

VOICES ISRAEL
GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025





VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER

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Dates for your Diary

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

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

Haiku – Aviv Searching

*chilly day negev
driving in the car with friends
eyeing wild barley*

Yochanan Zaqantov

Aphorism of the Month

**There is no such thing as a
part-time poet.**

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



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

I was so saddened, as I'm sure everyone was, to hear of the passing last week of our dearly beloved member, friend and fellow-poet, **Ruth Fogelman ז"ל**, who died after battling bravely through a long illness. I didn't ever get to meet Ruth personally, but in the last couple of months of her life, when she was already so weak as not to be able to talk on the telephone, we did have a WhatsApp correspondence. I was truly uplifted by her strength of mind, her wonderful spirit and her tremendous faith. Ruth will be sorely missed, but I'm pleased to tell you that Ruth submitted a poem to be considered for the 2025 Anthology, which has been judged as meriting inclusion. Before her passing she was told that the poem would be included in the Anthology, which made her very happy. We hope in a forthcoming issue of the Newsletter to pay tribute to Ruth with an obituary and some of her poems.

Don't forget that the Anthology deadline (15th March) is approaching fast. Most members still haven't submitted their poems and there are only two weeks to go. Please make sure you submit your poems well before the deadline.

We've reached that time of year again (hasn't the year flown by) when we review the previous year's activities at our Annual General Meeting and look forward to another year. The AGM this year will be on Sunday March 23rd at 7pm (Israel time) and will be on Zoom only. It will be followed by an Open Mic poetry reading. There are more details on page 10 of this Newsletter. I hope you'll be able to participate.

In just a few days from now (5th March) members of the Upper Galilee Group of Voices Israel, led by our esteemed member, Reuven Goldfarb, will be presenting poems at a reading hosted by the Geiger Safed English Library. This library has over 15,000 English language books and periodicals on every subject and caters for readers of all ages, including many of our members. There are more details on page 7 of this Newsletter. Do come along and support our poets, if you are able.

Early next month (1st April) there will be a Voices Israel Poetry Workshop in Tel Aviv, arranged by our wonderful coordinator Elana Dorfman. You will find more details on page 6 of this Newsletter. Please register as soon as you can to reserve your place. I'm sure it will be a great event – unfortunately I won't be able to participate as we will be out of the country, but I look forward to hearing all about it and seeing the Chapbook.

Our membership fee for 2025 is coming up for payment renewal. **To get the EARLY BIRD rate, you must pay by March 31st.** (see p22 of this Newsletter for details.)

Please keep sending your artwork, your essays and your letters to the editor. Members do enjoy reading and viewing what you share, and it is wonderful to share our members' many and varied talents.

Last month was a particularly sad month for Israel, as we heard news of the tragic deaths of the Bibas children with their mother and other hostages at the hands of monstrous killers. As we now start a new month (Adar and March with perfectly synchronized dates) let's hope that *mishenichnas Adar marbim b'simcha* - meaning 'As Adar (the present Hebrew month) comes in, happiness should increase' - and we should have a fantastic Purim and only good news for the whole of Am Yisrael.

Kind regards,



Julian Alper,
President, Voices Israel.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

MEETING DATES, TIMES AND PLACES - MARCH 2025

SOUTHERN Meeting via Zoom Sunday, March 30 at 5:00 PM Coordinator: Miriam Green miriamsgreen@gmail.com	TEL AVIV Meeting via Zoom Thursday, March 27 at 7:00 PM Coordinator: Mark L. Levinson Mobile: 054-444-8438 nosnivel@netvision.net.il	JERUSALEM Meeting via Zoom Wednesday, March 19 At 7:30 PM Coordinator: Avril Meallem Tel: 02-567-0998 aemeallem@gmail.com	UPPER GALILEE Wednesday, March 19 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, March 11 at 7:00 PM at Edit Gavriely's home Contact Naomi Yalin for details Coordinator: Naomi Yalin Mobile: 054-794-3738 naomiyalin@gmail.com	NETANYA/SHARON Monday, April 28 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, March 20 At 19:30 Israel time Coordinator: Shoshana Kent Mobile: +972-52-808-9365 y2nosh@gmail.com	GLOBAL GROUP 2 Meeting via Zoom Sunday, March 9 At 19:00 Israel time Coordinator: Judy Koren Mobile: +972-54-741-7860 koren.judy@gmail.com

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

- **Lise Longchamp Katz** of Pointe-Claire, Quebec
- **William Winston** of Oakland, CA

SAD NEWS – RUTH FOGELMAN Z”L

It was with much sadness that we heard of the passing of our dearly beloved member, Ruth Fogelman z”l, who passed away after a long illness. We send our sincere condolences to all of Ruth’s family.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS

- To - **Our many members** who had poems published in IAWÉ’s arc31.
- To - **Pesach Rotem** who had four poems published in Synchronized Chaos: "Sieg Heil!"; "November 22, 1963" (written at Ira Director’s workshop on dates); "Life Lessons"; and "The Rooster Crows" (written at Iris Dan’s workshop on aubades). You can read the poems at <https://synchchaos.com/poetry-from-pesach-rotem-3/>.
- To - **Isaac Cohen** for his many successes throughout the month.
- To - **Miriam Green** whose poem “The Svach” is published on the Jewish Book Council’s web page – you can read the poem [here](#)

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.



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

EVENTS

Voices Israel – Workshop, 1st April



You are invited to a unique workshop.

We will work on **one poem** throughout the day. **We will learn:** to develop a free flow of writing to create raw content, to recognize overly used phrases, how to add imagery and improve the structure of our poems

Place: Beit Ariela Municipal Library
King Saul Street 25, Tel Aviv

When: April 1, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Fee: 30 NIS to cover the room

Please bring a kosher dish to share

To register: Use link below

See you there!

Poem Under Construction

To register click [here](#).

This workshop was scheduled for a number of months ago but had to be postponed. Even if you previously registered you still need to register now if you wish to take part.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Voices Israel – Poetry Reading, Tzfat - 5th March

**CELEBRATING WORLD POETRY DAY
AT THE GEIGER ENGLISH LIBRARY**

*Poetry Reading
by the Upper Galilee
Chapter of Voices
Israel*

Wednesday March 5th at 15:00
38 Jerusalem Street Tzfat
10 NIS Donation to Library Appreciated

For more info contact:
Reuven: 04-697-4105
Nechama: 054-686-3135

Do come along and support our poets, if you are able.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Poetry Symposium

"From Troy to Tel Aviv," a poetry symposium — partly in English, partly in Hebrew — will be held at Bar-Ilan University on March 25. Keynote speakers include Aharon Shabtai, Sharron Hass, and Miriam Rother. Among the sessions are a panel on poetry and embodiment and a short reading of translations. The symposium is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is requested so that the organizers may properly arrange for refreshments.



Department of English Literature and Linguistics
Faculty of Humanities
Bar-Ilan University

Department of Comparative Literature
Faculty of Humanities
Bar-Ilan University

Department of Classical Studies
Faculty of Humanities
Bar-Ilan University

טרויה אל תל אביב: סימפוזיון שירה

From Troy to Tel Aviv: A Poetry Symposium

יום שלישי | 25.3.2025 | כ"ה באדר
אולם וייספלד (303) Weisfeld Hall

Original & translated poetry readings: From Troy to Tel Aviv (Hebrew & English)	15:20	Coffee and pastries קפה ומאפי בוקר	09:30
יו"ר מושב: ד"ר אריאדנה קונסטנטינו אור שושני מיכאל שנהב דוד צמיר-גל		דברי פתיחה פרופ' מרצלה שולק, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן	09:50
Prof. (Em.) David Schaps Yoni Hammer Kossoy Stefani Eliron		Poetry and Poetic Bodies שירה וגופים פואטיים	10:00
		יו"ר מושב: ד"ר יעקב מאשיטי "המשורר כפסל: האפולו של טשטניחובסקי והגוף היהודי" ד"ר ג'אקומו לואי, אוניברסיטת חיפה "לשיר הימנון לאל" ולקרב את העולם: לוטס ושירה בין יוון וההגות היהודית בימי ביניים ד"ר פרנצ'סקה טרונטי, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן "חלק מהעולם הרי תמיד יהיה בג'ר' - מיתולוגיה וכינון העצמי ד"ר שמעון אדף, אוניברסיטת בן גוריון	
Coffee Break הפסקת קפה	16:20	Coffee Break הפסקת קפה	11:45
Prosody and movement workshop: Homer's Odyssey Choreographer Miriam Rother	16:30	אהרון שבתאי בשיחה עם פרופ' דניאלה דוויק, דקנית הפקולטה למדעי הרוח	12:00
		Lunch Break הפסקת צהריים	13:15
		Multivocality in Music of the Wide Lane. Sharron Hass in discussion with Prof. Marcela Sulak	14:15

להרשמה לאירוע לחצו כאן <<

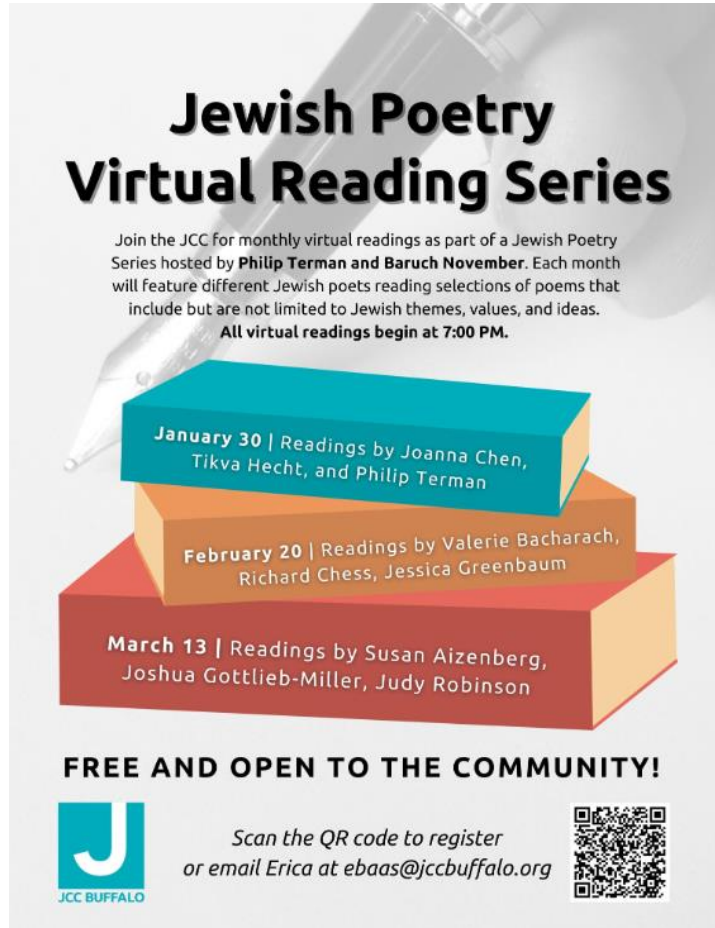
הסימפוזיון יתקיים בעברית ובאנגלית, ללא תרגום סימולטני
The symposium will be conducted in Hebrew and English, without simultaneous translation

biu.ac.il מוקד המידע לשירות: *9392 משפיעים על המחר, היום.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Judy Robinson – Poetry Reading

On 13th March, our member Judy Robinson will be participating in a virtual reading:



Jewish Poetry Virtual Reading Series

Join the JCC for monthly virtual readings as part of a Jewish Poetry Series hosted by **Philip Terman and Baruch November**. Each month will feature different Jewish poets reading selections of poems that include but are not limited to Jewish themes, values, and ideas. **All virtual readings begin at 7:00 PM.**

January 30 | Readings by Joanna Chen, Tikva Hecht, and Philip Terman

February 20 | Readings by Valerie Bacharach, Richard Chess, Jessica Greenbaum

March 13 | Readings by Susan Aizenberg, Joshua Gottlieb-Miller, Judy Robinson

FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY!

Scan the QR code to register or email Erica at ebaas@jccbuffalo.org

JCC BUFFALO

English-Language Poets of Jerusalem

Invites you to a series of workshops in March. For more details see [here](#).

IAWE Poetry Reading



*BECAUSE A PERSON IS LIKE
A TREE IN THE FIELD*

AN EXHIBITION BY
MICHAEL KAGAN

FEB 17 - MAR 16
RAMAT AVIV
SHOPPING MALL GALLERY

SPECIAL EVENT
MARCH 4 7:00PM

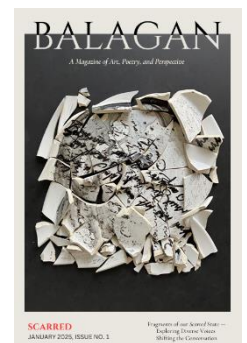
THE ISRAEL ASSOCIATION OF
WRITERS IN ENGLISH (IAWE)
WILL HAVE A POETRY READING
AT THE GALLERY ON THE
SUBJECT OF THE EXHIBITION.
WITH
KAREN ALKALAY-GUT
AND MEMBERS OF THE
ORGANIZATION.
ALL INVITED
CONTACT
MICHAEL@MLKAGAN.COM

ANNOUNCEMENTS/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.

BALAGAN – is a new Magazine of Art, Poetry, and Perspective. BALAGAN, meaning “chaos” in Hebrew, is Writing on the Wall’s new quarterly literary magazine. You can download a copy here - [BALAGAN - ISSUE NO. 1 \(updated\)](#).



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VOICES ISRAEL AGM

The 2025 Voices Israel Annual General Meeting **via Zoom** will be at 7pm (Israel time) on **Sunday, 23rd March 2025**.

If you would like to propose a resolution at the AGM, please send it to president@voicesisrael.com to arrive at least one week before the meeting date, i.e. by Sunday 16th March.

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2024 AGM for approval
3. President's report
4. Adoption of treasurer's report
5. Reuben Rose Poetry Competition report
6. Voices Anthology report
7. Membership report
8. Bar Sagi Competition Report
9. Regional group reports
10. Resolutions
11. Any other business

The AGM will be followed by an **Open Mic** poetry reading.

To register, please use this [link](#).

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

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](#).

OfTheBook 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/>.

24th Wergle Flomp Humor Poetry Contest will award prizes of \$2,000, \$500, \$250, and ten Honorable Mentions of \$100 each. The winner will also enjoy a two-year gift certificate from our co-sponsor, Duotrope (a \$100 value). The top 13 poems are published on our website. There's no fee to enter. Entries close on April 1. Whether your poem is published or unpublished, or even if it has won a prize in a different contest, you may submit it to our contest. Jendi Reiter will judge, assisted by Lauren Singer. One poem only, please. [Submit online here](#).

The Ilanot Review seeks submissions until 31st March 2025. Up to **5 poems**, not to exceed 7 pages. Submission fee of **\$3**. **Theme: Flaw and Favor** - From fairy tales to suspense thrillers, characters are often identified as favored by nature, the gods, the parents, or flawed in ways unsightly, unseemly. We all know, though, that sometimes our flaws are the means by which we find redemption; and outward favor can mask flaws. It's a crazy, mixed up world, and we'd not have it any other way. We want to read about flaws, favors, and turns of fate. Send us your most secret flaws, your most fabulous favors. For more information see here [here](#).

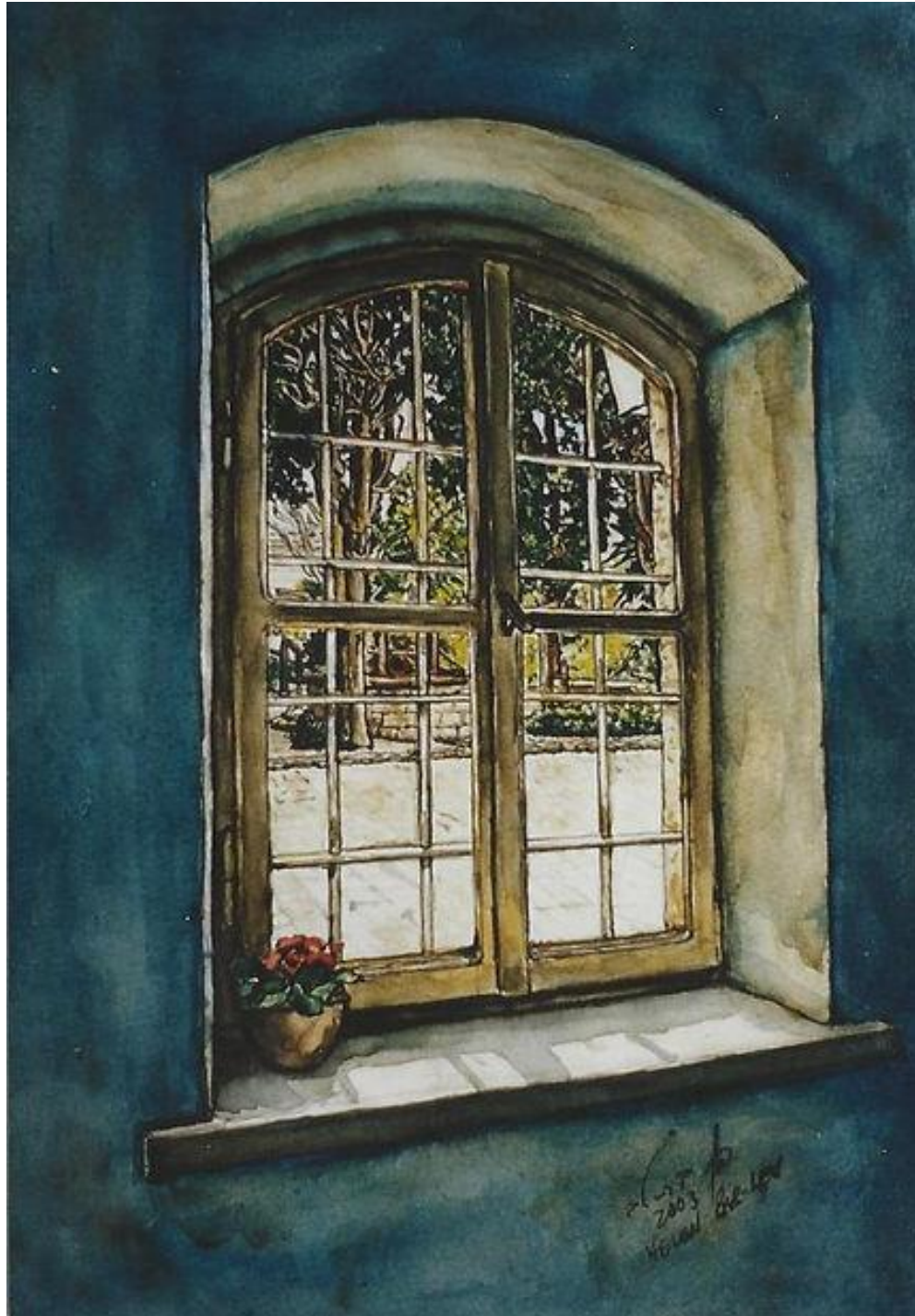
Yaffle Competition seeks submissions for poems for The Yaffle Prize 2025 by 8th March. £200 prize – entry fee £6 for one poem. See more details [here](#).

Poem Alone – seeks submissions - method is simple: one poet, one poem. To submit, send poems in the body of an email (no attachments please) to poemalone [at] outlook [dot] com, and include a brief third person bio (50 words max). See full guidelines [here](#).

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OUR MEMBERS' ART

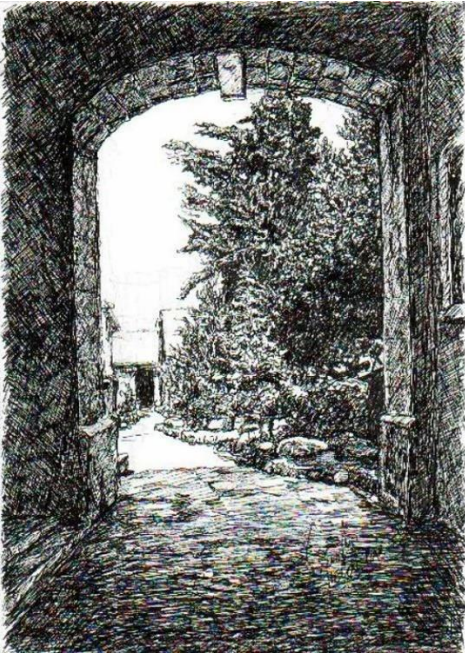
Helen Bar-Lev's Watercolour Painting - "Window in Sergei Courtyard"



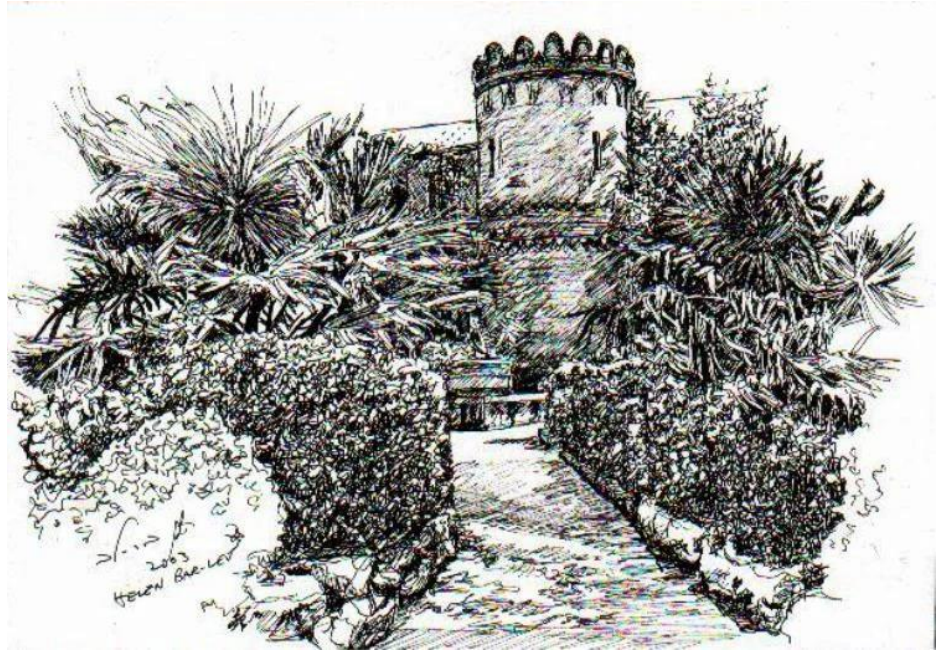
Helen writes:

In the early 2000's I was living in Jerusalem - painting, teaching, and selling some of my 'nature' things in the store of the Society for Protection of Nature, then located just opposite the Russian Compound. I also frequently brought students to sit and do artwork in their courtyard. I sold bookmarks of flowers, some pressed, some with my paintings of flowers; prints of the art I had done in their courtyard, a poetry book on animals... And so, one day, in the office of the director, Naomi Tsur, I saw this window and did a painting of it.

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This is an ink sketch of the entrance to the courtyard



Another sketch inside the compound. This image was used for T-shirts they printed up



The compound was returned to the Russians some years ago and the SPNI has moved.
And so have I.
Good days they were.

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Eli Ben-Joseph's Drawing
based on a newly discovered Da Vinci drawing "Bella Principessa"



The recently discovered portrait *La Bella Principessa*, The Beautiful Princess, is a chalk-and-ink portrait attributed to Leonardo Da Vinci, whose realistic style has interested me. When I first saw the original online, I was attracted to the subject's sweet smile and fine hair net. In drawing a take-off of the original, I have used colored pencils of varying hardness.

Eli Ben-Joseph

--



Front cover "Faraway" an acrylic on canvas, 16"x 20" – Judith Robinson

This is not a realistic depiction of a place, but rather a fanciful one; the colors and perspective are all imagined and idealised. In this and in other paintings I like exercising imagination.

KINGFISHER – THE COLOUR OF WORDS

by Julian Alper

W. H. Davies portrays a brightly coloured kingfisher in his poem “The Kingfisher”.

*It was the Rainbow gave thee birth,
And left thee all her lovely hues;
And, as her mother's name was Tears,
So runs it in my blood to choose
For haunts the lonely pools, and keep
In company with trees that weep.*



There are several different varieties of kingfisher found all over the world but given that Davies spent much of his life in England and Wales, more likely than not he is describing the common kingfisher. When I lived in England, to see an electric blue flash as a kingfisher flew by was certainly not a common occurrence, rather, it was a once-in-a-blue-moon occasion. But here in Israel, we are lucky enough to see three different kinds of kingfishers – as well as the common kingfisher, its larger 'cousin' the white-throated kingfisher, and the pied (black and white) kingfisher. The common kingfisher is as majestic as its name implies and as Davies describes, it has a vivid blue back and head and pinky-orange breast. These rainbow colours make it clearly distinguishable from all other birds.

When you see a kingfisher perched very still on a branch of a tree or on reeds by the lakeside, you might be forgiven for believing it was enjoying life in the slow lane. In fact, you might think of W. H. Davies' words in his famous poem “Leisure”

*What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.*

But nothing could be further from the truth – the kingfisher doesn't have time to 'stand and stare' for very long. It's a small bird, barely bigger than a sparrow, and since each day it needs to eat about sixty percent of its body weight, it's constantly on the lookout for a nice fish or crab for breakfast, lunch and supper. It has no time for passively watching the world fly by.

I'm always surprised when I see a very colourful 'hunting' bird. I would have guessed that they would be more successful if they were a dull brown colour, but the kingfisher is such a capable fisher (the king amongst the fishers) that its bright colours don't seem to be a handicap at all.



KINGFISHER IN TEL AVIV - JULIAN ALPER

William Henry Davies knew a little bit about colour. He, himself, was a colourful character – he was found guilty of stealing handbags as a schoolboy and later he spent several years as a hobo (tramp) in the United States. On one occasion he jumped off a rail-road train and injured a leg so badly that it had to be amputated below the knee. He was in and out of 'boodle jails' in Michigan, where he found 'cheap' accommodation and plenty of time to drink, smoke and play cards..... and also to read.

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In his thirties he relocated to London, where he moved in literary circles. Friends included Hilaire Belloc and W.B. Yeats, and he settled down to become a serious poet. Amongst his many poems was 'The Kingfisher', written in 1920.

Another similarly colourful character, the painter Vincent van Gogh, was also attracted by kingfishers. 'Kingfisher by the Waterside', which he painted in 1886, depicts the bird's plumage but it's not nearly as colourful as it should be - indeed it is considerably duller than in real life. While in English tradition we recognise the bird's majestic appearance and top-

notch fishing ability and afford it the literary title the 'Fisher King' or more recently simply the 'kingfisher', this is not so in other languages. In van Gogh's Dutch, the kingfisher would be the 'ijsvogel', literally 'ice bird' and in French it is 'le martin-pêcheur d'Europe', literally the 'European swift fisher' (a bird of the swift family that feeds on fish). It's hard to be critical of the king of painters, but I suspect that van Gogh hadn't ever seen a live kingfisher. After a little Google research (which, I understand was not possible for van Gogh) and a recent trip to Jerusalem's Natural History Museum, I think I understand why van



KINGFISHER IN TEL AVIV - JULIAN ALPER

Gogh's kingfisher was so dull-feathered. Amongst the hundreds of exhibits at the museum was a long-dead common kingfisher that looked decidedly jaded. And guess what, van Gogh used a taxidermized bird as his model.

I'm mildly amused that in depicting the colours of the kingfisher the poet painted a more realistic image with his words than the artist with his brush. A thousand words can sometimes be worth more than a picture.



VAN GOGH'S KINGFISHER – WIKIPEDIA



KINGFISHER IN JERUSALEM'S NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
JULIAN ALPER

Julian Alper is a nature photographer and blogger – see his blog at <https://natureofisrael.blogspot.com/>.

A COMB-OVER'S TALE

By Birgit Talmon

In his prime of life there was no shortage of us. Side by side we were there forming his luxurious profusion of hair. Each and every one of us had our specific places. In those days the “cow-lick” was the fashion, deeply aspired to by all. I, as a sideburn member, was kept fairly close-cropped.

Over the years the ranks have thinned considerably. Holds weakening, departures continue, at times on the pillow, at times on the shoulder. Likewise there was a most unfortunate incident in the soup the other day.

There are to be no gaps showing. Thus we are requested, one after the other, to come to the rescue, which slowly covers less and less efficiently the baldheaded truth.

As aforementioned, I am a sideburn native and the day came, when it was my turn to enter the stopgap-ranks. With so many friends departing on one-way tickets I became important as never before. In the process of growing as long as required for my new task, I was slowly redirected. At first slightly uphill, then sprawling across the wasteland once adorned by the loop of the towering cow-lick and finally downwards the other side until united there with new comrades.

So, here I am, extended to the best of my ability. With some, the reinforcements of comb-overs are recruited from astern. We here are dragged exclusively from right to left. The lonelier it gets on this barren plain it's only by a hair's breadth that I succeed in staying put on the exact spot meticulously allotted me by the fine-toothed comb.

In headwinds I'm in a tight spot. At moments like that I have a tendency to quickly crowd up with the others. We then, the conglomerated bunch of us, flutter like a flag of which no self-respecting flagstaff would be proud.

Our Master no longer has much confidence in our ability to fulfill the task. This I gather from the glistening, wonderfully odorous and sticky stuff, which makes it impossible for me to slide astray at this evening's concert.

On the stage the ensemble has gathered. Horsetail hairs meet delicate gut strings, nestling close, to be followed by wild bowing and stroking. All this, of course in time to the conductor's arms and the hall is filled with beautiful music; yet it does not cause me the joy I usually feel at such events. I recall only, what I'd seen.

On rising at the usual time I happened to look back over Master's shoulder. Having lost the hold, you had failed to get up with the rest of us; just lay motionless on the pillow until the morning breeze silently carried you away.

As sideburn natives, you and I grew long together and held on tight to one another in many a storm. That's over now – may you rest in peace.



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AN INTERVIEW WITH MALKA KELTER

by Bob Findysz

On a bright, clear, crisp but brittly cold late winter morning, I met with Malka Kelter in the cozy living room of her 6th floor apartment in Jerusalem's old Katamon neighborhood. The walls were full of artwork some but not all hers. Following are the questions which guided our conversation and Malka's responses loosely transcribed.



1. *In a recent Voices Israel newsletter I noticed a painting of an olive tree which you did. We have been writing poetry together in the Voices Jerusalem group for over five years now. But, the subject of your painting has never come up in casual conversation or within your writing. How long have you been painting? Which medium(s) do you prefer working in?*



Aside from an early attempt in the sixth grade, I really didn't get into painting until much later in life. Watercolors caught my attention. Then, I got into acrylics. Painting with oils is too much of a bother. I tend to prefer abstracts and landscapes. My mother, Hannah Libman, is actually a recognized artist who works in collages. Once in a while I use that technique as an element in a larger piece of mixed media. For example, the surrealist painting over my dining room table which you have been admiring. The central seated figure is a watercolor painting glued onto an acrylic painting.

** Do you remember when you started writing poetry? If so, how did you begin?*

For my fiftieth birthday I received a journal. I began writing songs and poems in it. Pieces of the moment, which were very therapeutic. I have used poetry to express my feelings during important periods in my life, such as when going through my divorce. Several poems are about my twins, who passed away within a week of their birth. Poetry has helped me relate to them, and heal. Writing is a valuable process, a reflection/ expression of changes I am undergoing. That collection is still in the drawer literally. Maybe someday I will publish it all in a book. I already have a working title: Let Your Light Shine.

** Do you feel painting and writing are mutually exclusive means of expressing yourself? Have you ever written any ekphrastic poetry (viz. a poem written on a visual work of art)? If so, can you give an example?*

Nowadays I am writing more than painting. But I use both to capture moments. I feel both are means to express my feelings, not just an art form. As for ekphrastic poems, I have written two. Here on the living room wall is a three-dimensional collage I call "Breakthrough". Subsequently I wrote a poem which talks about the piece. I would like to include the painting and its poem. [See **afterword**.]

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2. *Is there a poet(ess) or more whom you particularly enjoy reading? If so, who? Why do you like their writing?*

I don't really have any poets whom I read and prefer. However, I very much enjoy reading the poems of my fellow Voices Jerusalem writers. And, the monthly meetings have influenced my own writing. The feedback I get on pieces I present to the group is very supportive and encouraging. And it is valuable to be exposed to other poets' styles.

3. *When you aren't writing poetry or painting, how do you spend your time? Work? Family? Community? Other, personal pursuits?*

I am a wife, mother, grandmother and daughter. Each role is important to me. My second husband is vegan and I enjoy creating special dishes for him. Lately, I have begun baking vegan cakes for soldiers, a very special niche market! I have three sons and 14 grandchildren (between 2 and 20) whom I try to stay in close touch with. I also have a step-son to whom I feel very close. And, finally, my 95-year-old mother lives nearby and I am involved in her daily life.

Beyond my family, I am a medical clown. My clown name is Marshmallow. I started volunteering with children at Alyn quite a while ago but then took a break. Nowadays, a partner and I visit the surgical department of Sharei Tzedek. Our focus is on empowering the patient. On special occasions, such as Purim or a grandchild's birthday, I go to kindergartens. I think when I was working as a kindergarten teacher I was really an educational clown. I am also part of a puppet show team called "Sabuba" (Grandmas making puppet theater) putting on performances in kindergartens. All sorts of outlets for my creative urges.

4. *Ending on a more personal note, where did you immigrate to Israel from? How long ago?*

After spending a semester in Israel during college, I came from Connecticut to Israel in August 1973 for a cousin's wedding and basically just stayed. I always felt I was an American Jew rather than a Jewish American. So, the transition was not all that difficult. More divine intervention than fulfilling a Zionist dream. When I arrived, I wasn't particularly religious. First, I became more observant. When my twins died at birth, I was angry at God. That was the beginning of my relationship with Him.

5. *Anything else you would like to add?*

My life's been a journey, full of all kinds of stories en route. At 74, I feel I am still looking forward to what's next.



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Afterword

Herein I am including Malka's ekphrastic poem and the artwork it reflects.

Breakthrough Collage

Poster board; a new material. You need a knife to cut it.
Quite a change from aquarelle – or watercolor, as you know it.
No wet-on-wet, to let it flow, and spread throughout the page;
Each cut takes strength and effort, to form each angle and shape.

So I paste the shapes and pieces, to give height, but also depth –
I work by instinct and intuition; no intentional plans or steps.
But one thing I know from Art Therapy, is that nothing in art is just
“chance”;
So I take a step back to observe what I did, and my feelings are just
enhanced:

Each piece has a unique formation; no two shapes are quite the same.
They make contact with each other, but they intersect from different planes.
The triangles and the diagonals seem to dominate the piece;
Yes, a few curves are there to soften, but there's a lot of energy released!

The shapes push through from above or below – they need their own exposure!
Even the frame is not solid, complete – I won't tolerate enclosure.
No symmetry is found in this collage; its message is loud and clear:
“Here I come, ready or not!” Breakthrough-time is finally here!

And when I start to paint the shapes, the collage seems to come alive!
The primary colors are vibrant – like my spirit, which wants to thrive!
And once I start, I feel compelled to work until it's complete –
I want to follow the process through, and see the finished feat!

When it's done, I can see, and almost touch, the feelings these pieces convey.
It's amazing how shapes and colors, alone, have so much to tell and to say.
There's no need for a picture, or landscape, to express pure emotion or mood –
I can finally appreciate abstract art, like a taste for a new kind of food.

One area is dark and cavelike, like the “Blue Hole” that divers explore;
But light keeps breaking through it, and coming to the fore.
And on the side is expressed the theme of starting a new life –
The Phoenix-bird emerges, born from ashes of fire and strife.

I see images of “vision”, and “horizon”, and “a dream”,
I see “hope” to meet the challenges, whatever they may be.
I see a pure white shape, like a flock of birds in the sky;
To survive and escape a frozen world, to a new life they must fly.

So a few pieces of poster board, and a few tubes of colorful paint
Can represent the past, and the future that awaits.
This collage expresses where I've been, and where I hope to be,
As I rebuild my life, with G-d by my side, finally free to just be “me”.



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