

VOICES ISRAEL
GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025





VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

MAY 2025 NEWSLETTER

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Dates for your Diary

Save this date for a Voices
Israel workshop
24th June – Further details on
page 7

Kindness (A haiku)

A wounded sparrow
cries out to you for comfort.
Do not walk away.

Pesach Rotem

Aphorism of the Month

I seem to wax more poetic as
I wane.

Ethelea Katzenell



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

And after April, when May follows, And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!

Robert Browning

It was so sad to hear last week, news of the passing of our dear member Susan Rosenberg, a remarkable woman and long-standing member of Voices Israel. Susan had recently celebrated her 100th birthday, which we marked with a special birthday tribute to her in the November 2024 Newsletter. We plan to have an obituary/tribute to Susan in a forthcoming Newsletter. If you would like to contribute to this feature with photos, words or poems about Susan, please e-mail to Wendy Blumfield blumfieldwendy@gmail.com by 15th May.

Just a few days ago we celebrated the prize winners and those who received Honourable Mentions in the 2024 Reuben Rose competition (the 35th such competition). It was a wonderfully enjoyable evening – the highlight being the reading of the winning poems and an Open Mic session. If you couldn't take part, there is a recording which you can view by clicking on this link - [YouTube](#). During the coming weeks we will review the format of the competition – if you would like to take part in this review, please take a look at the details on page 7.

For me the greatest honour as a poet would be to receive a prize or an Honourable mention in the Reuben Rose competition. I've submitted several poems over the last few years without success. But I'm determined to keep trying to improve, in the hope that one day I will succeed. With that in mind I'm looking forward to the next Voices Israel workshop, 'Two American Poets – a Midsummer Workshop in Haifa' - see details on page 7. If you're a little nervous about participating, I'd like to tell you that I too was somewhat anxious before my first workshop. But I needn't have worried – the workshops are conducted in a friendly, supportive environment with nobody put on the spot or made to feel uncomfortable in any way, and even more importantly, I felt I gained a terrific amount from the ideas and enthusiasm generated there. It was very inspiring.

In last month's Newsletter I noted that we are considering a Poetry Appreciation group. A number of people responded to express interest, so very soon we will send out more details of how and when this group will operate.

It is well-documented that Jewish and Israeli poets are finding it hard to get poems published in a fiercely anti-Semitic world. Various new opportunities are available for poets which we try to feature in the 'Calls for Submission' section of the Newsletter. If you know of any good opportunities for places to submit poems, please do let me know.

The newsletter is enhanced enormously by your contributions. Members really do enjoy reading and viewing what you share, and it is wonderful to showcase our members' many and varied talents. So, please don't be shy, keep sending your artwork, your essays and your letters to the editor. [Also, a Haiku or Aphorism for page 2, or one of your photos to complement a stanza or a few lines from a favourite poem.](#)

Kind regards,



Julian Alper,
President, Voices Israel.

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MEETING DATES, TIMES AND PLACES - MAY 2025

SOUTHERN Meeting via Zoom Sunday, May 11 at 5:00 PM Coordinator: Miriam Green miriamsgreen@gmail.com	TEL AVIV Meeting via Zoom Thursday, May 8 at 7:00 PM Coordinator: Mark L. Levinson Mobile: 054-444-8438 nosnivel@netvision.net.il	JERUSALEM Meeting via Zoom Tuesday, May 20 at 7:30 PM Coordinator: Avril Meallem Tel: 02-567-0998 aemeallem@gmail.com	UPPER GALILEE Wednesday, May 21 at 12:30 . 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, May 20 at 7:00 PM at Iris Dan's home Contact Naomi Yalin for details Coordinator: Naomi Yalin Mobile: 054-794-3738 naomiyalin@gmail.com	NETANYA/SHARON Monday, May 26 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, May 22 At 19:30 Israel time Coordinator: Shoshana Kent Mobile: +972-52-808-9365 y2nosh@gmail.com	GLOBAL GROUP 2 Meeting via Zoom Sunday, May 4 At 19:00 Israel time Coordinator: Judy Koren Mobile: +972-54-741-7860 koren.judy@gmail.com

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS

- To - **Voices Israel members**, whose poems have been selected for the Voices Israel 2025 Anthology.
- To - **Isaac Cohen** for his many successes throughout the month.
- To - **Pessy Krausz**, whose article 'Sheila Patz - The Secret of Long Life' and poem 'Cry the beloved' are published in the ESRA magazine. Pessy's poem can be read in the Poet's Corner section of this Newsletter. And Pessy's poem 'Cry the beloved... a new song' was published in the Jerusalem Report magazine.
- To - **Mara Lee Grayson**, who has had three poems published:
- 'footnote 1. the verb' in New Feathers Anthology – you can read the poem [here](#)
 - 'How to be the Mother of a Missing Daughter' in Variant Literature – which can be read [here](#)
 - 'Cross-Country Hydatidiform' in Pedestal Magazine – you can read the poem [here](#)
- To - **Amiel Schotz**, whose poem "I have this dreadful weariness" has been accepted for inclusion in the Voices Unbound (University of Pennsylvania) International Anthology. Amiel's poem can be read in the Poet's Corner section of this Newsletter.
- To - **Gail Wasserman**, whose poem 'I am the Sun This is My Promise' was published in the local paper Benicia Herald and in the Moonstone Arts World Poetry 2025 Anthology – the poem can be read in the Poet's Corner section of this Newsletter.
- To - **Helen Bar-Lev, Peter Bernstein, Mark Elber, Judy Koren, Judith Robinson and Susan Olsburgh** who have all has poems published in the Poetry Super Highway's 27th annual Holocaust Remembrance issue which is now online and can be read by clicking [here](#).
- To - **Helen Bar-Lev** who was commissioned by Winning Writers to do a painting to illustrate a winning poem called Shoulder Season (by D.T. Christensen) – you can read the poem and see Helen's painting by clicking [here](#).
- To - **Hyam Abramson, Bob Findysz and Pessy Krausz** who have poems included in an Anthology 'War/Peace in Gaza' – the poems can be read in the Poet's Corner section of this Newsletter.
- To - **Esther Cameron** who has had 'Three Poems for Poets' published in the April edition of New English Review – you can read Esther's poems [here](#).
- To - **Mark Levinson** – who was a runner up in the Saturday Evening Post's limerick contest (announced in the January newsletter). You can read Marks's limerick [here](#).
- To - **Michael Stone** for his recent publications of English, literary translations of mediaeval Armenian poetry.
- To - **Wendy Blumfield** for her recent book review in the Jerusalem Report and article in the ESRA magazine.

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SAD NEWS – SUSAN ROSENBERG Z”L

It was with much sadness that we heard of the passing of our dearly beloved member, Susan Rosenberg z”l, who passed away just a few months after celebrating her 100th birthday. We send our sincere condolences to all of Susan’s family.

We are compiling a tribute/obituary for Susan for a forthcoming Newsletter. If you have any poems, photos or memories of Susan, please e-mail to Wendy Blumfield blumfieldwendy@gmail.com by 15th May.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

➤ **Amir Coosner** of Haifa

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.

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: 10:00-13:00; 15:00-18:00. Friday: 10:00-13:00.



Nefesh B’Nefesh Event - Jennifer Lang will be discussing her books *Places We Left Behind* and *Landed: A Yogi's Memoir in Pieces and Poses* with writer Amital Stern and yoga instructor Elyse Chaya Bracha on Sunday, May 4th, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m at Nefesh Be'Nefesh Jerusalem / Cinema City. For details and registration, see <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/jennifer-lang-book-signing-tickets-1298284165889?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Free Book: Submit, Publish, Repeat – How to Publish Your Creative Writing in Literary Journals (Updated for 2025)

Dear Writers,

Announcing the latest edition of *Submit, Publish, Repeat*. This book is the definitive guide to publishing your creative writing in literary journals. The book has been fully updated for 2025, with fully updated lists of literary journals seeking submissions. (In addition to the comprehensive guide to submitting and publishing your work.)

We're giving away the book, completely free.

Get your free copy here:

Free Book: Submit, Publish, Repeat (2025 Edition)

The book has helped many authors get their start with publishing.

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VOICES ISRAEL – WORKSHOP

Voices Israel invites you to celebrate the balmy days of summer with a workshop on



TWO AMERICAN POETS

A Midsummer Workshop in Haifa

Tuesday June 24th, 2025

10:30-15:30

Mercaz Hadarim,
25 Rehov Kiryat Sefer, Ahuza, Haifa

Wendy Blumfield will present the work of the feminist, immigration activist and poet **Emma Lazarus**

Pesach Rotem will present the work of **Bob Dylan**, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, and his literary heroes.

Presentations will be followed by writing exercises so bring your lap-tops, pens and paper, quills and ink, whatever inspires your muse.



There will be a break for lunch between the two sessions. **Please bring a Vegetarian Kosher dish to share**
The fee for this workshop is 25NIS

To register click [here](#).

REUBEN ROSE COMPETITION REVIEW

You are invited to participate in a review of the format for the next Reuben Rose competition.

We will discuss possible ways to increase the number of poems submitted.

For example, should we reduce the entry fee (and the prize money)?

And should we have a separate book for the winning poems?

If you would like to participate in a Zoom Meeting at 9pm on Tuesday 13 May please e-mail president.voices@gmail.com. Also e-mail if you can't participate but would like your ideas to be considered.

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JERUSALISM EVENT



Join us for a special evening of poetry and reflections on the current state of publishing at the Community Gardens of the Natural History Museum in Jerusalem's German Colony.

The two participating authors—Marcela Sulak & Jane Medved—are English-language Israeli poets who both published books in the last year and attended the recent Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) annual conference in the US. At the event, MC Penina Simkovitz will invite Marcela to share from her book *The Fault* (Black Lawrence Press, 2024) and Jane from her book *Wayfarers* (Off the Grid Press, 2025). Then, local poet Lonnie Monka will interview Marcela and Jane about their experiences publishing and attending the AWP conference during these strange times.

In Israel, we are operating under challenging, ongoing traumatic conditions. Publishing English-language poetry with foreign presses is no small feat, in general, but especially impressive now. Additionally, attending the AWP conference, amidst concerns about expressions of anti-Israel and anti-semitic sentiments, suddenly takes on a new dimension of courage. Through this event, we will celebrate these new books and explore sensitive questions about the contemporary state of publishing.

The event will be held in the small booth in the corner of the Community Garden. Like most Jerusalem events, it will be free of charge (anyone interested in donating to Jerusalemism is welcome to contact us at: Jerusalemism@gmail.com). We will gather at 19:00 and start the readings at 19:30.

Bring receptive ears, an open heart, and literary questions. We look forward to seeing you there.

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CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

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](#).

The Haiku Shack Magazine is seeking poetry and micro fiction in English for its second issue. Deadline: June 30, 2025 or whenever a total of 40 accepted pieces has been reached. Theme: "What does home mean to you?" - 100 words maximum per piece, up to 3 pieces per person, previously published work acceptable, fee: \$0 (but donations appreciated). Complete guidelines: <https://creativeramblings.com/haiku-shack-magazine>.

Otherwise Engaged Literature and Arts Journal is a biannual literature and arts journal open to submissions from all artists, writers, and photographers worldwide – submit 3-5 poems in .doc, docx, or rtf formats. When entering a submission, please include a 20-50 word biography to be printed alongside your piece in the event that it is accepted for publication. Deadline: May 13, 2025. Email: otherwiseengagedjournal@gmail.com. The publication will be available in print on Amazon by July 9, 2025. Contributors will receive a PDF copy.

The Deronda Review is primarily a poetry magazine, but we are also open to short fiction, essay, and memoir. For the magazine itself, prose submissions should be a maximum of 500 words. However, longer prose works may be published on our homepage. Poetry submissions should consist of up to five poems, either in ONE Word document or in the body of the email. Only works with special graphic requirements should be sent in a .pdf. We are open to reprints and simultaneous submissions; if your submission is simultaneous, please tell us so. We recommend that you read an issue (see current issue and "Archives" section), and consider our statement on the aims and character of the magazine, [here](#). We publish one issue annually. Our next reading period will be from May 15 to July 15, 2025. Send to Esther Cameron, derondareview@gmail.com, or to Mindy Aber Barad, maber4kids@yahoo.com. For the 2025 issue, we will continue the theme of Trust (primarily among fellow-humans), and add that of Will. Poems on other themes, especially nature and the seasons and any of our past themes (see the Archives), will also be considered.

Write-Haus Magazine is now accepting submissions to be included in its fifth print issue, **"In Parentheses."** **Grammatically**, we use parentheses to present pertinent, but often secondary information. They can clarify a point or offer a quiet aside, sometimes gently, and sometimes disruptively. They sit within the flow of a sentence but often call attention to themselves.

Figuratively, we see parentheses as holding the daily happenings of our lives: glances exchanged between strangers on a crowded bus, puffer jackets on a summer day, a missed call, a good morning and goodnight. Parentheses mark the soft boundaries of the everyday—the spaces where we meet each other, even for a moment, in real and surprising ways.

For Issue 05, we are looking for poetry, prose, and visual art that respond to this theme—both its grammatical and metaphorical meanings. Send us work that clarifies or complicates; that offers a side note or a second look; that disrupts syntax and challenges form; that reveals the beauty in our experiences whether big or small. From cover to cover, this issue will serve as the parentheses that hold your work, (eternally).

We look forward to reading and viewing your works, **In Parentheses**.

Send your submissions through to writehausmagazine@gmail.com.

For more details see: <https://write-haus.com/issue-05-submission-guidelines/>

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Minyan Magazine (<https://www.minyanmag.com/>) publishes poetry and flash fiction written by Jews and their allies alongside one another. Although we like work with a Jewish theme, we also enjoy work with secular themes. Send us your best, regardless of the theme! Please note that we are a journal of tolerance. It would be a great idea to look at our previous issues to get a sense of what we publish, and all of our issues are free to read! Unsolicited submissions containing three to five previously unpublished poems or up to three flash fiction stories are welcome year-round.

Poetry Submissions

- Please make sure that your poetry submission contains only one Word document or .pdf with your 3-5 previously unpublished poems.
- Please include your short bio in your cover letter.
- Work should be submitted using our [Submittable](#) link.
- We provide a free option and a \$5 option for expedited submissions. Using the \$5 option guarantees that we will respond within 10 days. This small contribution goes towards keeping the magazine going.

Submissions to **New English Review** (the monthly magazine) should be sent to kendra@newenglishreview.org. There is no word limit, but please keep in mind that your work will be read online. Submissions for the coming month are due by the 20th of the previous month. (Example, submissions for June must be in by the 20th of May.) Timely or news-relevant pieces will be accepted at any time. If you wish to submit please click [here](#) for guidelines on submitting.

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

The Literary Times invites writers, poets, and artists to submit their work for upcoming issue 06, exploring the theme of 'Forbidden.'

Submission guidelines: Submissions are completely free, submit your work via google forms, submissions must be in doc or pdf format, all works should be submitted in one single file.

For more information see <https://theliterarytimes.wordpress.com/magazine-submissions/>

Deadline: 18th May, 2025!

**If any members would like to
help in compiling this page for
future editions of Newsletters,
please email
newsletter.voices@gmail.com**

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OUR MEMBERS' ART

Brenda Brett's 'LA Dolce Vita, Amalfi' - Charcoal and pencil on paper.



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Front cover – Miriam Webber - For this mosaic, titled "Shell fish" I took a walk to the beach off Moshav Habonim where I live, and collected a bag of small shells. My son cut down several forks for fins and tail, and the head is a dinner plate. The blue surround is made up of broken plates and tiles. This is one of five mosaic pieces on the walls of my kitchen, all linked to food in one way or another.

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POETRY AND THE IRISH JEWISH MUSEUM

By Yvonne Altman O'Connor



The Jewish Museum in Dublin is an intriguing place. It was opened in 1985 by President Chaim Herzog while on a state visit to the city where he grew up. His father, Rabbi Dr. Izack Herzog had been appointed as the first Chief Rabbi of Ireland in 1922.

The museum is situated in two former homes in the Jewish area of the city which also housed one of the many little shuls that was created as the community grew rapidly with new arrivals from Russia (mostly from what is now Lithuania) from the 1880's on. The synagogue remains just as it was, with the ladies' section now displaying Religious objects and information for visitors.

Throughout the museum, there are displays of documents and memorabilia showing the long history of the Jewish presence in Ireland. It is a goal of the museum to educate about the Shoah. The museum hosts students from all over Ireland who come to learn about the Jewish religion and culture. We also have a

steady stream of international tourists and we hold regular events on various Jewish topics which are open to everyone.

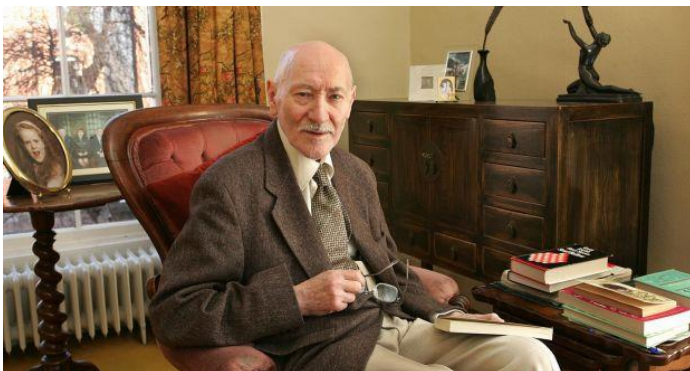
The museum is small, old-fashioned and captivating. Every item tells a story and visitors usually enjoy a personal tour. Along with a small cohort of dedicated volunteers, I have been involved with the running of the museum for many years.

Despite being overshadowed by the notorious fictional character, Leopold Bloom, from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the Irish Jewish community has made significant contribution to the literary world. Writers such as Hannah Berman, Michael Sayer, Leslie Daiken, David Marcus, and the young person's author, Marilyn Taylor among others, come to mind.

David Marcus, (1924-2009), himself a writer of fiction and poetry was for more than 60 years a major figure in the Irish literary landscape and considered the most important literary editor in



The Museum



David Marcus – Photo by Matt Kavanagh

Ireland during the second half of the twentieth century, fostering the skills of generations of young, aspiring writers and poets. His own poetry collection *Lost and Found* was published in 2007 but his novels where he explored what he called "the ongoing trauma" of juggling a "hyphenated heritage of being a Jew in Ireland are perhaps better known. The museum held an evening of poetry in tribute to him following his death in 2009.

A poet who is often overlooked and who emerged from the Irish Jewish community is Hyman Edelstein (1899-1957). Edelstein was born in Dublin where his father was a framer of holy pictures, much sought after by the

catholic population. He studied at Trinity College but emigrated to Canada at the age of 23. There, he became editor of the Canadian Jewish Times, the Canadian Jewish Chronicle and the Jewish weekly and other Jewish publications. he was one of the original members of the Canadian Authors' Association. He published his first book of poetry *Judean Vineyards*, in 1914 and went on to publish eleven volumes of poetry in his lifetime. He is a poet concerned with spiritual,

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social and moral issues. His last work, *Spirit of Israel and other poems* (1950) emphasises his strong interest in social justice.

From time to time, the museum has held poetry readings from visiting poets or Jewish poets who moved to Ireland such as the recently deceased Judith Mok. It was a great pleasure to host contemporary poet, Dubliner Simon Lewis whose first book of poetry *Jewtown* was published in 2016. In this work, Lewis reflects on the Jewish community of Cork where his family arrived from Lithuania in the 1880's. The poet pays homage to the Cork Synagogue which sadly had its last Sabbath with the closing of the shul the same year. (2016).

Ordinarily, poetry would not be a feature in the museum but there is an exception. Currently, we are holding an



Portrait of Rosa Solomons by her daughter, Estella Solomons
©The Trustees of the Estate of Estella Solomons

exhibition on **The Solomons family of Dublin**, an exceptional family who arrived in Ireland in 1824 and were involved in many aspects of Irish social, cultural and religious life, producing also one of our greatest artists, Estella Solomons. Her mother Rosa Solomons (1843-1926) was a gifted linguist and pianist. She was instrumental in the development of Jewish education and the creation of the main Synagogue at Adelaide Rd. (est. 1892) She published poetry inspired by her personal and spiritual life, including the collections *Facts and Fancies* (1883) and *The Memorial Lamp and Other Poems* (1924). For international poetry Day 2022, the museum posted some of her work here: https://jewishmuseum.ie/news_and_events/poetry-day-ireland-2022/

Lastly, to commemorate the visit of President Herzog in 1985, a limited edition of *Four Modern Gaelic Poets in Hebrew* (translated by Dr. Penina Nave and Professor Daithi O hUaithne) was printed and a copy is on permanent display at the museum. For me, nothing captures the spirit of the museum more than seeing these powerful modern poems written in ancient Gaelic lying side by side with their Hebrew versions, two worlds converging.

The museum website: www.jewishmuseum.ie



Continued on next page ...

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The Memorial Lamp by Rosa Solomons

A feeble Lamp set on a pedestal,
Sheds in a quiet room its flickering ray;
This glimmering light illumines sad memories,
But who would throw on grief the glare of day?

As each recurring year brings back the date
When grief was poignant, that may now be dim,
We fondly, sadly think of bygone loves,
Resigned, the faint Memorial Lamp we trim.

Twelve hours from sundown to the dawn of day
It gently burns, and through the night our eyes,
Unused to pale light, waken oft, we dream,
And from strange dreams that Lamp to trim we rise.

Thus to the memory of dear ones gone,
(Upon the anniversary of death);
Love's hand lights reverently yon mournful Lamp,
Extinguished not more quick than human breath.

Hyman Edelstein from *Spirit of Israel* (1942) Ryerson Press Toronto

"And let there be but one Righteous."-Bible.

*The drooped sun glared one monstrous living coal,
And all around the fires of Sodom blazed...
The skyscrapers, lancing the higher air,
Shot up like spears of flame into the void-
With a prophetic glow the City burned.*

*Of a sudden I beheld Him,
In a saving moment I espied him:
Out of the blurred dusk of a doorway
In a tenement basement,
As from some dark cavern of Horeb,
Shining with white beard and cherub eyes-
Old Israel's eyes, those honest eyes,
That looked straight into God's-
Like Moses' unveiled face from the midst of the thick cloud;
And under his arm a Book, hugged hard to his heart,
And he walked anciently, on his staff bending heavily...*

*And the mountains of tenements were suddenly black with the
smoke of Sinai-
Yea, the Holy Mountains of tenements thundered and lightened
and quaked ...*

With thanks to the Irish Jewish Museum for supplying photographs for this article.

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A CITY ARISES

By Wendy Blumfield

May 13th, 1941, the East End of London was burnt to the ground, an all-night strafing of German bombers aiming for the Docks. My grandmother was killed by the blast, even though she and my grandfather were in their basement shelter. As an infant at the time I was not witness to these events, but later heard the family stories.

All the uncles and aunts had moved out to the suburbs but on hearing the news of the Blitz, my father and eldest brother set out to find out what had happened to the grandparents. As they made their way through the East End, weaving their way through broken glass and rubble, destroyed buildings still on fire, they came to the house in Wilkes Street. Only the front wall was standing, the telephone ironically still connected – and ringing. All morning the family had been calling only to hear the phone ringing – unanswered. A Home Guard warden approached them and told them that my grandmother had been taken to hospital where she passed away but that my grandfather had survived uninjured.

One should not assume that young children do not absorb the fear and trauma of war, however much parents try to protect them. The nuances in family conversation, the nightly bombing on our London suburb, the shortage of food all give a clear message that all is not well. The son of a neighbor was killed at Arnhem and I blamed myself because when he was last on leave I had been cross with him for not playing a game with me. Perhaps it is this that made me, still a small child, rejoice in the relief when the war ended. Going up to the West End to see the lights coming on in Piccadilly after five years of blackout; travelling on a train to see the beach and the sea for the first time; going with my mother to buy a longed-for dolls pram. Perhaps it was this, still a small child, that left me with life-long traumatic memories of explosions that one time blew me out of my cot in the shelter, of the musty dry concrete smell of the shelter and the spiders crawling up the walls, a fear of closed spaces.

We had no further connection with the East End, but as I grew up and heard these war stories I was curious to know more about the place and the people who had lived there. In the 1980's on a visit to London from Israel, I asked my two brothers to take me to the East End. They were both much older than me, one brother had been a schoolboy during the war and the other had gone into the Army in the final year and they had happy memories of visiting the grandparents in the East End.

53 Wilkes Street was located in the Spitalfields neighborhood, but No. 53 was no longer standing. It was a car park surrounded by bleak sooty buildings. Bomb sites had mostly been rebuilt with modern blocks, so out of keeping with what was once a thriving immigrant community, first the Huguenots who brought their silk industries, then the Jews working mostly in textiles and carpentry, and later other ethnic minorities. The deserted market-place and the streets around it were all destined for demolition and redevelopment.

But Spitalfields was not going to die without a whimper. **Save Spitalfields** protestors recruited historians and architects to explore the potential of this once vibrant location. Excavating an



THE WRITER AT HOME



SPITALFIELDS: RESTORED HUGENOT HOUSES. THE WRITER WITH HER SON AND DAUGHTER AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

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old Huguenot house, the discovery of a synagogue in the basement, Princelet Street Synagogue brought great excitement to the project. A light was on in an upper floor when we passed so we rang the bell. One of the architects opened the door and explained that the building was unstable and the synagogue not open to the public. My brother explained that I was from Israel and he reluctantly allowed us in with caution. Below the scaffolding was indeed a synagogue, albeit covered in dust with faded carvings, but recognizable among all the synagogues in the world: the women's gallery, the *bimah*, the ark.

Moreover, an abandoned flat on an upper floor had sent a dedicated researcher on a long journey to solve the mystery of "*Rodinsky's Room**." When it was unlocked after many years, it was as if Rodinsky had left in a hurry and vanished. A half-drunk cup of tea was next to the unmade bed; a pot of porridge still on the stove; a chaos of papers and newspapers in 15 languages showed also an interest in the Kabbalah. Records, clothes, sweet wrappings, street maps of London suburbs – but not a clue to Rodinsky's whereabouts.

We left Spitalfields feeling depressed. I couldn't image the glory of the East End, the comradeship, described to me by the family elders.

Fast forward to June 2023. By this time both my brothers and my husband had passed away and I was the "matriarch" of our nuclear family, blessed with supportive children and a beautiful tribe of grandchildren. My children planned a special birthday treat for me – a roots trip together to England, to the places they were born and lived before our Aliyah and of course a return to the East End.

Save Spitalfields had succeeded. The narrow streets of Huguenot houses had been cleaned and paved, the houses



WILKES STREET: SITE OF THE GRANDPARENTS' HOME, DESTROYED IN THE BLITZ. NOW A CAR-PARK FOR FOOD TRUCKS.

themselves smartened up with brightly colored front doors and neat blinds or curtains. Walking tours revived the history of this vibrant community. Other historic buildings had been discovered and the Trumans Brewery and pub on the corner of Wilkes Street was full of office workers ordering a Ploughman's Lunch. No. 53 Wilkes Street was still a car park, but filled with food trucks and tables. My daughter bought us some vegetarian dumplings from a Taiwanese woman who told us the entire story of the area's rejuvenation. The once deserted Spitalfields Market, an original Victorian gem with its iron and glass domed roof

was a riot of color: clothing, shoes, household goods, trendy art pieces, oils and spices, as well as an entire section for recycled clothing and items, interspersed with food stalls for every cuisine, all packed with visitors and locals, for now the East End was a favorable location for young people working in the City.

The city had arisen, from its devastating destruction to this hub of activity, and it was possible to look back and imagine my grandparents and my parents and extended family enjoying a full community life. The market probably sold kosher chickens and herrings rather than exotic spices and trendy clothing, but the people had returned, there was music in the street and the East End had come back to life.

* *Rodinsky's Room* by Rachel Lichtenstein and Iain Sinclair (Granta Books)

This essay was first published in arc 31 the literary journal of the Israel Association of Writers in English (IAEW).

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

TRIBUTE TO RUTH FOGELMAN Z"l

Sadly, our member of very many years, Ruth Fogelman z"l, passed away on 22nd February 2025, after battling bravely through a long illness. Voices Israel is delighted to present this tribute to Ruth's memory.

Poem by Avigail Wiseglass (Ruth's daughter)



לאימי מורתי – שיר חדש אשירה לך

Within the walls
On Ararat street
Within the womb
In Tabor Olam –
That is where we first met.
Cradled in your arms
You would sing me songs.
Hand in hand we'd walk down
The cobblestone streets –
You still singing.
Awakening Jerusalem with your song.
Shir Hadash – a new song.
Then, leaving the garden,
In the new city,
On the paved streets,
I still hear your song.

[Jerusalem scenes photographed by Ruth.
Thank you to Yocheved Miriam Zemel for all her help in compiling this tribute.]

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Obituary for my mother by Avigail Wiseglass

My mother always wrote.

During the Shiva I opened an old folder that was always on the shelf but I never knew what it was. It turned out to be a diary of me as a baby that my mother had written from my perspective.

Ima, you wrote about me, and now I'm writing about you.

I remember that when we were children you used to chant Tehillim in our bedroom at night in a Sephardi tune that you loved.

And during your hospitalization I said Tehillim at your bedside, although not in the Sephardi tune.

When we were kids you made us a *Shema Al Hamita* - photocopied from a siddur and glued onto colourful paper.

And when I parted from you on your last Erev Shabbat I said the Shema with you for the very last time.

You have given me so much – and I can never give back what you have given me.

You gave me a love for words, a love for Tehillim and Hashem, a love for Jerusalem, and just love. I hope to live in the light of all you have taught me, and pray that I may pass it on to my children - and that through this you will continue to be blessed from Zion.

My children now use those colourful hand-made Shema cards at their bedtime.



Obituary by Rav Benny Lau (translated into English)

“Now therefore write this poem for yourselves” (Devarim 31:19)

The entire Torah is described as a poem, because “This is the nature of the Torah, the story of which is not clearly elucidated, but rather even the simple meaning of the text (*Peshat*) requires commentary and grammatical interpretation, before consideration of the homiletic interpretations (*Derash*).” (The Netziv of Volozhin)

I quote these lines whilst Ruth Fogelman’s face and letters appear before me.

At the 929 Project, we had the privilege of receiving over the years her Torah-inspired poetry, letters that were turned into words, a poetic creation stemming from the poetry of the Torah.

Such poetry cannot come into being without a deep sense of loving connection to the letters of the Torah. From each and every letter of her writings shines a great love for Torah and the Torah-Giver.

I am writing these lines during tense days of war and surrounded by a heavy fog that makes it difficult for us, the citizens of the State of Israel, to see the light of Jerusalem and all the goodness that God has bestowed upon us in the Return of Zion of the recent generations. Ruth was a precious stone from the stones of Jerusalem and as such illuminated both her immediate and more distant surroundings. Being exposed to her poetry softens the heart, peeling off layers and opening the barriers that separate between a person and their Torah. With faith in the light of the Torah, Ruth managed to act to bring people together. This was described by the light-seer, Rav Kook zt”l: “We have but to remove the seal from the ears of our children... and the song will strike waves in their hearts and raise their souls.” (Rav Kook, Eder HaYakar p. 48).

May her memory be a blessing and may her letters shine on.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Obituary by Sarah Yocheved Rigler (a neighbour)

Thirty-five years ago, my husband Leib and I had a traumatic experience. Our 1 1/2-year-old daughter Pliyah had a febrile convulsion. She suddenly stopped breathing and turned blue. She started breathing again, but we were totally panicked, especially because this was our first baby, born when Leib and I were 40. We rushed her to the Emergency Room at Hadassah Har HaTzofim. The next day was Erev Yom Kippur. The doctors informed us that our baby would have to stay in the hospital for Yom Kippur. Of course, I would stay with her, but my husband was too nervous to leave us even to go back to our Rova apartment to get the things we would need for Yom Kippur: *Machsorim*, slippers, and some toys and books to keep Pliyah amused over a very long day. We called our best friends in the Rova and asked them to get our key from Ruth Fogelman, our upstairs neighbor, and bring us these essential items. They politely refused. Erev Yom Kippur was too busy a day; they didn't have time. We called other close friends, but no one had the time to help us. Less than 2 hours before Kol Nidre, I was standing in the hall of the Children's Ward when I suddenly saw Ruth Fogelman walking up the hall, a big smile on her face and two shopping bags in her hands. Ruth was as busy as every other Jew that day, with three young children at home. She was a neighbor, but not a close friend. Yet somehow Ruth, and only Ruth, made the time (and spent the money to take a taxi) to help us. I cry every time I think of her amazing mitzvah. I know that now she is getting the reward for what she did.

Obituary by Yocheved Miriam Zemel

It's hard to bid adieu to my friend, Ruth
Adieu, I commit you to G-d
While I miss her embrace, her smile, her soft words of inspiration and support
I know that she is at home in heaven
She who saw G-d in every leaf, in every event, in each person
She who made time and space for all her loved ones, close and distant in time and space.
is now in the celestial expanse among the holy angels
I am grateful for her connecting me with our Torah, our biblical heroes and relating them to my life with depth, warmth and caring.
Ruth taught me how to relate to the Biblical characters as live men and women, uniting with them in their struggles and conquests, and in their everyday lives. They emerge as role models as well as fallible human beings.
She guided me to see the sensuous aspect of the world while retaining an appreciation of its awesomeness.
Her love for our Homeland, our Holy City pervades her poems
Her poem, Jacob's Ladders,* speaks about the poets of the town whose "ladders bridge earth and heaven...they stretch earth up to heaven/as they pull heaven down to earth."
Ruth was such a poet.
As coordinator of the Jerusalem Voices, she taught us all a lot. One of her messages was to be grateful, as she wrote in For All These I Am Grateful, "for my child's hug,,,and the peace in my home when everyone's asleep."**
Ruth's Poem, "Not Yet," in which the angel who has taught the fetus the Torah from beginning to end before his entering the world, then upon seeing the light of the world before entering, slaps him on his mouth and causes him to forget all the Torah completely.
Amongst the reasons that the angel cited was "you can't leave yet--/there's more you need to know---/how to fix a world that's torn/and not yet healed...****
Ruth's spirit lives on in her poems, as she continues to heal the world.
One of Ruth's Volumes of poetry is titled Cradled in God's Arms. I believe that she is currently cradled in G-d's arms and feted by our Heavenly Father and his court.
It was my privilege to be in the Jerusalem branch of Voices Israel during her leadership as co-ordinator and to be her friend and poetry partner after. Her spirit will live in me always.
*What Color Are Your Dreams, P30
** What Color Are Your Dreams P27
***What Color Are Your Dreams P24, Babylonian Talmud, Niddah 30B
****What Color Are Your Dreams PP. 24c& 25--

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Obituary – Hebrew poem by Maytal Admoni (granddaughter) translated into English

Here there was a lady
Who was Jerusalem.
Her words were Jerusalem
Her ways were Jerusalem
Her family was Jerusalem
Her love was Jerusalem.

הייתה פה אישה
שהייתה ירושלים.
מילותיה ירושלים
דרכיה ירושלים
משפחתה ירושלים
אהבתה ירושלים.

She walked through its streets
Photographing
Writing
She left her mark
Loved a deep love
Was one with the landscape.

בין רחובות העיר התהלכה
צילמה
כתבה
השאירה חותמה
אהבה אהבה עזה
הייתה חלק מהנוף.

Purple
Soul
Acceptance
Light
Learning
Striving

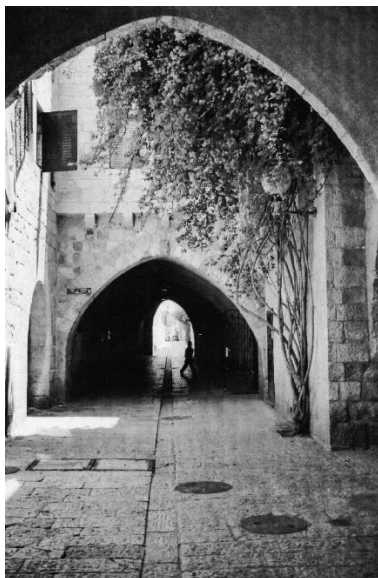
סגול
נשמה
קבלה
אורה
למידה
שאיפה.

Thank you for what you were.
Thank you for the life you lived.
Thank you for what you did.
Thank you for the love you shared.
Thank you for your hospitality.
Thank you for all you gave.
Thank you for remembering.

תודה שהיית.
תודה שחיית.
תודה שעשית.
תודה שאהבת.
תודה שאירחת.
תודה שנתת.
תודה שזכרת.

We will miss you so.

נתגעגע כל כך.



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Obituary – Hebrew poem by step granddaughter translated into English

The heart overflows with recollections
Ruthie z"l is no longer with us
Her soul ascended to the high heavens
And we remain here orphaned

Her generosity was boundless
Never expecting anything in return
A woman full of acts of kindness
That remained concealed in the shadows

I greatly appreciate her
She supported me through difficult times
At times a warm and loving hug
Positive outlook and empathy from the heart

"You are all my daughters," she would say
Regularly giving of her time
She would talk to me openly and equally
And treated my children warmly

An unforgettable lady
She has a warm place in my heart
I will learn from her ways
Her absence is painful

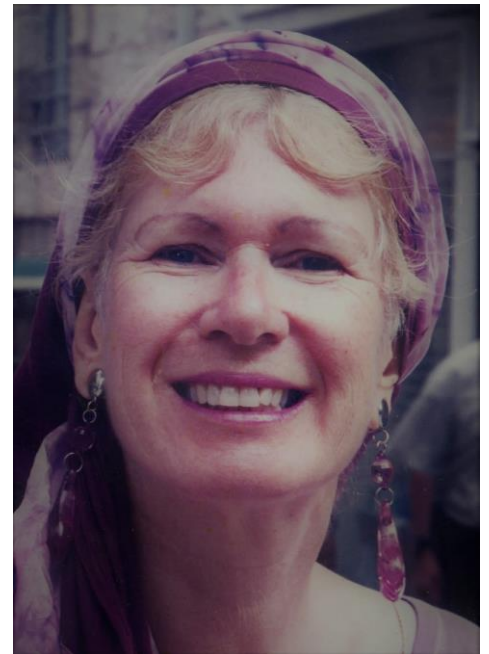
הלב מוצף הרהורים
רותי ז"ל כבר לא בין החיים
נשמתה עלתה לגנזי מרומים
ואנחנו נותרנו פה יתומים

היתה לה נתינה ללא גבול
היא לא ציפתה לתגמול
אישה מלאת חסדים
נבלעו הם בין הצללים

אותה אני מאוד מעריכה
בשעות קשות נתנה לי תמיכה
לעיתים חיבוק חם ואוהב
ראייה חיובית והשתתפות מהלב

כול היו בנותי כך אמרה
נתנה מזמנה כדבר שבשגרה
דיברה אלי בשוויון ובפתיחות
וגם לילדיי התייחסה בחמימות

אישה בלתי נשכחת
שומרת לה פינה בלב
מהדרך שלה לדרכי לוקחת
החסר שלה כואב



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Poem for Ruth by Wendy Dickstein

Tiny birds outside my window
utter not one sound,
circle round the rose bush
shivering, seeking food.
It's so cold, we're expecting snow.

Suddenly my cuckoo clock bursts into song
It's ten o'clock: they're burying my friend Ruth.
At the cemetery her children gather
bent under umbrellas and tears.
Over the years we've shared poetry and music.
Sleep peacefully, dear friend
In your cold wet grave;
may your soul rise.

We try not to listen to the news
like children whose parents try to shield them
but we, like they, know everything.
Under the ground there are people
In dark, wet prisons
struggling to get through
In your merit, gentle soul,
May they also rise.

Poem by Esther Halpern

(from Pri Hadash writing group)

אור עולם באוצר חיים אורות מאופל אמר ו'ה'
(מפיוט אחרי 'ברכו' בר"ה ויום כיפור)

Eternal light in the treasury of life
commanded G-d, light from darkness,
and there was light.

To Ruthie, my teacher,
(inspired by Ruthie herself).
With love from Esther Halpern

Ruthie shared with me
sheaves of light blessed by Heaven,
blue skies, matching eyes,

a life filled with light,
with love, kindness, joy and hope,
may He grant you all.

Erev Rosh Hashana 5785

(References to Word Sonnet by Ruth Fogelman)



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Three poems by Ruth Fogelman z"l

WORD SONNET upon radiation treatments

Blessings,
like
angels,
radiate
sheaves
of
light,
linger
on
eyelids,
kiss
my
blue
eyes.

(Published in the Deronda Review)

Just

when you feel you're crawling
through a tunnel,
and your throat tightens
as you grope, shivering
through the dark and you fear
the tunnel will swallow you,
just keep on,
inch by slow inch

until golden light
enters, expands,
and strokes you with its glow
and you emerge
and dance
towards the hope-filled day.



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

When Imagination Takes Off

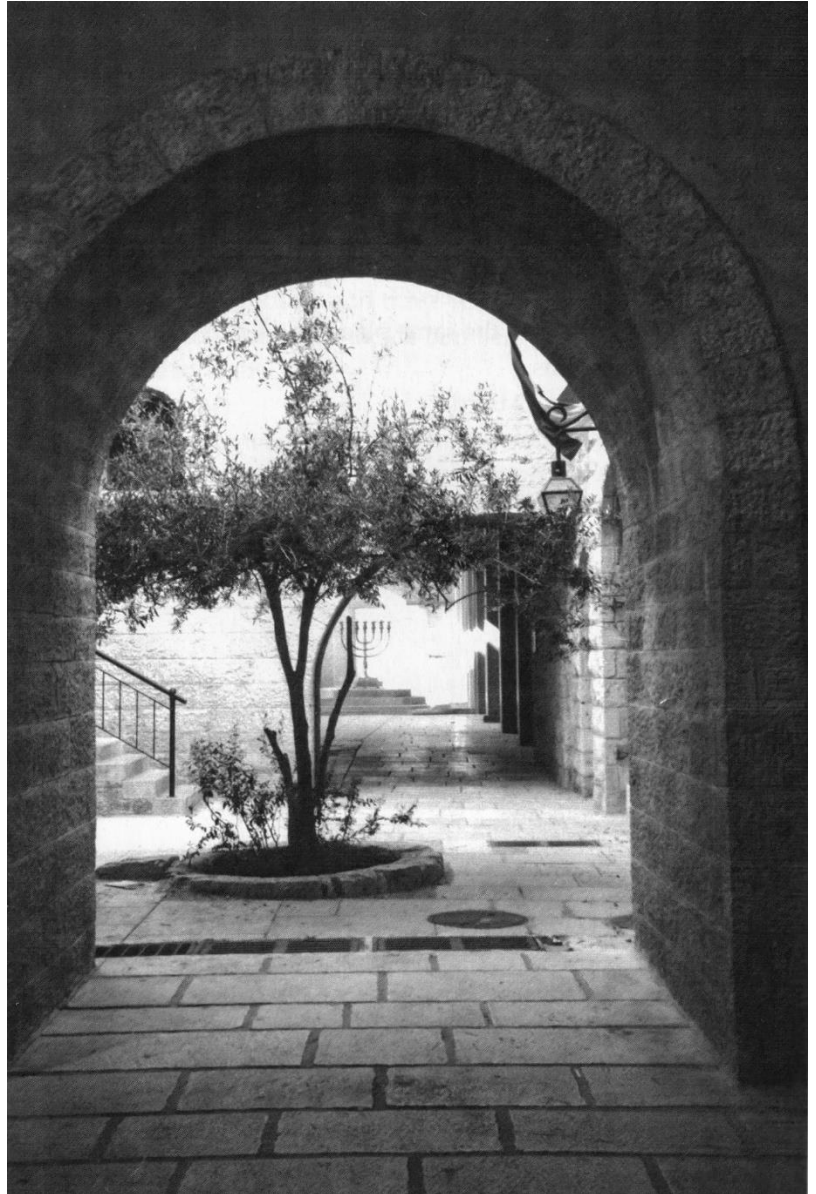
When imagination takes off
what have I left?
No imagination to wonder
where it might be.
It's certainly not napping
in such unimaginative spots
as behind the computer
or under the bed.

When imagination takes off
beyond the seas and stars,
how can I write a word?
How can I create a poem,
compose a concerto,
decorate a birthday cake,
paint a picture or sculpt,
or design a home?

Can I borrow some imagination
from my grandson
whose armored knights swing swords
in castle courts
while elephants and tigers roam with cows
and eye-patched pirates
hunt for treasure
to donate to a museum?

His imagination soars,
while mine just took off on holiday.
Now, where would my imagination go?
Basking on a Hawaiian beach?
Crossing the Norwegian fjords?
On a cloud-laced mountain peak?
On camel-back across the Sahara?
Afloat on the Dead Sea?

I just can't imagine where it could be.



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Poems co-written by Ruth z"l and Mindy Aber Barad

Fingers of Gold

A Challah Poem

By Ruth Fogelman and Mindy Aber Barad

RF Fingers of gold

Shoot from the morning sun
And curl around the waking city,
Bathing her in light.

MAB Fingers of gold

Clasp the altar.
Tufts of smoky fragrance
Float to the East.

RF Tufts of fragrance

Jasmine and pine
Are carried in the morning breeze
And seep into the crevices
Of the City's stone.

MAB They curl around the waking city.

And the altar and the smoke
The cradle of the *Shechina*
Rocks us gently

As our eyes open wide

Thank You for the gold

This is perfection!

RF As our eyes open wide

To the new day,
And we shake our bodies
From our dreams,
We inhale the fragrance of the leaves.

MAB Jasmine and pine

Ride upon the smoke
Freely

As the fingers of gold

Glow in the new light.

RF Glowing in the new light,
The leaves reflect the angels' wings,
The cobbled streets, for now, still silent,
Remind me of the footstool
Of the Throne.

MAB. We are as dreamers

As we again witness

This new day -

This renewed day of old -

The answer to our prayers

A Broad Space of Stillness

A Challah Poem

By Mindy Aber Barad and Ruth Fogelman

MAB In a broad space of stillness,
A breeze disturbs the pages of a Book.
It has lain there, open, quiet,
For thousands of years.

RF A broad space of stillness
Before the birds open their morning song,
Before the rooster's first crow,
Casts its light in the dark pre-dawn.

MAB The first light taunts
The dark of the pre-dawn.
They are all governed by the Book;
The light, the dark, the dawn,
The spirited breeze.

RF For thousands of years
The stillness has reigned.
Before each battle for the Land,
The stillness settles across the earth.

MAB Before each battle for the Land,
The Book is held and read
Aloud, by an unseen Voice.
Horn of the ram,
Cry of the babe,
Whisper of curtains
That flap in new tents.

RF The light, the dark, the dawn,
The spirit, the slight breeze and strong wind
Split the stillness
Like a canoe slicing water

MAB The Voice splits the stillness.
Readiness shimmers in the air.
Straightened shoulders
Crowd in for a glimpse at the Book.

RF Whispers behind curtains in new tents
- A newly-wed couple
Whose hopes stand at ladder's head,
Whose dreams accompany their every step -

MAB Hopes stand tall at ladder's head
Just before the dawn of battle
Will the few withstand the many
Or is the conflict lost?

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

In the Cemetery of My City

By Ruth Fogelman and Mindy Aber Barad

RF

In the cemetery of my city
Five black marble graves
In a row
Enfold family blown apart
While eating lunch
In a Jerusalem restaurant.

MAB

City of the fallen
Live on in blocks and rows
On a bright hillside
Manicured graves
Grief swept clean
With a view

RF

Manicured graves – too many
Doctors, nurses
Brides and grooms
Cut down
By self-slaughtering marauders
For no other reason than
That they walk upon
The paved streets of my city
Jews, Gentiles, citizens, tourists
All akin in a bomber's eyes.

MAB

No more lunch
In Jerusalem cafes
Blackened final moments
Death-cries of charred voices
On bloodied avenues

RF

On the bloodied avenues, charred body parts
Pure souls left this world
For one better
Where wars are no longer waged
Terror – a distant memory
While in the street men collect
Severed limbs and burned skin for burial

MAB

Memories of dead infants
Pave the streets
Jerusalem wails
Once golden
Now in solemn slumber
Numbed by the Monsters of Death

RF

Monsters of Death
Hide behind women and children
Within ambulances and mosques.
Who will protect the children of your people?
While our children, fresh from school
Protect ours?

MAB

Battles are no longer waged
In the cemetery
Only the unnerving quiet
Of the songs of Angels
Hangs as a light curtain
Around the graves.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

DERONDA TODAY

By Mindy Aber Barad

The telephone rings, "Dad, good morning, how did you sleep?" His oldest son Daniel calls every morning.

"How should I sleep, but with my eyes closed!" is the standard answer. "I'm fine. You have a fine day, and give my love to the children."

They live so close, but he only sees his son's family about once a month. His daughters have scattered to the respective strongholds of their husbands' families; they send the occasional cake for the holidays, a fancy tray of sweets, a new book.

"Good morning Deronda," Kiril says as he tosses a free newspaper into the open door of the antiques shop. A sign, etched in the display window, bottom left, proclaims "Deronda Family proprietorship since ____."

Deronda, David Deronda, smiles and waves, while looking past the newspaper man. Kiril is lucky to have that job, he thinks.

Daniel, Deronda's father, had had the real nose for the antiques business. He managed to be around just after the seven traditional days of mourning, to buy up estates, collect "junk" from the garbage piled on the street after an elderly person's apartment had been cleaned out.

David Deronda scratches his nose, a habit he has developed over years of having too much time to think, think back to earlier days. And earlier yet, to the times before he was born.

Often history weighs upon him, like the dust settled into the lock of the old chest beside him. Once again he promises himself, before no witnesses other than some old lamps (including the real Tiffany), that he'll have the locksmith in to fix the two hundred year old lock.

It was Moise, Deronda's grandfather, who had bought the plot and built the building that housed the shop and four others, and the apartments above. Without these, Deronda would have had no livelihood at all. Yes, he was much luckier than Kiril. Luckier than most; he owned a substantial piece of downtown Jerusalem, some of the most valuable real estate in the world. On purpose he dressed like a schlepper, like the old lonely man that he now was. It was nobody's business how he made a living-all they saw was the shop, that's how it should be.

Thus passes yet most of another morning at the landmark shop on Queen Shlomzion street (named after the famous queen of Israel in the Maccabean period). Deronda's father had often joked about the street's earlier name, Queen Mary, during the British times. Still, the street was one of major thoroughfares where many pilgrims would pass on their way to and from the old city of Jerusalem. They would stop in, usually later in the day, express their wonderment at David's knowledge of so many languages, so much history, and purchase a trinket that had once been owned by someone famous in the not too distant past.

Moise had been a money lender, to the Turks and then the British after them. He had been one of the few property owners, towards the end of the British Mandate, who managed to "force" the British authorities to pay him "rent" for his confiscated building, for the two years that the area had been zoned off for security purposes. Otherwise, he had told them, he would simply have to stop lending them money. His logical arguments had, at the time, made quite an impression on the High Commissioner.

Deronda thinks that Moise must have twisted many arms, greased many palms, he'd never said, but he, together with other investors, managed to secure the plot on which they built a huge building and divided it into four subdivisions, each with its own street number. They owned it outright, title registered, free of encumbrances. The shop had been an



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

extra bonus, thrown in because Moise himself had brought in the other investors, all of whom were prepared to develop the area and adhere to a high standard of design and construction.

Deronda's children have encouraged him to contact tour guides, get more traffic into the shop. They finally did put up the famous old photograph of Shlomzion Street during the British Mandate (and until 1967) – the one with the barbed wire coils in the middle of the street, where the shop can be seen to the left. It was supposed to attract more customers, inquiries which would lead to more sales.

"What do I need more sales for?" Deronda had asked. "Do we need more money? Are you lacking for anything?"

When the building had been completed, the Deronda family had taken the penthouse for themselves, where several generations had lived together and separately. This was the venue for the high and mighty to meet and mingle – the intellectuals, the artists, the Rabbis, the captains at the helm of the tiny, but growing community, the financiers, the British Mandatory officers.

The rest of the building, residential and commercial, had been rented out, had provided an income for so many Derondas, on several continents. Deronda felt that none of them was in need financially, and he was happy with the content of his days, the rhythm of the shop, such as it was.

Ah, but that was so far in the past; today only one man outside the family had any idea of the heritage, the lineage of Deronda. Yossi Yerushalmi, the historian and genealogist; he had walked into the shop one day, looking for a gift. Deronda was glad of the company. Yerushalmi was delighted to meet such a distinguished (his words) gentleman whose family had lived in Jerusalem for so many generations. Months later, Yerushalmi had returned, with a puzzled look on his face.

"Deronda?" He queried. "The Deronda?" Deronda himself had nodded silently, although unsure where Yerushalmi was going with this line of questioning.

"You mean to say that Deronda is not just a fictitious character in a book?" Deronda shook his head. "And you have proof of this?" Deronda nodded, and said "some."

Deronda pointed to the old chest beside him; the initials above the old lock, DD.

"So you're saying that the character, the title of the book, is based on a real person of that name?"

Deronda's wry smile, the only one he owned, came through of its own volition.

Each man made a friend that day, although Yerushalmi also acquired a new client, and was sworn to secrecy. Through the ensuing years, Yerushalmi came in irregularly with updates- a stray scrap of paper from the George Eliot Institute in England, where Yerushalmi had gone through more archival material than he cared to remember, in order to find some kind of proof that the great Victorian author had based her title fictitious character on the name of a real person.

Daniel Deronda once existed, in England, in the early Victorian period. He was a tailor, who subscribed to several Jewish publications, and whose name was also mentioned on a roster of synagogue members who were eligible to vote for the new rabbi, Rabbi Moses Gaster. The real Deronda is later mentioned on the manifest of a boat, which, it seems, did indeed take him to eastern parts of Europe. This is where the story and the truth cross paths, and the story ends.

The real Daniel and his new wife Rachel (Mirah is the name of the wife in the fiction) set sail eastward, and eventually ended up in the nascent Israel, referred to as the Old Yishuv, the Holy Land, where they belonged to a group of ultra orthodox Jews who were associated with a particular rabbi. Entire communities had emigrated to Israel from various parts of Europe; much of Jerusalem at that time had been parceled between the various groups, with their own rabbis and particular customs.

Deronda pulls at his chin, where his grandfather had had a beard, and undoubtedly, his father and grandfather before him. While Eliot's Deronda appears to have been clean shaven in the story, there is no doubt that even if the real Deronda had been so in London, he surely would have grown a beard once in the Holy Land.

Deronda scratches his nose and wonders when Yerushalmi will come again. What treasures, trinkets, from old birth and death registries, will the historical hunter dig up? Deronda especially wants to know more about Liselotte. He wants to write his memoirs – when will he get around to that? So many people he knew, even as a boy. His grandfather introduced him to them; in retrospect there may have been very few, but all became famous for one task, one institution, or another, in Jerusalem, a significant, but until recently, very small town indeed. Only after 1967 did the world begin to see the city emerge as a major player on all fronts.

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The rabbi, the statesman, the men whose names now grace the street signs. They had mostly Hebraicized their names; everyone had a biblical name back then, with some exceptions. Boris Shatz, founder of the Bezalel school of Art, and a most welcome guest at the Deronda home. He had been so taken with the view of the Old City, from the balcony, that he received permission from Moise Deronda to bring a small group of art students to paint the vista.

David and Rachel Deronda became the third generation in the tradition of gracious hosting in their apartment, just upstairs from the shop- Mayors, Prime Ministers, government officials, ambassadors – all gone now. Deronda remembers especially a woman, an English speaking tourist, the wife of a philanthropist, who, having huffed and puffed up the three flights of stairs to the penthouse, declared, "

"There's no elevator. This is nothing but a cold water walk-up." The Derondas correctly surmised that she would not be returning any time soon.

Liselotte – Moise's first wife – was the exception to all rules, she was unique, not only for the fact that she retained her European name. A photo of Liselotte, elegantly dressed, outside the shop when it was first opened, hangs in the shop, admired by strangers.

Many of Deronda's grandchildren, and those of his siblings, have modern Hebrew names, newly minted conjunctions of words. G-d is mine, you are mine, she is mine, my light, my beauty, my dew. All mine, he thinks: Liel, Liat, Lihi, Lior, Linoy, Lital. All named for the elegant, somewhat mysterious, Liselotte, his grandmother who died young. Deronda only remembers his grandfather's second wife.

Deronda closes the shop between two and four. He clings to this antiquated custom, as though it adds ambience to his shop. He still loves the idea of closing the glass door, turning the sign around to "closed", and retreating through an antique lattice room divider towards the back of the shop, to the stairs that go up to the shop's gallery. This is where he now lives; the gallery was once used as office space and storage. Even though Deronda has to stoop because of the low ceiling, this is his home; he no longer lives in the penthouse. The wooden steps are carpeted, they had renovated the shop right before his beloved Rachel passed. All these years, since she's been gone, he is careful to throw away all the chipped china; he has barely one non- matched set left out on the counter. There is no sense in putting the dishes away in the cabinet, only to take them back down.

Deronda remembers that he has a ready-made meal in the freezer, a sign of love from his daughter-in-law. It may have been there for three weeks or more, but, he thinks, if it's been frozen, it'll be just fine. He hates using the microwave, the newcomer, the usurper of his old appliances, but it has its advantages, he must admit.

Instead of his usual brief nap, Deronda decides that today is the day – he takes out some sheets of paper and begins to write. He begins, "I am born". He loves the reference to yet another Victorian novel, with whose main character he shares a first name. Then Deronda crosses out the line and writes, "even before I am born". He wants to begin his story with the enigmatic Liselotte – one who has intrigued the entire family, made famous for all those "mine" children named after her. But he doesn't know enough. He has so little information, and the papers are all in the old chest, beside his chair in the shop. That has been his depository for all of Yerushalmi's offerings for these many years.

Deronda decides to go upstairs first, to see the penthouse apartment; perhaps it will inspire him. He descends the stairs in the shop, goes through the back door to a courtyard, unknown to pedestrians. From there he uses the residents-only entrance to the back of the building. The courtyard has evolved from a place of communal washing and cooking into a make-shift parking lot, and now to storage and garbage containers – a convenience for shop owners, just as the street itself, Shlomzion the Queen, is evolving into a pedestrian mall.

Deronda collects an electric bill from his crumbling mailbox just inside the hallway. He climbs the stairway, smooth marble polished and slightly con-caved, by almost one hundred years of footfalls. The wrought iron railing is still sturdy, although the paint is peeling. His apartment, the penthouse, a place of so much tea, brandy, freshly warm cakes graciously served by his late wife, his Rachel, is now occupied by tenants, a nouveau riche couple who are also renting one of the other stores as an upscale restaurant. They seem to be making plenty of money, and paying for the privilege of living in a historical building.

Kiril has told Deronda that he has seen the wife upstairs, leaning over the railing on the balcony, looking at the famous view of the Old City. This only reminds Deronda more of his beloved Rachel. Everyone loved that view; even in the times when it had been too dangerous to set foot on the balcony. Fortunately their building was never shot at by Jordanian

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snipers, even as the street below was covered in barbed wire, the Deronda family members had gingerly made their way up and down the sidewalk for the nineteen years between the War of Independence and the Six Day War. Their neighbors had not been so fortunate; one of Deronda's classmates had been killed by a sniper, when they were in grade school- a pick-up ball game in a nearby street had become deadly.

Deronda ascends, each step a new memory, a face from long ago, sounds, smells - to the penthouse. He rings the bell, but there is no answer. Weary, Deronda slowly returns to the shop at 4 pm. He turns over the sign, turns on the lights, resumes his position in his chair. Determined to sift through the old papers, he leans over to open the old chest. It is made of woods, metals and tooled leather, all smoothed by time and generations of hands admiring the work. Minds have wondered about its adventures.

Leaning towards the chest, Deronda's eyes close briefly for a nap, his hand on the lid of the chest. He relaxes into his vision of his Rachel, the first Rachel Deronda in generations, hostess of the soirees with the tea, brandy and wonderful cakes. Rachel, he reaches out to her, joins her, perhaps they will go see Liselotte.

Kiril hurries into the shop the next morning, having heard the shrill ringing of the telephone from two shops up the block. The door is open, Deronda, asleep, with his hand on the old chest, is not answering. Kiril, in his bright red overalls with the newspaper logo, a cross between a clown and town crier, picks up the telephone.

"Good morning," he says, knowing that Deronda's son is at the other end. "This Kiril newspapers, your father not to wake up." He nods, puts the receiver down, immediately retrieves it and dials for an ambulance. Looking down at Deronda, Kiril recognizes the wry smile; he knows there really is no rush. Deronda is happy where he is.

Mindy Aber Barad is co-editor of The Deronda Review - <https://derondareview.org/>

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HEART-THREADS: BONDS THAT BIND

By Elana Wolff



In autumn of 2008, the writing group I've long been part of—the Long Dash—embarked upon a collaboration with studio artists of the Women's Art Association of Canada. The idea was for the writers to compose poems in response to works by the artists, and the following April, in celebration of National Poetry Month, hold an exhibition/reading at the venerable heritage building of the Women's Art Association in downtown Toronto. The initiative got off to a fast start and by wintertime we had enough pairings to start planning our first event. That event was so successful—in terms of attendance, reception and sales—that we decided to continue co-creating and holding NPM events, which we did, for eleven fruitful years.

I wrote many poems for and after works by the studio artists, and purchased a number of their pieces as well—to be surrounded at home by the beauty of the art and the resonance of the collaboration. Each of the studio artists inspired me for different reasons and in different ways. The paintings by artist, Barbara Feith, moved me for their allusiveness, exactitude, and deep feel for colour and place. During an early visit to Barbara's studio, I was so taken by a small gouache-on-paper piece, titled *Sculpture Garden in Chotek Park*, that I bought it on the spot, and I was sure the painting would readily evoke a poem. Barbara was delighted by my enthusiasm, but as was our practice, she didn't reveal many backstory details. The piece was tasked with speaking to me on its own.

I had the painting framed and hung it on my kitchen wall—where I gazed at it daily from my place at the table. But it remained secretive, and did not evoke a partner-poem. Not that year, nor the next, or the next. It wasn't until 2017, nearing the final round of the Long Dash/WAAC collaboration that a poem for Barbara's painting came to me. At the time, I was immersed in the 'field component' of a longstanding quest for modernist Prague-German-Jewish author, Franz Kafka (1883-1924). I'd first read Kafka as a teen and was immediately swept into his strange and angsty, mysterious world. I continued over the years to read, reread and deepen into Kafka's work and world; he became my shadowy mentor. In 2008 (coincidentally the same year as the collaboration with the WAAC artists began), I enrolled in an intensive three-year Biography as Art program. The final assignment was to give a presentation on a person, no longer living, who had made a significant contribution to humanity.

My choice of Franz Kafka led me into the field—to search (together with my intrepid husband) for traces of the author in places he lived, worked, sojourned, and where he was laid to rest: Prague, his hometown, a focal location. It was during one of these fieldtrips, while retracing Kafka's favourite city walking spot, Chotek Park (Chotkovy in Czech), that Barbara Feith's little heart-sculpture painting lit up on the screen of my mind—touched as I was by the sudden convergence of presence-in-place. And before long, I had a poem: "What More Is There to Say of Hearts." The partnered pieces—*Sculpture Garden in Chotek Park* and my poem appeared together in the final exhibition/reading of the Long Dash and WAAC studio artists in April 2018.

Barbara sadly departed this plane in 2021. Sometimes I hear the tinkle of her laughter—as fine and light and resonant as her work, which lives on.

"What More Is There to Say of Hearts" is included in my poetry collection, *Swoon* (Guernica Editions, 2020), and also in my cross-genre Kafka-quest work, *Faithfully Seeking Franz* (Guernica Editions, 2023). The League of Canadian Poets designated *Family* (broadly conceived) as the 2025 theme for National Poetry Month. We, the Long Dash, titled our group reading event, "Heart-Threads: Bonds That Bind." An image of Barbara Feith's exquisite little painting, *Sculpture Garden in Chotek Park*, illumines our publicity poster.

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What More Is There to Say of Hearts

I saw the man in the dream—that Franz—
on a bench
in the park
consuming fruit.
'Fletcher'—masticating slowly—
for his health.

He rose
from the bench;
this act in the past
converted the dream-scene
to red—probably through the homophone "rose,"

though maybe through the fruit
he liked to eat.

That colour
in Chotkovy Park, in
a garden of sculpted hearts—

What more is there to say of hearts
that hasn't been said already
by the Romantics
and more baroquely—

Maybe that these hearts in the park
were captured in paint by an artist I like,
that she and Franz and I have strolled
that park in Prague,
though he the most,
and none of us together.
Of dreams: that they conflate, and animate.
Of red: that it's the colour across from green.



Barbara Feith's 'Sculpture Garden in Chotek Park' (6 ¾" x 9")

A newly released 55-minute podcast on Faithfully Seeking Franz with Elana talking to Ari Barbalat for the New Books Network can be heard here: <https://newbooksnetwork.com/faithfully-seeking-franz>.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH BIRGIT TALMON

By Bob Findysz

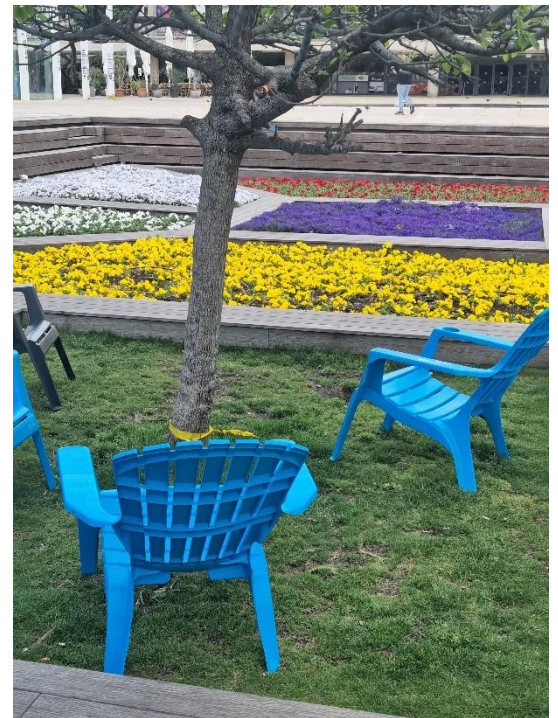
On a cool, gray early springtime morning under skies deeply congested with menacing clouds pregnant with rain and bruised in tones of black and blue, I made my way down the Judean Hills to the State of Tel Aviv where, of course, I found a much warmer version of the day with no precipitation in the air. The "Hill of Spring" was busy going about its own version of life in Israel. I made my way to the branch of Café Landwer at HaBima Square to spend some time in conversation over coffee with Birgit Talmon.



For recent VOICES Israel newsletters, I have interviewed members whom I thought would be interesting for readers/ fellow members to get to know better. I started out with people I had met in the VOICES Jerusalem group, whom I personally wanted to become better acquainted with.

Then I decided to move further afield. And so, I was very pleased that Birgit Talmon agreed to this interview. I feel it is important to note here that thus far none of those whom Julian Alper and I have approached has turned us down. A truly positive reflection on the *esprit de corps* within VOICES Israel.

Following are the questions which guided our talk and an approximate but accurate rendering of Birgit's answers.



1. *From your bio-notes in a recent VOICES Israel anthology, I see that you have worked as a translator and also write prose and poetry in a number of languages, i.e. Danish, English and Hebrew. Do you speak/ comprehend other languages?*



Like many Europeans, I know French to a certain extent and I studied German in school for eight years, which is as long as I studied English. But, I never took to that language. English is much easier to learn, less rigid in its rules. In Tel Aviv I also studied Yiddish. My instructor kept correcting me, saying I was speaking German. The three Scandinavian languages, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian are fairly similar to each other. In school we had to learn Swedish which we did not like. For us it felt like speaking our own language with a slightly "odd" intonation and we were ashamed when we had to read out loud. In the late 50s Denmark and Sweden completely cancelled the border between them and Danes and Swedes are free to work in each other's country.

This became extremely common especially after the bridge was built. People communicate in their own language and understand each other. Norway was Danish and achieved independence from Denmark in 1905. Up until then the name of their capital was Christiania, now Oslo. Due to the country having been Danish, I understand Norwegian the best.

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- Besides publishing four (4) books of poetry and sonnets in English, have you published any poetry in Danish or Hebrew?

Recently I found a portfolio stuffed with poems in Hebrew, still "in the drawer". I did publish some Hebrew poems in anthologies and participated in two exhibitions of Hebrew poetry before becoming involved in VOICES. And, I still write in Hebrew ever and anon. I also write in Danish but mostly to family and friends.

At home with my children, I spoke Hebrew, not Danish. We also spoke English.

(At the end of this interview please find an afterword containing examples which Birgit has selected from the above-mentioned books.)

- Do you remember when you started writing poetry? If so, how did you begin? In what language(s)?

For many years I only wrote in Danish and then also Hebrew. But, when we moved to Tel Aviv, I met members of VOICES Israel and began writing poetry in English.

- Are there times of the day, a special place and/or other conditions which you find are conducive to creative writing, poetry or otherwise?

I am definitely a Night Owl. During the day I might scribble words/ thoughts/ ideas on scraps of paper. But, later in the evening I will sit at my desk and work on a computer. Much easier to modify, move from draft to draft.

2. Another aspect of your personal life emerged from your bio-notes: You worked as a desert guide in the Negev. Would you like to discuss this here? In what language(s) did you guide? When? How did you get to Beer Sheva? What brought you to Tel Aviv?

We went to live in Beer Sheva in 1963 because my husband was engaged at the Dimona reactor. At Sde Boker, I studied to be a certified desert guide, worked in the whole Negev area and became completely fascinated with the Bedouin, their nomadic but highly developed desert culture, e.g. the water-repellent fabric they weave for their winter tents, their sense of law and order.

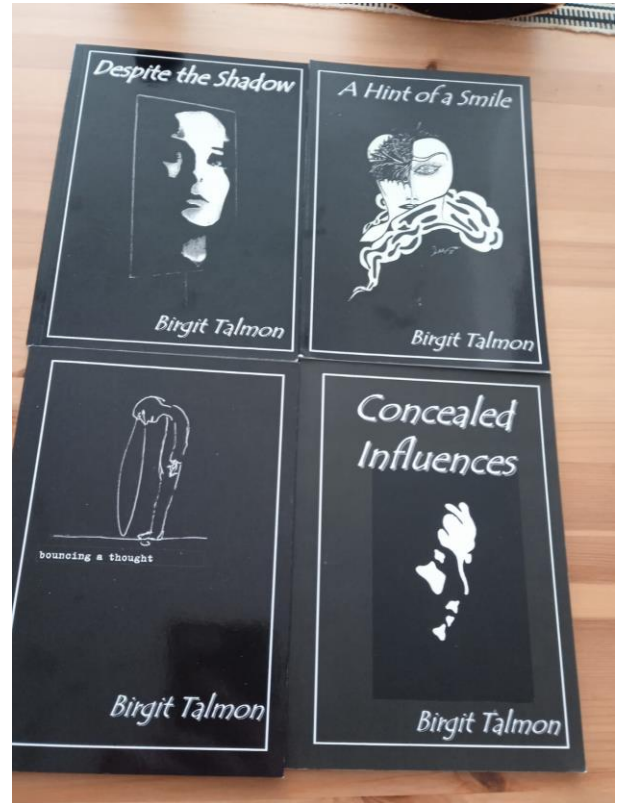
We had an active social life centered around my husband's fellow workers. Lots of parties.

All three of our children were born there: Dan, my firstborn, Anat the sandwich and only daughter (the apple of her father's eye, as practical and down-to-earth as he) and Uri the baby.

I "did 19 years" in Beer Sheva. There were better times, which were strongly flavored by Israel's positive relations with France and the products that appeared in the shops. But, by and large, it was a small town and I grew up in Copenhagen. So, when my husband changed jobs and we moved to Tel Aviv, for me it was a return to the big city.

3. You have studied with eminent writers. Could you name a couple-few of them? Where and when did you study with them?

Over the years after moving to Tel Aviv, I met and studied with a wide range of Israeli writers in English, men and women, each with their own distinctive style. In alphabetical order: Aharon Almog; Dan Bania Seri; Haim Be'er; Niza Ben-Ari; Moshe Ben-Shaul; Jacob Besser; Nathan Jonathan; Joram Kaniyuk – who is deceased with a street named after him in Tel Aviv; Rena Levitin; Emanuel Lotem; Amnon Navot; Dorit Peleg; Asher Reich; Jotam Reuveni; Roni Someq; Gideon Talpaz; Meir Wieseltier. And, Jerry (Jerome) Mandel – the last and strictest of them all, "no mercy where no mercy is due", therefore my favorite mentor. Since the early 2000s, I haven't been studying with anyone but continue writing in English.



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

Benny Andersen was a Danish poet whose writing taught me to write "big events in small words" in order to penetrate better. To tell a story without noise, leaving the explosion to the end. To prefer brevity to long-windedness. Very typical of Scandinavian writers in general. And, I am influenced by this style.

- 4. *When you aren't writing creatively and/or translating from/ into one of a number of languages, how do you spend your time? Family? Friends? Hobbies? Community? Other, personal pursuits?*

While living in Beer Sheva, though busy with children, the home and guiding, I developed a passion for working in wood. One of my grandfathers, whom I'd never met, was an eminent carpenter that worked in mahogany and participated in various exhibitions. My two sons, with various degrees in different plastic arts, also work in wood. So, it must run in the family.

In Tel Aviv I continued with wood, often *schlepping* home discarded things which I deposited on the balcony until I was ready to spray for bugs, scrub and sand, acid-wash old paint to reveal the original grain and maybe apply a thin layer of shellac for protection. Turning these found objects into lovely pieces of furniture and small cabinets.

There were many times when my daughter and I would pass a heap on the sidewalk across the street and she would beg me not to take on another such project. Since my husband's passing I have moved into smaller quarters, which restrains me; but, my fingers still itch.

A soprano, I sang for many years with the Philharmonic Choir of Tel Aviv, participating in operas here and abroad. When I was very young I remember wandering past a church at Christmastime and hearing a choir singing. I fell in love with vocal music and have remained a fan and participant.

Both of my sons live in Berkley, California. Between them I have three (3) grandsons. My daughter and her family live in Tel Aviv though her three daughters were all born in London while her husband was working there. My husband died six years ago. But I am fairly involved socially with family and a range of friends both male and female, though they are slowly disappearing to a netherworld. May my boyfriend outlive me.

- 5. *Ending on an even more personal note: Were you born in Denmark? When and from where did you immigrate to Israel?*

I was born and lived in wonderful Copenhagen when my husband arrived on a student exchange program. He was a native-born Israeli. We met on a bus trip. A long story. As a scientist, he moved on to Paris and I followed him there. I had been on an *ulpan* at Kibbutz Beit Hashita before we married and went to France. From Paris, we "immigrated" to Beer Sheva due to my husband's engagement at the reactor outside of Dimona. Over time, also after quitting, he repeatedly let me understand that, if he were ever caught, no ransom should be paid.

- 6. *Anything else you would like to add?*

Humor is an important part of life and my writing. A wee bit of humor makes the medicine go down. A sprinkle of it helps lift a text. Sometimes there is a slight touch of sarcasm in my humor. Often you can find some between the lines if you want to.



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An Afterword

Following are examples of Birgit's poetry which she selected from the four (4) books she has thus far published in English.

*From Birgit's first book entitled **Despite the Shadow**,
with her own cover design:*

SWEET STINK OF SURVIVAL

As soft as newborn moles
And emitting scented freshness
The socks set out once more.

In the burrows of the boots
Blindly they cling 'round feet
Called up again all too soon.

· _ ·

Stiff with dust and sweat
Upon returning
From the perpetual dispute
In heritage fields,
They rise from the burrows,
To reek her rooms.

With relief she welcomes
This familiar stink:
Smelly feet in ditto socks
Spell life.

Continued on next page ...

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From her second book of the same title,
cover design by her son, Uri

A HINT OF A SMILE

Again last night,
Snug in her armchair
Legs crossed under the
Peach coloured nightgown,
Mum had me read aloud
From the weekend-papers
Because, as she said,
Her eyes were too tired.

Sipping her tea slowly
She browsed through
The papers and had me
Read the stuff I'd skipped.

It was getting late
And I was in a hurry
For our date
And mum knew.

Seeing the old anger
Rise in me
She quickly brought me
The hot chocolate
With a special flavor
I have come to like.

With a hint of a smile
She watched me
Gulp down the treat
And get drowsier
With each mouthful.

On waking this morning
Mum and I
Were friends again
And you, I had let down
Once more.

--

Could it be!
Could she have - all this time?

Continued on next page ...

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*From Birgit's third book entitled **Bouncing a Thought**,
a collection of 14-line sonnets, one word per line,
cover design by her son, Dan:*

DOUBT

Soup
Could
Actually
Rid
Her
Of
The
Wedding
Ring,
But
Then
Again:
For
Him?

Continued on next page ...

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*From her last book entitled **Concealed Influences**,
with her own cover design:*

Concealed Influences in vivo

In the bustle
Of a festive meal
I happened to be seated next to
A hyperactive fork.

Hypnotized by
Its dance
In time with
Foreign articulation
Of Hebrew
From its master's mouth
I realized that
You don't need to
Be a native, per se,
Of the land of milk and honey
In order that your
Silverware
Has a hand
In the conversation.



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ROBIN

Art thou the bird whom Man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin?

William Wordsworth



Photo by Julian Alper

European Robin

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