "God Full of Compassion" by Ido Ganiram, Member, Search and Identification Unit which is in difficult dialogue with the prayer for the dead and the belief in God's compassion.

"Oh God full of compassion / Who dwells even in the refrigerators (holding the bodies of the murdered) Grant true rest / To those bearers beneath the stretchers"...Walking carefully on a stairway to the sky.../ Therefore O Merciful One / Hide difficult memories from us forever... / And You will say Amen."

Shuri Hazan's poem, "Another page in the Haggadah" echoes the idea in many of the poems that "A page is written in the Haggadah for the ages"...and that "blood remains on the lintel". In the words of Elchanan Nir's seminal poem, "We Need a new Torah Now", we need 'a new love out of the terrible weeping / For we are all washed in the blood of Re'im and Be'eri."

Rachel Goldberg-Polin, mother of the murdered hostage Hersh, whose plight galvanized the world, great matriarch like the biblical Rachel, finds it in her huge heart to address the mothers on the other side of this war. In her amazing poem, "One Tiny Seed", she writes:

"And I know / ...way over there / There is another woman who looks just like me / Because we are all so very similar / She has also been crying..."

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, "We do not pray in order to be saved; we pray so that we might be worthy of being saved." With people like Rachel Goldberg-Polin in the world, how can we not be saved?

Shiva: Poems of October 7 can be purchased from Amazon [here](#).

Voices Chapbook – Light Thru Trees

In the **Judith Magazine**, a new online **Journal Of Jewish Letters, Arts & Empowerment**, Erika Dreifus writes **An Open Letter to the Editor of The New York Times Book Review**, which makes mention of our Chapbook, **Light Thru Trees** dedicated to the memory of Judith Weinstein Haggai. She quotes Jessica Steinberg's review in the Times of Israel:

the Kibbutz Nir Oz resident who was murdered by Hamas terrorists on October 7 along with her husband, Gadi Haggai, as they took their regular early morning walk, was many things, including wife, mother, teacher, puppeteer and poet.

Born in upstate New York but raised in Canada, Weinstein, 70, moved to Israel as a young adult and lived in Israel for decades.

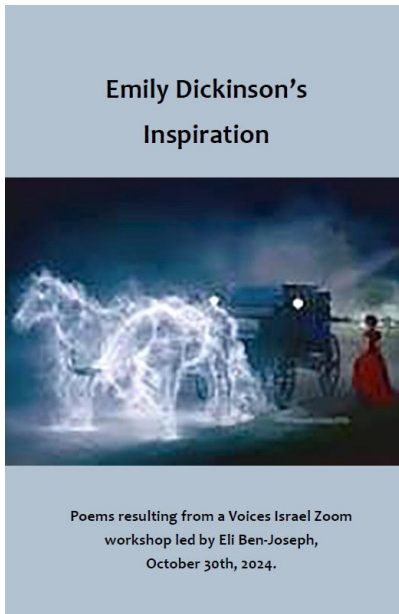
She had long been a member of the southern branch of Voices Israel, a group of English-language poets that meets monthly.

Weinstein was well known for her haikus, the short poems she wrote throughout much of her adult life.

Titled **Light Thru Trees**, the chapbook "highlights Weinstein's poetry and offers an opportunity for her fellow poets to memorialize her," even as her body, and her husband's, continue to be held hostage in Gaza. The full article is [here](#).

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Voices Chapbook – Emily Dickinson’s Inspiration



Following the recent very successful workshop led by Eli Ben-Joseph, thanks to Judy Koren for creating a pdf chapbook with all the poems submitted. The chapbook features poems by Donna Bechar, Judy Foner, Pessy Krausz, Reuven Goldfarb, Lisa Aigen, Ruth Schreiber, Judy Koren, Miriam Alper, Marlene Goldberg, Hayyim Abramson, Lisa Aigen, Denise Kirsch, Kaila Shabat, Yehudit Goldfarb, Dina Yehuda, Fran Levin, Elana Dorfman, Ann Bar-Dov, Susan Bell, Edit Gavriely, Susan Olsburgh, Rumi Morkin (aka Miriam Webber), Eli Ben-Joseph, Pesach Rotem and Julian Alper.

Thanks also to Elana Dorfman for arranging the workshop and Eli Ben-Joseph for leading it.

Members who would like a copy of the pdf chapbook should e-mail newsletter.voices@gmail.com.

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Voices Israel - Anthology 2025 - The submission period has opened and will remain open through March 15th, 2025.

Guidelines:

Submissions for the Anthology are accepted until March 15th, **Israeli time**. *International submitters: please don't leave it to the last day to submit*, you might find you've missed the submission period if you haven't calculated the time difference correctly!

Poems must be previously unpublished. However, poems that have been included in the monthly poetry pages attached to our newsletter or were written at Voices Israel workshops and appeared in the resulting chapbook of the workshop, are not considered "published" (since they were circulated only to a closed group of members, not available to the general public) and will be considered.

The editorial board then reviews all submissions, makes its decisions, and sends notices out to contributors. We aim to produce and print the volume by July or August. It is then distributed to paid-up Voices Israel members and others who have ordered and paid for copies. Copyright for individual poems is retained by the author of each poem. Copyright for the anthology belongs to Voices Israel Group of Poets in English.

How to Submit:

There is no fee for submitting poems for publication in our Anthology.

Poems **must be submitted using the Voices Israel Online Submission Manager, powered by Submittable**. This is the only way to submit your poems. Email submissions to any of our team will not be considered. Use this link to submit to the anthology - [submit](#).

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Judith Magazine, a new online **Journal Of Jewish Letters, Arts & Empowerment** seeks submissions – more information can be found [here](#).

The Jewish Literary Journal (a monthly online journal) seeks submissions of up to 5 poems - further details can be found [here](#).

Of The Book literary journal publishes fiction, non-fiction, and poetry from new and established voices welcomes submissions of up to 10 pages of poetry, with one poem per page. Further details can be found [here](#).

WRITE-HAUS online journal welcomes submissions of prose and poetry for a **SUNDAY SHOWCASE**. More details are [here](#).

THE DERONDA REVIEW (www.derondareview.org), continues to accept poems for its page “Poems for Israel, October 2023,” which now contains the work of more than 40 poets. The page is being updated as new poems come in, so scroll down to find the latest! Poems for posting on this page may be sent to derondareview@gmail.com.

Green Golem is a new online Zionist literary magazine that is now open for submissions. Visit the Golem at <https://greengolemmag.com/>.

Jewish Book Council - Paper Brigade seeks unpublished poetry. Please submit a maximum of two poems, along with a \$3 reading fee. Poems will be considered for both *Paper Brigade* and JBC's online poetry series, Berru. The submission period closes on **February 15, 2024**. There is more information [here](#).

Free the Verse is now accepting submissions for its Spring issue. While the theme and title of this issue is ‘Here again’ you are encouraged to interpret it creatively. The deadline for this issue is **February 25th, 2025**. More information about how to submit can be found [here](#).

The Zest of the Lemon is a quarterly literary magazine where poets can share AH HA moments, smiles, and the beauty of small. The publication captures the zest of what it means to be truly alive. The publication will be self-published as an ebook and in paperback format. The first volume will be in **Spring 2025**. To make that happen the **deadline for submissions is Jan 10, 2025. The total number of entries will be capped at 500**. There is more information [here](#).

The Ekphrastic Review welcomes submissions during January – see more details [here](#).

Saturday Evening Post Limerick Contest – seeks limericks describe James Williamson's cover illustration from an old issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*. Submissions until 25th February 2025 – for more details of how to submit see [here](#).

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OUR MEMBERS' ART

Eli Ben-Joseph's Goldfinch – A woodcut print



This is the wood-block carving from which the goldfinch print is pressed. The process has three parts. First a sketch from which the wood block is marked, secondly a carving on which the top layer takes the colors, and thirdly the print onto watercolor paper which is pressed against the block and then refined by my brush strokes. No two prints from a particular block are exactly the same. Generally speaking, my guides have been Thomas Bewick (18th-century English artist), Japanese color printers, and Itsik De Langue, a Nahariya artist who studied print-making in Holland. I usually made 12 prints from each block, though in some cases I only made three. **Eli Ben-Joseph**

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Miriam Webber's Sea – Mosaic



By way of explanation, Miriam writes:

“Sea” - mosaic

My windows look towards the sea,
what better subject could there be?
A 30 by 60 tile as base,
an ideal size with ample space.

Plate, bowls and tiles that I have used
and even stones, together fused,
create, from sky-line down to shore,
the illusion I was aiming for.

A technical challenge, without a doubt
was using different shades of grout,
from light grey sky through dark grey sea
to beige - with shells, just two or three.
It could have been a ghastly mess
but care resulted in success.

Rumi Morkin (a.k.a. Miriam Webber)
25.12.24



Front cover – Bring back their sunsets.

Acrylic on glass – Sunlight plays through the half meter quadrant painted on my window.

Ira Director

You can see more of Ira's wonderful work on his web site

<https://sites.google.com/view/iradirectorexhibition2022/home> which contains highlights from 50 years of paintings, sculptures and poetry.

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MY LITTLE WOODEN WRITING DESK BY WENDY BLUMFIELD

My mother z”l was a passionate reader and she loved to read to me. My memories from infancy were snuggling up with her on the sofa listening to her melodic voice. She did not limit our reading to picture books but we got through many of the classics, leather-bound volumes with small print and no illustrations. One thing I remember was that she always announced the name of the author and the title when we started a new book. So it is imprinted on my memory the authors of almost every book we read then and those that I have read up to today.

I followed her as she read and absorbed every word, so I was reading well before I started school.

This inspired my imagination so as soon as I could handle a pencil, I would jot down little stories and if I was very emotional about something, I wrote a poem.

My grandfather z”l knew a carpenter who needed work – he always found work for needy Jewish refugees. He asked him to make me a little wooden desk so that I had my own place to write and store my papers.

I was so delighted when it arrived, it had a sloping lid to hold my paper, and a ledge for pens and pencils and even an inkwell. By this time we had graduated from pencils to ink pens which had to be dipped into ink which then dripped onto my clothes and made blots everywhere. At school, the boys behind us dipped our plaits in their inkwells and the ink went flying when we threw back our plaits.

My fingers were permanently stained like smokers whose nicotine stained hands give away their habit. And I came home each day with ink blots up my sleeves.

At home I wore a smock like an artist. The desktop opened and I stored every poem and story I wrote.

When I was eight, my eldest brother returned from the Army and started to work for a typewriter company. One day he came home with a small portable typewriter for me.

I was over the moon, taught myself to type and my mother at last could rejoice that I was not spilling ink all over myself.

Three of my friends decided that we would have a short story competition. The only literary contact that we could ask to judge was the owner of the corner newspaper shop. I won to my great delight.

As I grew up, my feelings were expressed in poems. But I found that the stories I wrote were much richer when based on a real life event. So that was how I went into journalism, writing feature articles, investigating social issues, protesting

against injustice.

When we made Aliyah in 1974, I was contacted by Reuben Rose z”l who with his three brothers had been friendly with my elder brothers in our London community. He invited me to Voices and the rest is history.



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THE POWER OF WORDS – KLARINA PRIBORKIN

Try to think about the impact words have on us. We use them casually in speech and in writing. We read texts in one form or another every day, listen to other people, participate in conversations, express opinions and convey information in order to cooperate. But when do we stop to think about the creative use of words and what they really mean beyond the literal, everyday meaning.

In order to explain what a word actually is a Swiss linguist [Ferdinand de Saussure](#)'s coined the terms *signifier* ('sound-image') and the *signified* ('concept'). Saussure argued that the meaning of a sign "depends on its relation to other words within the system;" for example, to understand an individual word such as "tree," one must also understand the word "bush" and how the two relate to each other.^[1] People who know several languages are familiar with various signifiers for the same signified as each word has slightly different connotations and cultural references.



Let's take the word "tree," for instance and try to imagine a generic tree. While people who grew up in Russia or other parts of Eastern Europe might imagine a birch tree, people who grew up in Israel might imagine an oak or even an almond tree. Each tree has a completely different cultural framework of reference, different connotation and symbolism. As someone who grew up under the Sycamore trees in Fergana, a town located in Central Asia, I learned to appreciate the shade and the microclimate these trees provided enabling, us, the children to play outside even in the heat of August.

These trees were my friends and my soulmates. I would spend hours examining their barks and tracing the endless trails of ants that were traveling back and forth on the tree trunks transporting precious crumbs of food to their nest. Try to think about the first image that pops into your mind when you think of the word "tree" and you'll probably discover that your associations and framework of references is completely different.

A few years ago, I wrote a poem about these sycamore trees in order to process my memories in my third language and ironically make the signified trees more tangible and present in my life through their English signifiers. When I started writing the poem, I could only think about the Russian word "чинара" as the signifier of my childhood tree, yet I chose to write the poem in English in order to explain my childhood self to my adult self.

Since, Russian has never been a language that enabled me to express my emotions, I always opt of Hebrew or English when it comes to writing. I grew up in Israel with my Russian speaking family and since we immigrated when I was 11, my Russian is quite stagnated. I think in Russian mostly when I count, curse or criticize myself or other people, which is something I inherited from my family. I also think in Russian when I remember my childhood, but only when it comes to specific words that are difficult to translate into Hebrew such as бантик, дефицит, чебурашка, Буратино, простакваша, кефир. These words mostly relate to food, cultural phenomena, books and and TV shows and convey a very specific meaning to people who grew up the former Soviet Union.

The poem about the sycamore trees was published in Voices Anthology of 2022, volume 48.

Remembering the Fallen Trees

My sycamores won't sing the songs of childhood
or listen to the running steps of joy.
Their shade won't shield me from the crimson sun
or sooth my sweaty palm to cool my brow.
In fall, your crispy brown beauty won't adorn the pavements
or form the intricate collage of browns and reds
protruding through the cracks of glazing ice
that sent me off to school on frozen mornings.

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But, once, when early snow appeared
before the trees had shed
their magical, beloved cloak,
the emerald tiara froze to death
and heavy branches crashed
into electric poles — disabling the town.
No school, TV or late-night reading
but stories are told best in candlelight
piano tunes are played
to sooth the heart and resurrect the soul.
Some trees succumbed to the ordeal
but most of you survived to our delight
and were reborn in Spring.
Yet nothing could protect
from coarse corruption of the men
that chopped your branches off
for greed and gain.

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VOICES ISRAEL – INTERVIEW WITH RACHEL KORAZIM

Tuesday January 28th at 7pm (Israel time) on Zoom an interview with Rachel Korazim about the new book **Shiva**, which she coedited. Rachel will be interviewed by Dina Yehuda.

Dr Rachel Korazim is a Jewish education consultant in curriculum development for Israel and Holocaust education. Rachel opens for her audiences a window to Israeli society through literature; through stories, poems and songs of the best of Israel's writers, she invites listeners to engage with Israel in an innovative way. Since the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic – Rachel created a global community of hundreds of learners who meet to study Israeli poetry online regularly – Rachel teaches at Israel's well known learning centers such as Pardes and the Shalom Hartman Institutes as well as numerous world Jewish communities. In her free time, Rachel enjoys scuba diving in the cenotes of Playa del Carmen in Mexico and the amazing coral sites of the Red Sea. Rachel is also a very active grandmother of eight grandchildren who all live in Israel.



As the horrors of October 7th were unfolding, the most common reaction was “ein milim,” אין מילים, “no words.” Shock waves spread like the ever-widening ripples of a pool into which a stone has been thrown. Images of mutilated bodies, burnt homes and wrecked cars flooded the screens we couldn't stop watching. The media continued to project graphic scenes endlessly, commentators discussed politics and military points of view for hours, yet people struggled to answer the simple question “How are you?” It is not surprising that new poems were immediately created to give utterance to the nation's feelings and emotions. Published and well-known poets alongside new fresh voices appeared daily on social media and, with time, in the literary supplements of daily papers. The poems described the inability to speak: they gave voice to choked tears, rage and despair. Moving from an initial reaction of shock, the poetry gives voice to soldiers on the battlefields of Gaza, bereaved families at funerals, evacuees in their temporary shelters and hostages in the hands of Hamas, as well as victims across the border. The poems collected in this anthology come from a broad Israeli ideological spectrum and were collected during the first six months following October 7th, or, in the Jewish calendar, from Simchat Torah to Pesach. As is often the case in Israeli poetry, the poems are in deep conversation with all layers of Hebrew texts from Tanakh through Talmud, from prayers and rabbinic literature all the way to medieval and modern Hebrew classics. The title Shiva, which means seven, connotes both mourning and the tragic date. This collection was selected from many post October 7 poems discussed in Rachel Korazim's online Israeli poetry class “Windows to Israel Through Literature.”



Shiva: Poems of October 7 can be purchased from Amazon [here](#).

Net proceeds of all sales will be donated to the Israel Trauma Coalition for their work with victims of October 7th and its aftermath.

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Chanita Millman, 15, Shachar St., Beit Hakerem, 9626323 Jerusalem, ISRAEL.

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