

VOICES ISRAEL
GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026





VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

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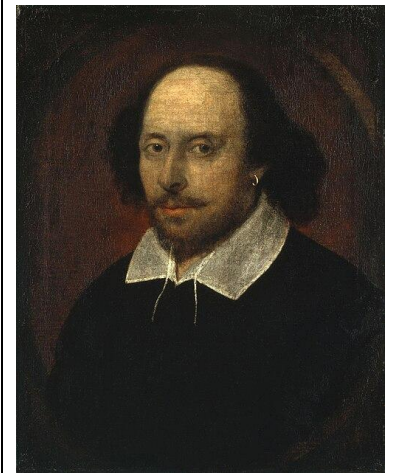
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Shakespeare
The Chandos Portrait

[\[Wikipedia\]](#)

AGM
Thursday
19th March 2026
at 7pm
Israel time



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*Dear March—Come in—/How glad I am—I hoped for you before—
Emily Dickinson*

Dear Friends,

The last day or two have been a challenging time for us all, and the next few days may be equally difficult. Please make sure you **stay safe and well**, following the guidelines issued by the Home Front Command. If you're feeling particularly anxious and/or you need any help, please do call me on 054-307-3587.

Anthology 2026 — the submission period has been extended until 11pm (Israel time) on **31 March 2026**. All members are invited to submit up to three previously unpublished poems. Full details appear on page 9 of this Newsletter.

Reuben Rose Prize — Congratulations to Reuben Rose prize winners and those who received honourable mentions – the supplement to this Newsletter includes all the winning poems. Thank you to our hard-working competition organiser, Mark L. Levinson and this year's judges, Baruch November, Judy Robinson and Fran Levin.


Bar Sagi Prize — the submission period has now ended, and we eagerly await the judges' decision.

Membership Fees — **Don't miss out on the early-bird rates.** All members may take advantage of the 2026 early-bird rates (until **31 March 2026**), which are **NIS 100** for Israeli residents and **\$35** for overseas members. To make your payment, please see details on this page of our website:
<https://voicesisrael.com/about-voices-israel/membership/>.

Newsletter — please continue sending your artwork, photos, essays, letters, and, of course, poems to newsletter.voices@gmail.com. Members truly enjoy reading and viewing what you create, and it is wonderful to share the many and varied talents of our community.

Have a wonderful Purim and hope to see you at the AGM!

Kind regards,



Julian Alper,
President, Voices Israel.

**Save the date – Voices Israel AGM
Thursday 19th March 2026
at 7pm (Israel time) on Zoom**

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

MEETING DATES, TIMES AND PLACES - MARCH 2026

<p>SOUTHERN</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Sunday, March 22 at 5:00 PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Miriam Green</p> <p>miriamsgreen@gmail.com</p>	<p>TEL AVIV</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Thursday, March 26 at 7:00 PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Mark L. Levinson Mobile: 054-444-8438</p> <p>nosnivel@netvision.net.il</p>	<p>JERUSALEM</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Sunday, March 22 at 7:30 PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Avril Meallem Tel: 02-567-0998</p> <p>aemeallem@gmail.com</p>	<p>UPPER GALILEE</p> <p>Wednesday, March 4 at 10:30. at the home of Reuven and Yehudit.</p> <p>128 Keren HaYesod Artists Quarter, Tzfat</p> <p>Coordinator: Reuven Goldfarb Tel: 04-697-4105 Mobile: 058-414-0262</p> <p>poetsprogress@gmail.com</p>
<p>HAIFA</p> <p>Tuesday, March 24 at 7:00 PM at Iris Dan's home</p> <p>Contact Naomi Yalin for details</p> <p>Coordinator: Naomi Yalin Mobile: 054-794-3738</p> <p>naomiyalin@gmail.com</p>	<p>NETANYA/SHARON</p> <p>Tuesday, March 24 at 7:00 PM at Susan Olsburgh's home</p> <p>2/6 Zalman Shazar, 3rd floor Ramat Poleg</p> <p>Coordinator: Susan Olsburgh Mobile: 054-919-3575</p> <p>olsburgh.susan@gmail.com</p>	<p>GLOBAL GROUP 1</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Thursday, March 12 at 19:15 Israel time</p> <p>Coordinator: Shoshana Kent Mobile: +972-52-808-9365</p> <p>y2nosh@gmail.com</p>	<p>GLOBAL GROUP 2</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Sunday, March 15 at 19:00 Israel time</p> <p>Coordinator: Judy Koren Mobile: +972-54-741-7860</p> <p>koren.judy@gmail.com</p>

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS

- To - **Isaac Cohen** for his many successes throughout the month.
- To - **Peter Brav** whose poem "NICKELS" about his late father Herman and his twin brother Seymour growing up in 1920/1930s Brooklyn will appear in Nine Mile Magazine in April (<https://www.ninemile.org/>). The poem debuted in GG2 last year where it received helpful comments from the group. And Peter's short story "Halfway Round The World" will appear in the April issue of *Niv Magazine*.
- To - **Elana Wolff**, whose poem Grand/mothers has been published by Public Reverie: A Journal of Literature, Culture, and Ideas. The poems are here - [Grand/mothers | Public Reverie](#)
- To - **Ruth Schreiber** who has had two poems selected for arc 32, the Anthology of Israel Association for Writers in English (IAWE). The poems are "Weary" and "My Lesson."
- To - **Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman** who has been shortlisted for a prize in the international competition "The Country of the Poetry of Love" for her poem "LIGHT" which is included in the Poet's Corner section of this Newsletter.

VOICES ISRAEL – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Save this date

*We will hold the 2026 Voices Israel Annual General Meeting **via Zoom**.*

Date for Annual General Meeting: Thursday 19th March 2026.

Time: 7pm Israel time - the Zoom meeting room will open at 6:45pm.

For our overseas members who wish to attend, please check the time in your location that equates to 7pm in Israel.

Immediately after the meeting there will be an Open Mic poetry reading.

The Agenda for the meeting along with the Minutes of the 2025 AGM, the 2025 balance sheet, and the Treasurer's report have already been sent to you by e-mail.

To register please use this link - <https://forms.gle/QdFggoSNz2EJ1gAk8>

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 Thursday 12th March.

We look forward to seeing you all at the AGM and hearing you read your poems at the Open Mic.

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HONOURING OUR NONAGENARIANS

We are delighted to announce that we are planning a special Zoom evening this summer to celebrate our nonagenarian poets and their wonderful poetry.

The evening will be hosted by Miriam Green (who, we hasten to add, is certainly not a nonagenarian!).

If you are already ninety or older, will be turning ninety this year, or know of any of our members who are in their nineties, please email president.voices@gmail.com and/or miriamsgreen@gmail.com.

LIVE POETRY REVIEW ON ZOOM

Save this date
15th April 2026 – 7:30 pm on Zoom

Dina Yehuda will be in conversation with **Miriam Botzer** of Tzfat. Together, they will explore Miriam's life and creative journey, focusing on five or six of her poems. Their discussion will address how Miriam turns to poetry as a medium for personal and universal reflection. Being in the period between Yom HaShoah and Yom HaZikaron there will be poems that resonate and are in dialogue with these challenging days.

Registration details will be sent soon.



ANNOUNCEMENTS/OFFERS

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:

Sunday to Thursday 10.00 till 12.00 and 16.00 to 18.00 and Friday 10.00 till 12.00.



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WORLDWIDE POETRY (WWP)

- [14 Ways to Write an Ekphrastic Poem | Martyn Crucefix](#)
(Ed - Thanks to Dina Yehuda for bringing this to our attention)
- [Poem of the week: To Wordsworth by Percy Bysshe Shelley | Percy Bysshe Shelley | The Guardian](#)
- [The best recent poetry – review roundup | Poetry | The Guardian](#)
- [Literary Hub » Looking Ahead to the Most Anticipated Poetry of 2026](#)
- [The Blogs: Participant Observation: A Poem | Shai Afsai | The Times of Israel](#)
- [The Blogs: When the land sings | Mikhail Salita | The Times of Israel](#)
- [The Blogs: The Sky from the Classroom Window on 18 Margolin St. | Aviva Frankenthal | The Times of Israel](#)
- [Inside the poetic world of Gad Kaynar-Kissinger | The Jerusalem Post](#)
- [Thought of the day by Emily Dickinson: why this 19th-century poem is resonating again in 2026 - The Economic Times](#)
- [Thought of the day by Robert Frost - The Economic Times](#)

MONTY PYTHON VICTORIAN POETRY



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NLz3fEWinI>

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Voices Israel Anthology 2026 – Extended Deadline

The submission period for the 2026 Anthology runs until **11pm on Tuesday March 31st, 2026, (Israel time)**.

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

A button to submit poems appears at the bottom of the page - [Submitting to the Anthology – Voices Israel Group of Poets in English](#). **It functions only during the submissions period. Before clicking on that button please read the following guidelines and instructions.**

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.

- You **MUST** read the full Guidelines at the top of the submission form on the Submittable page.
- **Important!** Please note that poems must be submitted one by one on Submittable, each poem in a separate submission form.
- **You may submit a maximum of 3 poems** on any subject. We *prefer* poems that fit on one page (up to 40 lines including stanza breaks but not including title), but we will *accept* poems of up to 60 lines. Lines longer than 68 characters, including punctuation and spaces between words, will be counted as two lines.
- Judging is anonymous and the poems are judged “blind” — the editorial team does not see the poet’s name. **Therefore you must not include your name or identifying details anywhere except (if you wish) in your bio, which the judges do not see.** (There is no *need* to include your name anywhere, since the name you registered as the owner of the account is the one the poem is attributed to). **Failure to observe this rule will result in that poem not being considered.**
- **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.

Full details are here - <https://voicesisrael.com/anthology/submitting-to-the-anthology/>

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

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](#).

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 January must be in by the 20th of December.) Timely or news-relevant pieces will be accepted at any time. If you wish to submit, please click [here](#) for guidelines on submitting.

VAST CHASM, publishes “work that explores the human experience, including flash and short fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and other nonconforming work.” They accept submissions “year-round, on a rolling basis, for their quarterly online issues.” No fee to submit.

The Weekly Poems Contest - All Poets Invited

Weekly Poems invites all poets from everywhere on Earth to submit a *weeklypoem*. Poems must be 15 lines or shorter, written during the current week and submitted by Saturday, with the winner published on Sunday. Submissions are open eight months of the year, for three weeks per month, opening on the first Monday of the month.

Submission & Publication Months

Submissions are open eight months of the year, with issues of *Weekly Poems* published on the first three Sundays following the first Monday of the month.

- Period 1: February, March, April
- Period 2: June, July, August
- Period 3: October, November

More details can be found [here](#).

WRITE-HAUS

Write-haus is an Israeli journal that features writers of all genres and artists/interdisciplinary work every week in their Sunday showcase online feature. It's free to submit examples of your work. <https://write-haus.com/sunday-showcase/>

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PALETTE POETRY: “Submissions for our Featured Poetry category are open year-round to poets at any stage of their careers. Featured poems are published online only and will spotlight a number of poems from new authors each month. We highly encourage emerging authors to submit.”

Basket Magazine Online Journal seeks submissions. Please submit up to three poems to editor@basketmagazine.co.uk as a .pdf, .doc or .docx file. Feel free to include a brief cover note/bio, though this will not affect our decision-making — it’s just nice to know about people. We will only consider previously unpublished poems — this includes work that has previously appeared online in any form (social media, etc). We do not consider simultaneous submissions.

Thimble Literary Magazine is open for submissions February, **March**, May, June, August, September, November, and December. In other words, all months except January, April, July, and October. For more information see <https://www.thimblelitmag.com/submissions/>

Starboard Press

The First Light Spring 2026 Poetry Contest is the second in a series of biannual contests. All entries are eligible to be selected for publication in the Spring issue of First Light Journal due to come out in April 2026. For more details see <https://starboard.press/poetry-contest-2/>

Deadline - March 9, 2026

Entry Fee - There is no entry fee.

RockPaperPoem is open for poetry submissions until March 8, 2026. More details can be found here: <https://rockpaperpoem.com/submit/>.

The Banished Poets Society Newsletter welcomes submissions for the April on-line edition for National Poetry Month. This is a publication reflecting the hopes, dreams and commonalities of all cultures. Many voices do not have a platform to express the dreams and often sufferings of so many aspects of today's society. We believe that poetry is a unifying force across the planet, we are all the same and together we bring the light. Don't forget the beauty of poetry as we encapsulate the turmoil of our times and our dreams for peace and equality that will surely ensue if we all write of it. Send submissions, free of any charges, to editor Katherine L. Gordon at klgordonpoet@gmail.com.

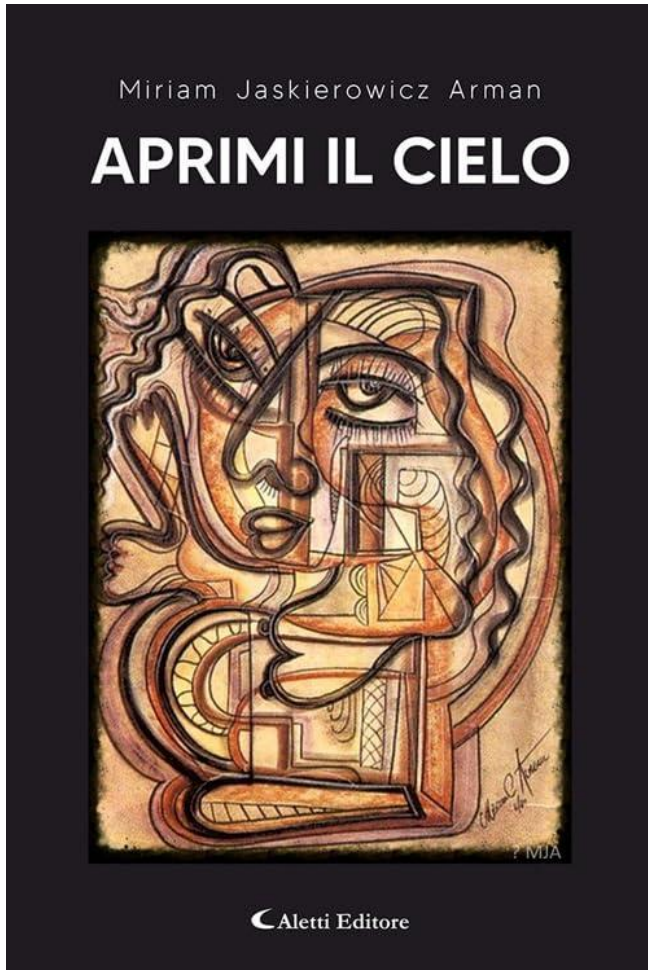
Check out Erika Dreifus' Jewish Literary Links

See - <https://www.erikadreifus.com/2026/02/jewish-books-and-writing-3/>

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

BOOKS

APRIMI IL CIELO - Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman's New Book of Poems in Italian



Read this article about Miriam and her book – [Click Here](#)

See also <https://www.amazon.it/Aprimi-cielo-Miriam-Jaskierowicz-Arman/dp/B0G4BCPF1F>.

And there's more information about the book in our January 2026 Newsletter

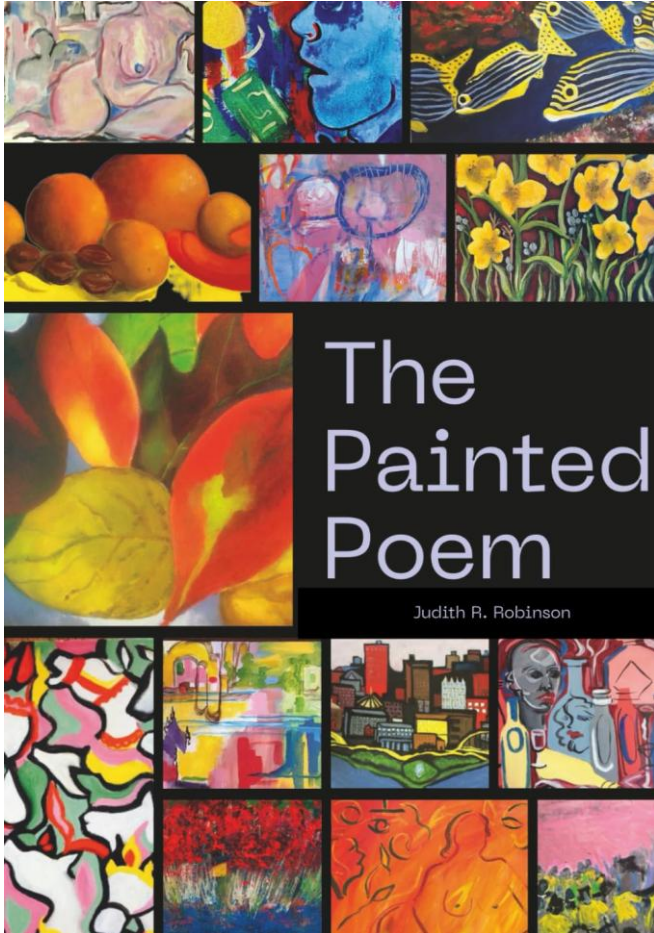
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The Painted Poem

Take a look at this news item about Judy Robinson's new book 'The Painted Poem'.

Click here => [Through image and word, Judith Robinson continues exploring life's meaning in 'The Painted Poem' | The Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle](#)

And there's more information about the book in our February 2026 Newsletter



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

If you're in Toronto on 15th March, join Elana Wolff at her book launch

Everybody Knows a Ghost slips through to the mystic, pulses up against forces of darkness, unreason, wonder and puzzlement; ripples with riddles at work in the human mind and the world at large. Ghosts appear as indications, shades, shadows and soundings that tour art, illness, nature and relationship; the nebulousness of memory; the extremities of life struggle.

This is "revelatory work" at its finest. As Wolff courageously writes of life's mysterious entanglements and death's spooky actions, "The key is not to fear" but to "make it across."
—Sandra Barry, author of *Elizabeth Bishop: Nova Scotia's Home-Made Poet*

This is a sophisticated collection: it takes delight in the mystery of things, how we mortals at times are capable—allowed?—to grasp, see, witness the immortal around us. Wolff asks of her readers to participate in controlled glee, wonderment, alertness, and sometimes ... dread.
—Carmelo Militano, author of *Archeologia Eros*

These poems gaze through "the vernal vault" at "what is sense-perceptible" and illuminated. And when that light is rent—by life's "game of shades," daytime hauntings and nighttime dreams—Wolff does not succumb to sadness. With "larging / heart ajar," she opens to the ineffable: "living still" midst the "dotted dark."
—Ruth Panofsky, author of *Bring Them Forth*

Follow Elana Wolff into current atmospheres (hard to catch, harder to transfigure) and the wild shifting ground of spirits, daemons, echoes, demons, traces of Kafka and love (where can you stand when shadows swirl around you?). *Everybody Knows a Ghost* is a book of moods and ruminations that's memorable in its medley of voices circling mortality and trauma. In pithy lines and eerie image, these brave broodings address the splendour in our shaken circumstance and the desert of awe that she crosses with us, for us.

—B.W. Powe, author of *Charge in the Global Membrane*



GUERNICA EDITIONS
ESSENTIAL POETS

\$22.95 CDN / \$18.95 U.S.A. / £12.95 UK



Guernica Editions
March In-Person Launch

Sunday, March, 15th at 3:30 PM
Supermarket: 268 Augusta Ave., Toronto, ON.

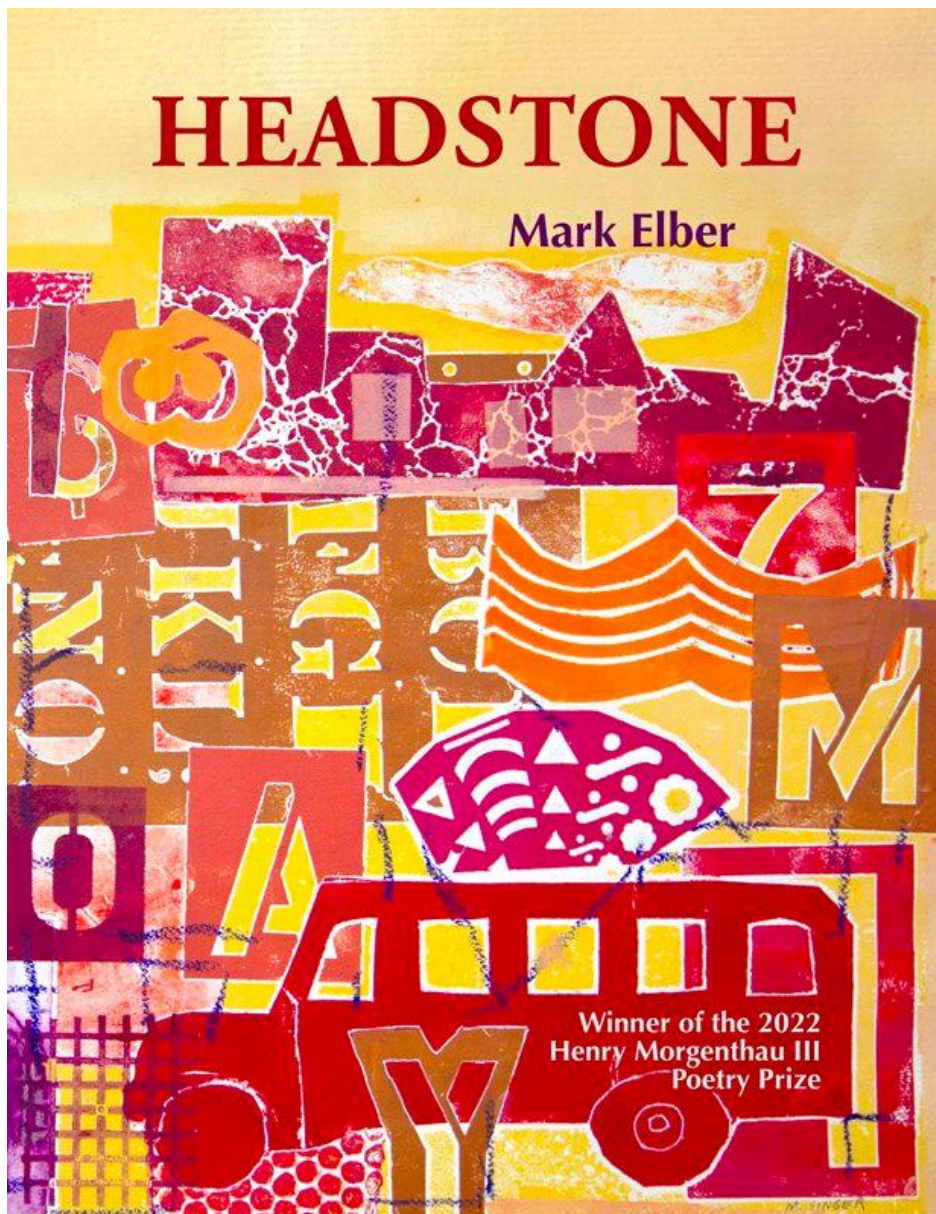
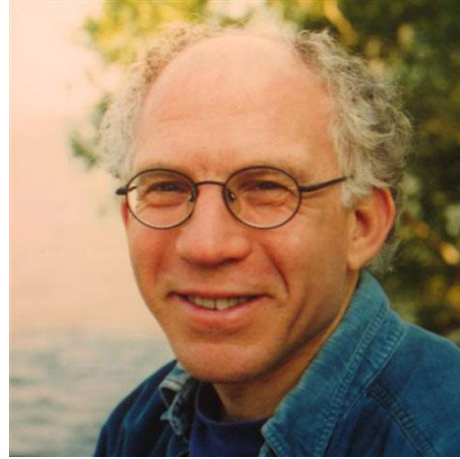
www.guernicaeditions.com

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A poem, "Ode to Accents" from Mark Elber's book "Headstone" was read recently on the weekly podcast, "Burning Bright" – you can hear the podcast or read the transcript on this page on the Passager website:

<https://www.passagerbooks.com/podcast-burning-bright/>

This episode's theme is John Keats and the Ode.



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OUR MEMBERS' ART

Cover Picture – Mask - Glass Fusion by Brenda Brett

Glass fusion is a process whereby layers of coloured glass are cut and shaped, then fired in a kiln, resulting in a vibrant blend of colour and design.



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Parakeets – by Eli Ben-Joseph



My interest in the parakeets is their affection for each other, but color and delineation matter. Aside from the play on greens and yellows, suggestive lines, rather than encasing ones, emphasize subjects more appropriately in this painting.

Eli Ben-Joseph

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

AN INTERVIEW WITH AMIEL SCHOTZ

By Bob Findysz

On a steely grey, deep winter afternoon weeping misty rain, I made my way southward down through the Jerusalem foothills via Beit Guvrin, forest



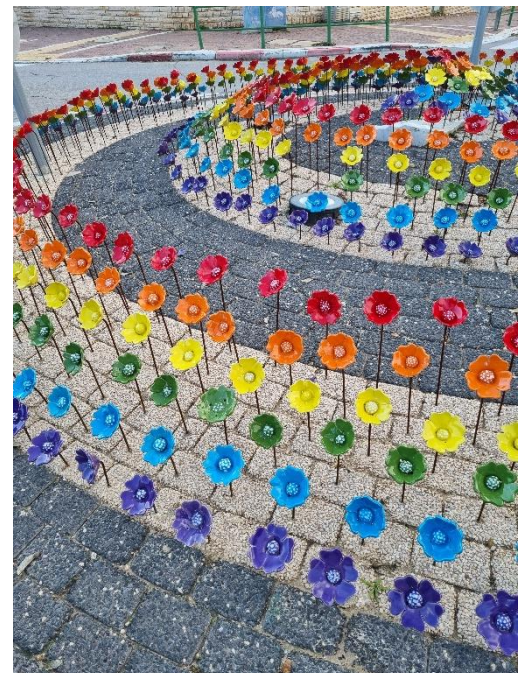
floors beginning to show signs of wildflowers of the season bursting out in bloom from so much sudden and heavy rainfall after a desperately dry stretch. Going to the Negev steppes on family matters, I set a date to meet at Amiel's home in Meitar, which sits at the end of Route 6: "A growing township, population circa



12,000, its close neighbors are the Bedouin towns of Hura and Lakkiah, Kibbutz Kramim a kilometer north, and the new settlement of Carmit. (AS)" I caught him returning from his weekly pilgrimage to granddaughters in Tel Aviv, traveling on the Beer Sheva -Tel Aviv train from the Lehavim station, and we sat over a freshly-brewed cuppa for a warm, lively and most engaging conversation. Following is a faithful and I hope equally interesting rendering of our tête-à-tête based on the questions which guided our conversation and Amiel's responses.



1. *From what I have gathered about you, mainly but not solely from your biographical sketch in the VOICES Israel 2025 anthology, you were born in 1936, raised and educated in Scotland, including an undergraduate degree in liberal arts at the Glasgow University in 1957 followed, at the age of 34-35, by a Masters in Fine Arts from Brandeis University in Waltham MA, outside of Boston. Acting, directing and singing are your forte. But, you are also a writer of prose and songs as well as poetry; a language instructor, translator (Hebrew to English), editor; and researcher in theater arts. After immigrating to Israel in 1965, you taught in the Theater Department and creative games in education at Tel Aviv University for a few years before moving on to The Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beer Sheva, where you were a Senior EFL Teacher for 25 years. In 1999, you wrote a seminal book entitled **Theatre Games and Beyond**, distilling your life experience, and spent over 20 years offering courses and workshops in creativity and theater games to groups, from preschoolers to pensioners, at risk children to professional teachers and actors. Along the way, you have also been very active in VOICES Israel: an editor-in-chief of the anthology for 5 years; a judge in VOICES poetry competitions; and a member of the Southern Region of the VOICES group of writers out of Beer Sheva and lately also its Global Group I. And, finally, you declare a devotion to tennis and your three grandchildren.*



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How would you characterize the poetry you write? Do you write only In English or also in Hebrew? Do you have any samples of other poems you have written and have perhaps not yet published, which you can share with us?

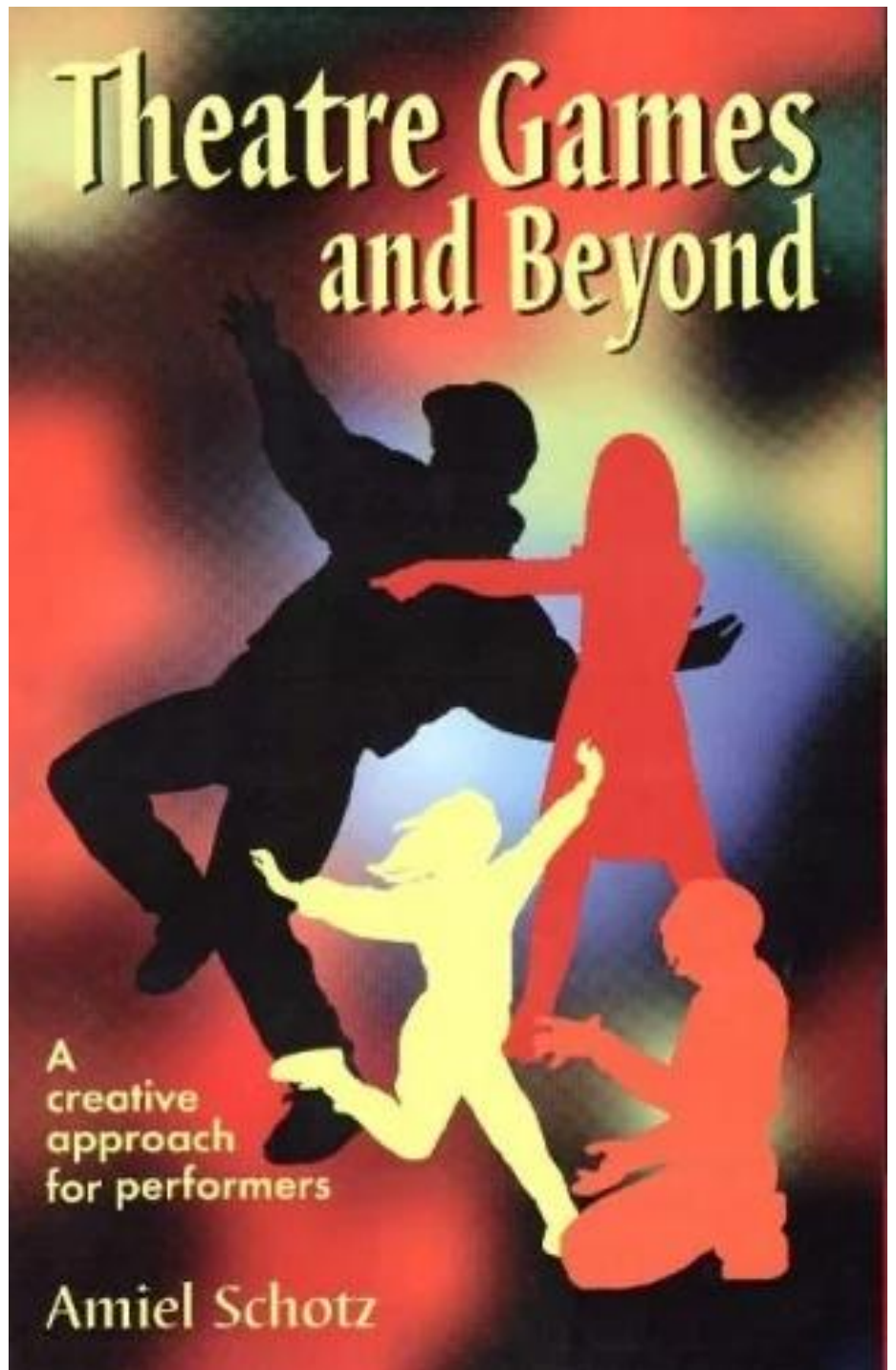
I only write in English, though I have translated Hebrew poetry into English. I try to be as personal as possible, and tend to follow tradition in metre form and often rhyme, enjoying the discipline (and paradoxically the freedom) it offers. I am including a couple of new poems: **The Seven Ages of Amiel** and **in the repair shop** (which appear as an appendix at the end of the newsletter BF); you'll see that I employ humor – for me nothing is more serious than comedy – but, don't get me started or I'll bend your ear for another century!

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

As a teenager I found a talent for comic verse and wrote updates of Gilbert & Sullivan songs for the Glasgow University Cecelian Society which I helped form. Then acting took over and I stopped for years. I always regarded acting as my principal form of the arts. Poetry came back when I was in my 60s. In the late 1980s I began writing poetry while on a safari in Kenya: **On Safari**. I would like to share a copy of that poem, which I once privately published in a limited edition, a slim collection of my early work; today it might be considered a chapbook. (To safeguard Amiel's publishing rights, this poem appears in the above-mentioned appendix. BF) I then became friends with a visiting poet at the university in Beer Sheva, Professor Norman Sims, who introduced me to VOICES Israel even before there was a regional group in the South.

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

As a pensioner/ widower, I can write whenever the need or inspiration arises.



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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?*

Too many to name, though Burns, Dylan Thomas, Keats and anonymous folk poets spring to mind. I was an enthusiastic folk singer for years and even recorded a CD of my own songs when I was 70, appropriately called "Senior Moments".

3. *Have you studied/ collaborated with other writers of poetry and/ or prose? If so, who? When? Where?*

Not formally, but in many VOICES workshops and especially in our group meetings with the feedback and discussions with so many wonderful poets.

4. *On a more personal note, at what stage in your life did you study at Brandeis, which is a long way from Scotland? When you moved to Israel in your late 20s, were you alone or with other family members? If so, with whom? Was there some trigger that caused you to relocate?*

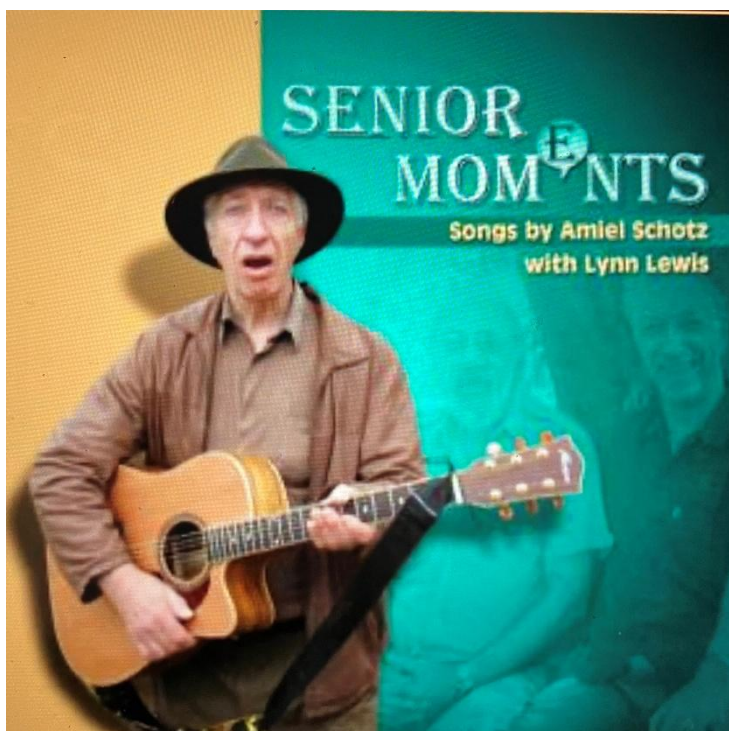
After I had worked as a computer programmer in England for 4 years, at Rowntrees & Co in York (I'd gotten a full 2 weeks of training at IBM in London!), in 1965 I decided to move on. I'd never visited Israel (summer jobs and then too-short vacations — my parents had been here many times), and now I had a profession much in demand, so came, intending to stay for a year or so.

- *Where did you live when you were starting out here? At what stage did you move to Meitar? We already know you have three grandchildren. Can you tell me about the rest of your immediate family members in Israel? Did you leave behind relatives in Scotland? If so, do you still have family there and/ or elsewhere abroad?*

I arrived, unmarried, in July of 1965, to stay initially with relatives in Jerusalem (one of my mother's two sisters, Dora, and her husband Dr. Isaac Camrass), to go to *ulpan*, then work. I got a job at the Central Bureau of Statistics, starting in the fall. But within a month, I was acting in an amateur group (that's a whole story on its own), at the Circle Theater, in Jarry's *Ubu Roi* performed in English translation, which ran till late spring 1966. We followed with a program of theater of the absurd, till spring 1967. By then I had moved to a rented room.

The 6-Day War followed and I then chose to make proper *aliyah*. A wonderful actress, Jackie Kronberg arrived as a volunteer and trained a group of us in theater games. In October, The Jerusalem Khan opened with a Gala performance that included Jackie and us, the first time "Second City" (Chicago) improv had ever been seen live on stage in Israel (indeed, improv of any kind). The money to completely renovate the Khan as a theater complex came from Henny Gestetner, American millionairess, who flew over a full plane of guests; so, the theater part of the gala had to be in English. Luckily, we were a huge success and were immediately hired as the English Theater of the Khan. To say more would take a whole book, which I'm in the middle of writing!

A little later, I got married to an American girl in Jerusalem, Myra (who later changed her name to Myriam, studied and qualified as a Conservative Rabbi). Myra needed to go back to Brandeis to complete her Ph.D. and I was accepted to their Theater Department to do an M.F.A. That was in 1971, when I was soooooo ready to study after so many years as an amateur actor (the Khan was my first truly professional engagement). After we returned to Israel in 1973, during the Yom



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Kippur war, our daughter, Avigail, was born in Jerusalem. When we separated after a few years, Avigail, then 2-and-a-half, left for the US with Myra and never returned. Avigail still lives in Los Angeles. Despite the distance, I have remained very close to her and now to her four-year-old son, Theo.

My second wife, Margo (and her 4-year old daughter, Roni), and I met, married and lived in Beer Sheva — we both worked at BGU. Margo worked in the Social Sciences Department at Sde Boker then moved to the main campus where she worked in the Center for Bedouin Development. Together we opened a private company for translating, editing and typesetting; in 1999-2000, we moved to Meitar — for the rest of a wonderful 30 years together. Sadly, she died far too young, of cancer in 2012; since then I've lived alone in our home.

I have a very extensive family of cousins, who mostly live in the Galilee, but with whom I'm sadly not in much contact. My father was born in Estonia; in 1912, while studying in Germany, he visited his older brother, Shachno, who had escaped to Glasgow to avoid being drafted into the Czar's army. Dad chose to stay in Scotland. My Mum, Milly nee Stelmach, was born in London from Odessa stock. She was the oldest of four siblings. I have one sister, Cherna, six years my senior, who lived her whole adult life in London where she developed a career in care-giving after her husband had a severe stroke. She received an OBE from the Queen for her work. Cherna had no children and she sadly now has dementia but lives comfortably in a London retirement home.



- *At the end of a poem called "Metronome Heart", which you presented in the 2025 VOICES Israel anthology (pp130-1), you speak of your heart and say:*

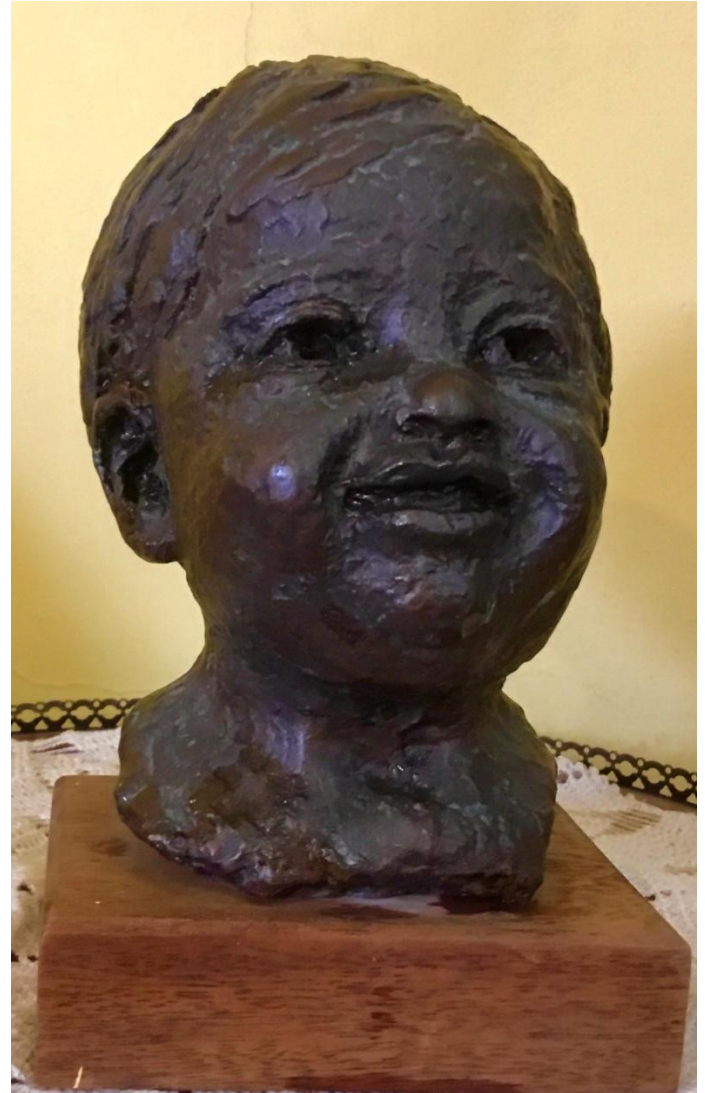
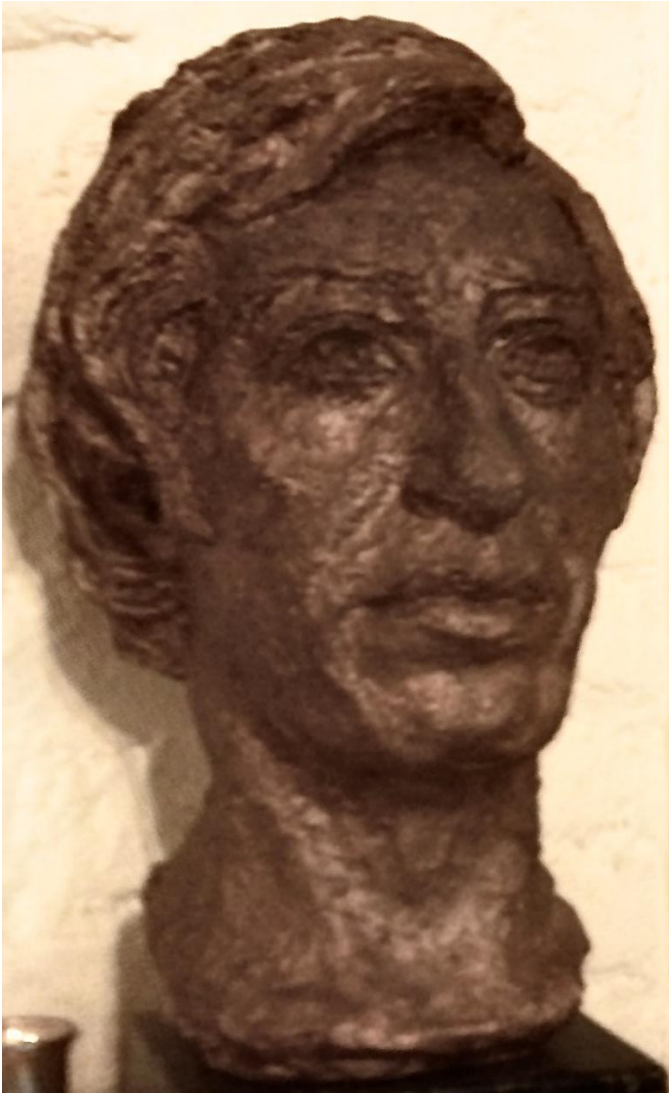
I hope she'll keep me yet a while --
a few more years of daily grind,
coping and loving — that's our style,
our actor's role in humankind.
So, hand in hand we'll strive and dream —
Together into the sunset gleam.

As you look towards your nonagenarian years, are there goals or a bucket list still unfinished? Dreams left to flesh out? What keeps you going? Awake at night? Getting out of bed every morning?

I can't explain why, but I look forward to every new day. I suppose I have never lost my curiosity and always hope to learn new things, so every day becomes a voyage of discovery. I find that I often need to clarify matters in my mind, and writing about them is the way I focus and work things out. I'm quite surprised that the springs of inspiration still seem to work at an age when, for most folks, they seem to have dried up, though things are slowing down. But then, my father, Benno Schotz, RSA, LLD (with honorary degrees from Strathclyde University and Hebrew University, freeman of the city

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of Glasgow and Queen's sculptor for Scotland) worked until 6 weeks before he died at 93; so, I'm hopeful I can stagger on a bit longer. *(The accompanying, sculpted head of Amiel was done by his father when Amiel was in his mid-40s; he also sculpted a head of Amiel's daughter, Avigail, at about one year. BF)*



5. *When you aren't writing, how do you spend your time today? Family? Community? Hobbies? Other, personal pursuits?*

I am still able to travel to Tel Aviv almost every week for a day or so with my stepdaughter, Roni, and her two young girls, Mia and Ella. For years now, I've been a part of a group of now-aging friends who meet weekly for a morning discussion of topics related to Judaism, Jewish and Israel life, including lectures on a variety of subjects; we range from highly orthodox to conservative and agnostic; we meet in Meitar but with some who drive up from Omer; despite occasional heated arguments, we are still best friends, committed to Jewish life and culture in its many aspects. In the past couple of years, I joined an English-speaking group in town who meet monthly to hear a talk or presentation on anything of interest; it also supports or helps sponsor individual concerts, etc. Many like myself are fluent Hebrew speakers but enjoy our native tongue. Plus, my two VOICES groups. Until asthma made me hang up my racquet at age 87, I was a hugely enthusiastic tennis player, and I do enjoy sports on the box.

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

Throughout my life, whenever one door closed another opened. For example, in 1967, while acting part-time in English theater at the newly-opened Khan, I lost my part-time job in the Statistics Bureau and on the very day I left, chanced to bump into a chap who immediately hired me part-time in his private company. This has become a common theme in my life.

I never saw myself as a poet, but rather an actor. However, with my strong anglo-saxon accent in Hebrew, I couldn't support a family with the few parts I secured, though I did appear in 3 full length Hebrew productions and, over the years, I had maybe 20 little roles in films. So, I taught University English. Though teachers are often called frustrated actors, I loved the teaching.

The "Second City" improvisation technique, which was introduced in Israel for the first time in October 1967, is actually based on theater games. From my personal experience, I went on to write a book on the subject.



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MICHELLE WEINER KINSBURSKY - INTRODUCING MYSELF

I have been keeping journals for as long as I can remember – since my twelfth birthday when I received one of those sweet, padded diaries with a tiny gold lock and key. Mine was yellow.

In high school, that private habit grew into a love affair with poetry. A young and inspiring English teacher captured her students' hearts and encouraged a group of us to create a school literary magazine called, *expression*. Writing quickly became the way I made sense of the world – and my place in it. Here are two poems from that journal (age 17, 1972) reflecting my youthful seriousness and satirical light-heartedness:



Pessimistic -

Could it be because you struggled endlessly?

Could it be because you fought for what was right and lost to tradition?

Could it be because you asked “why” and were answered “don’t question”?

Could it be because you expected response and only got silence?

A Disillusionment of the Delicious

I despise Rice Krispies in the morning
for they interrupt the solitude

I deplore Campbell’s perfect afternoon of soup and sandwiches
for it’s a shame to let those scrumptious morsels be sucked to sogginess

And I especially loathe Betty Crocker’s Hamburger Helper in the evening
who is she trying to kid –
disguising ground round in her noodles?

All my life, I have turned to the written word to understand experience, to question it, and to give it voice. Even the pursuit of my doctorate did not pull me away from writing. True, I may have stopped attending Voices meetings and workshops for a number of years (I first joined around 2008), but I continued to feel deeply connected. Every year, I paid my dues and submitted poems for the anthology. And when Voices called on members to commemorate Judih Weinstein Haggai - a beloved member who was murdered and taken hostage on October 7th - I wrote poems that echoed hers for the special chapbook created in her memory.

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Listen to the Jasmine by Judih Weinstein Haggai

as sundown sings its low notes
we listen to the jasmine
coffee gentle with cardamom
fingers stroking twilight

a pause to sip the earth revolving
treetops wave to meteors
neptune nudging nearer
feet caressed by cosmic hush

In Your Memory Listen to the Swallows by Michelle Kinsbursky

Each morning
the path calls me –
It is spring
and the red anemones
and pale pink cyclamens
draw me to this
path of memories
of possible tomorrows.
Lush and calming
its quiet embraces –
I listen to my heartbeat
believing in a world
so uncertain, but off
in the distance
is the call of the swallows

When our Voices president, Julian Alper, reached out with his warm, personal touch and invited me to (re)introduce myself, I gladly agreed. Many of you – especially members from the North - may not remember me, may not know me or may have joined Voices during my absence. In this piece, I'd like to share a bit of my story, some of the poetry I've written along the way, and a glimpse of the doctoral research that grew out of my work with literature, writing and dialogue across cultures.

A bit of background . . .

In 1984, my husband, Robert, and I moved from California to Israel with our three-month old son. (Years later, I still wonder how my mother let me get on that plane with her newest grandchild!) We first settled on a kibbutz in the Beit She'an Valley. Despite arriving with degrees from UC Berkeley—Rob with a doctorate in microbiology and I with a master's in first and second language acquisition—we quickly learned about kibbutz egalitarianism: he sorted carrots, and I cleaned toilets in the kindergarten - such was social equality on kibbutz in the early eighties 😊

After giving kibbutz life a try, we relocated to Rehovot (1985-1989). Rob began working at the Volcani Agricultural Institute in the Department of Soil and Water, while I cared for, what grew to be, our three boys and taught English privately in the afternoons. We made new friends and gradually acclimated to living in Israel – learning, among other things, that “no” is rarely final when dealing with office workers, and that Israelis reserve the right to tell you how to conduct your life.

For example, in 1985 I asked a postal clerk, “May I have a stamp for the U.S.?” “No, we don't have any,” she replied. When I persisted—astonished that the post office lacked stamps—the answer changed, and she produced one.

Or consider walking outside on a hot day with a baby who isn't wearing a hat: nearly everyone you pass will feel compelled to inform you that the child needs a hat, while shaming you with their eyes. These moments became part of our cultural initiation, though I suspect some things may have changed over the past forty years.

In 1989 we moved to Moshav Hemed located next to Ben Gurion airport (you never quite get used to the body-vibrating roar of jets overhead!). We chose the moshav to be close to Rob's work and the chance to live outside the city. Having both grown up in Southern California in ranch-style houses with backyards, we simply couldn't imagine raising three young boys in a fourth-floor walk-up with no garden.

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In 1990, Rob accepted a research position in the private sector and we moved to Hoshaya, a religious community perched on a lovely hilltop in the lower Galilee - 40 minutes west of Haifa and 20 minutes east of Tiberias. You must come visit in the spring, when the wildflowers are absolutely stunning!

During our first two years in Hoshaya, while our home was being built, we lived in temporary “Sachnut” housing - prefabricated houses provided by the Jewish Agency that had been reclaimed from the Yamit evacuation in 1982. Those early years were full of memorable milestones: Rob’s induction into the IDF during the Persian Gulf war at the age of 36, a rare and magical snowfall in 1992 (to this former Californian’s delight), and the birth of another son, bringing our little clan to four boys.

Our second son was born with a severe hearing loss, introducing us some thirty-five years ago to Israel’s remarkable system for early detection and support of hearing-impaired children. Many of you may have experienced “Tipat Chalav’s” [Israel’s early childhood care centers] simplistic yet surprisingly effective hearing tests of a baby’s hearing at around 9 months - crinkling cellophane paper, ringing a bell, hitting a spoon against a glass (I am assuming they are still carrying out this same test). Those sounds led to an early diagnosis which led us down the road to a confirmation of his deafness and the various methods of deaf education in Israel, as well as, appreciating the wonders of a cochlear implant when our son was twelve years old.

He can’t hear

What does it mean
he can’t hear?
He laughs and cries
looks deep into
my worried face
brown, twinkling eyes
. . . watching
I watch too, for signs
to make it, not true. . .

Tying his hearing aids, the size
of his baby ears
with thick string
to his blue striped T- shirt
He rips them off
wanting to be free of
devices, making
random noises
‘til he learns to listen
to our clamorous world

Wondrous times, now twelve
electronic hearing
a static, transforming
the outer world -
secret, muddled sounds
yet his inner life, rich with pulsation
of youth and mischief

Diploma in his back pocket
waving airport goodbyes
off to Gan Eden
rich, verdant trails
call him – then again,
and again and again
marking off each
country, doing
the impossible

[Voices Anthology 2022]

While raising our children, I continued teaching English privately both to Hebrew and English speakers, and later began instructing in a college in the north in required English reading courses and in teacher education of preservice English teachers. My students came from across Israeli society—Circassian*, Druze, Muslim and Christian Arab, Jewish (religious and secular).

My academic background is in sociology of education and in first and second language acquisition, but literature was always my passion. When my department head offered me a course to teach an Introduction to English Literature after an instructor left the department unexpectedly, I took on the challenge with great pleasure.

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I turned to Dina Yehuda, the former Voices' anthology editor and an active Voices member, who has an advanced degree in literature from Columbia University. She helped me, in her characteristic warm and charming way, to find my footing, and from there I took flight. For over a decade, I taught literature—short stories, poetry, and a bit of dramatic and graphic texts.

I was inspired by courses I had taken at Bar Ilan University for teachers of education and literature. The program I was admitted to encouraged instructors to use literary texts with students to discuss and grapple with the issues we are challenged by in our society. From that point, the English literary works I chose for my courses explored identity, difference, and the walls that separate us.

In that program, I encountered the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, a Chicano writer, poet and activist whose concept of the **Borderlands** profoundly influenced my thinking. She urges us to move beyond rigid “us versus them” frameworks and instead meet one another in the space between borders. That was what I witnessed in my classroom: students from diverse communities encountering another through the study of literature and reflective writing.

My Student

You look at me
hurt in your eyes
not sure if I really care
when I ask you to do it again

Why would I?
A quantum leap divides us,
your culture
a light year away from mine
my words don't match your thoughts

You have no idea
my expectations for you –
knowing, on this side of the world
trust is a treasure

I know that only
by living in the
borderlands –
crossing multiple identities
will there ever
be a chance.
A Chicana poet
taught me this

Some days
I say I'm a fool;
But today,
I know that tomorrow
is all about
this moment
opposite your sad,
non-believing eyes
believing in you

[Voices Anthology, 2017]

During those years, I was privy to my students' moving personal stories through a pedagogical approach which brought them into dialogue with themselves and with those they sat next to in the course. The stories they shared with each other and the relationships they developed through reflective writing inspired me to pursue a doctorate at the University of Haifa in my last years of teaching at the college.

In my research, I looked at how a narrative pedagogy that combines the reading of literary works, reflective writing and dialogue contribute to a prospective teacher's understanding of diversity. My students who came from different cultures, religions and social backgrounds were sharing with their partners letters they wrote in response to our readings and our course discussions. I studied their reflections while we read works such as Pearl Buck's short story, “The Enemy” (1942), Countee Cullen's poem, “Incident” (1925), and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1600). In their encounters and letter-writing responses they offered me a window into their identities and life experiences.

A thirty-two-year-old secular Jewish young man was partnered with a twenty-two-year old religious Circassian young woman. The male student, who had never met a Circassian prior to their encounter, described in his writings his fascination with his partner's head covering, while she shared openly her religious practices and beliefs.

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In another narrative experience, a young Druze woman sparked by the racist remark made in Cullen's poem, "Incident," wonders about her own cultural experience outside of the majority culture when repeatedly making reference to the issue she has with language, that her language, Arabic, was often not used or understood when leaving her village. How can she define herself if not through language? She asks serious questions about how to feel accepted in the greater society she is living in.

When we read the *Merchant of Venice* and I ask students to replace the word Jew in Shylock's monologue with some other group, this led many students to consider what it means to live in the borderlands, considering their own identities. One student, inspired by our learning, wrote a poem to Shylock, identifying herself and Shylock as Jews with a common history, and reaching out a hand to him, inviting him to return to his religion. In her writing, she is indicating that our identities can be a burden, but they are what define us.

At this time of deep division both in Israel and across the West, this doctoral project was a way to help future teachers encourage their own pupils to cross borders and live in the borderlands with the other, what I titled, "A Narrative Pedagogical Inquiry on Preservice teachers: Dialogue Across Differences".

Today, our sons are married with children of their own - three in the north, one on a kibbutz in the south - all choosing rural lifestyles. We have been blessed with twelve grandchildren, with one more expected in the spring.

You Are Off

Now off,
Off with you, my child
You whom I held last at my breast
Off you go now
to grow and stumble

You don't even look back
Your road clear and uncluttered
Adventure and questions
are rolled up now with the map I gave you
to help you make your way

I stand in the doorway
drying my hands on my apron
Once a tricycle blocked this concrete path
and bunnies were hugged too hard in the garden

I turn inside to the smell of freshly baked bread
now packed away in your duffle bag
cinnamon tea cools in my favorite blue mug
I rest my elbow on the breakfast table
Four empty chairs and me

[Voices workshop: Listening to the Voice Inside, June 2009]

I am now returning to activities I stepped away from for a time, including my involvement in Voices. I close with a selection of poems written over the years.

I'm glad to be back.

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Purim 2019

Another Purim
blood in the streets
searches in Arab
villages,
demolished homes

Another Purim, a family broken
Twelve children sit Shiva
father gunned down, while
terrorist born on narratives
menacingly, victorious

How to unlock
the fixed mind
To step away,
to embrace life

How to build trust
to feel hope
where bullets and anger,
are what is eaten at breakfast

Today I woke Purim happy
'til the broadcast,
Heart in a panic
for the next day, and the next

Today, I woke grasping
a thread, any small corner
for a different yesterday,
a better tomorrow

[Voices Anthology, 2019]

Witness

We sat under the campus knobby
trees
against a backdrop of love
sharing secrets
you held my hand
we made promises
the moon and the marble fountain
were a witness

Years of diapers
and torn jeans
struggling years,
of mortgages and domestic
negotiations
we loved and fought
and loved

Now under the garden trees
against a backdrop of
lively grandchildren
sitting between us
telling us their secrets
the sun casting shadows
between the branches
We see the yesterday
in the sunset, our witness
my hand in yours
their bright eyes
our tomorrows

[Voices Anthology, 2020]

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Pandemic, 2020

No. 1 Radio broadcasts punctuate the first days.
A steady flow of number counts, the hospitalized -
while spring-bleaching another
bathroom, hoping to cleanse and be cleansed
removing tangled cobwebs, wiping away
corona fogginess.

How do we salvage
what we've lost and hold
on to what we have in these
gloved hands and blue-masked faces?
We take refuge in the internet . . .
How much further shall we get
from each other, this black box meeting place?

No. 2 Little rebellious acts . . .
6am wanderings
in a carpet of crimson anemones;
Neighbor sits in my garden
her chipped coffee mug resting on her lap;
My youngest and his bride
bring bright orange mums, in a halo of baby breath.
And the babies, held up close to the screens -
Enough! Bring her to me, my grandchild.
Let me kiss those tiny cheeks and feel her downy curls.

No. 3 Autumn, the time
for rites of prayer, swaying men,
clusters of women
spread across a public garden,
improvising to heaven, shaded by the park's branches.
Cool breeze, a release from summer's final heat,
our words swaying in, around, floating upward
Smelling the sweetness of morning dew
concentrating – distracted, attempting prayer.
Holding tight to the flow
of tradition, it's like the back of our hand,
while our rabbi stands on the street
tears fill his heart. Return, he calls to us . . .
Yet, the streets and gardens
remain safe, with masks and green distances.

[Voices Anthology, 2021]

Do you dare sit at the same table as Shakespeare?

What did Dante eat for breakfast while writing *The Inferno*?
Did he go on holiday to the shore?
Did he write late into the night?
Or take quill in hand in spurts?

Rising out of the ordinary sands of time
come the once-in-a-life timers
How dare any of us sit then at our desks
and pretend to that tradition?

But if they had not,
Cervantes would not have read Homer by oil lamp
Joyce would not have boldly crafted Leopold Bloom
on hundreds of pages
in an Athens-Jerusalem stream of wonder

So, go ahead, open your Apple Tablet
Follow the noble tradition
Knowing you will barely be a speck in their shadow –
But, then, even a speck has an honored place in this
world.

[Voices Anthology, 2014]

.....
* Members of the Circassian community, are a very small minority. They live in two villages in northern Israel and are Muslim, but are not Arab (Rao, 2018). They originated from [Circassia](#) in the [North Caucasus](#), brought here by the Turks, speak Adyghe, and are also well-versed in Hebrew and Arabic. In order to maintain their culture and traditions, they marry within their own communities.

STUCK IN THE SECOND CHAKRA

by Reuven Goldfarb

The street brother was excited. He stood in the kosher bakery with a sheaf of newspaper in his hand, bubbling over with excitement and agitation. It was Friday morning, the time of week I always come in for challah and grape juice. In good-natured bonhomie, I asked him, "Hey, what's going on?"

"Look at this!" he implored. "What do you see?" He thrust toward me the food section of the weekly *Montclarion*, the neighborhood newspaper. Pictured prominently was a cluster of cherries, shiny red and life-size. I registered that it was an enticing photo, brilliantly colored, no doubt placed there to illustrate a story on cherries, a seasonal fruit. But I didn't get what about it had so impressed him.

For impressed he was, and disturbed, too. The words tumbled out. "Look at that. Right on the front page. Why don't they just put bananas in there, too?"

"What does it suggest to you?" I asked. I was thinking, cherries, cherry. To be cherry means to be a virgin. He's thinking about sex. These cherries have got him all stirred up. They're a stand-in for the young virgins he wants to hook up with. But I was certainly not going to risk a guess. He needed to be a little more explicit.

"Don't you see it? Oh, man!" And he twisted the picture in front of my eyes, urgently endeavoring to convey the picture and the message he thought it carried into my brain.

"Yes, I see it. It's a picture of cherries. What does that suggest to you?" He couldn't articulate the meaning. He wanted me to get it without further help, through a psychic transmission or a spontaneous realization, without him having to explain himself any further.

He looked around, decided that no one else there was on his wave-length, and burst out suddenly, with a touch of despair, "I'm in the wrong neighborhood. I'm gettin' out of here. I must be in the wrong neighborhood. I'm goin'."

Before he left, he put the paper down on a table, then swiveled around and headed out the door. Relieved, I shook my head and walked up to the counter to greet the luscious counter girl whom I had seen there several times before. She asked, "What was that about?"



"Well, I don't know," I replied, still somewhat bemused. "He was all riled up about something. This picture in the paper had gotten him all excited." I showed her the picture but decided not to share my speculations with her. "I have an idea what it was about, but I wanted him to tell me." She didn't ask more, so I didn't say more.

I bought two whole wheat *challot*, one regular size and one small, and a large, three-quart plastic bottle of Kedem Kosher Concord grape juice because we were going on a camping trip, and I wanted to transport my Kiddush grape juice in something other than a glass bottle.

As I headed back out to my car, I remembered what it was like to live on the street and recalled my feelings of isolation and loneliness. I imagined what it might be like to live that way for years on end, to feel like an outsider, no matter how many friends and acquaintances you had made. I thought most of all about the lack of intimate physical contact and of how horny and desperate a hungry man in that situation might become. I revisited the picture in the paper, which I had taken with me when I left the bakery, and recalled our brief, intense exchange. I questioned whether my initial supposition was correct, that the cherries represented virginity. I thought it just as likely that they reminded him of a man's balls, and that the bananas he had alluded to were the missing cocks he thought belonged with them. Either way, the sexual associations he ascribed to the glossy red sweet fruit were so vivid to him that he couldn't imagine anyone else, even a stranger on the

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street or in a store, missing the connection. But he and I didn't respond the same way to the same stimulus. I silently prayed that after he had turned the matter over in his mind, he would find a way to convey in more lucid words those passionate sensations moving through his agitated brain and hungry loins.

And later I wondered whether I should have held back the way I did, by maintaining an almost professional distance from his world. Maybe my conversational restraint was a way of stiff-arming him, of sending him back where he belonged, back on the street, back to his own people. But what could I do? Take him back home

with me and introduce him to a single woman? Take him to a rehab center and put him in the hands of a good social worker? Take him to a local community college and help him register for classes? No, this guy was not ready for any of those choices. He just wanted someone to see the world through his eyes. But I'm fairly certain that no one at the paper and no one else who read the feature made quite the associations that he did or saw the sublimated sexuality of the photographer or editor emerging from its dragon cave. He was all alone with that one.

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HOUSEGUEST BY RUTH SCHREIBER



Houseguest

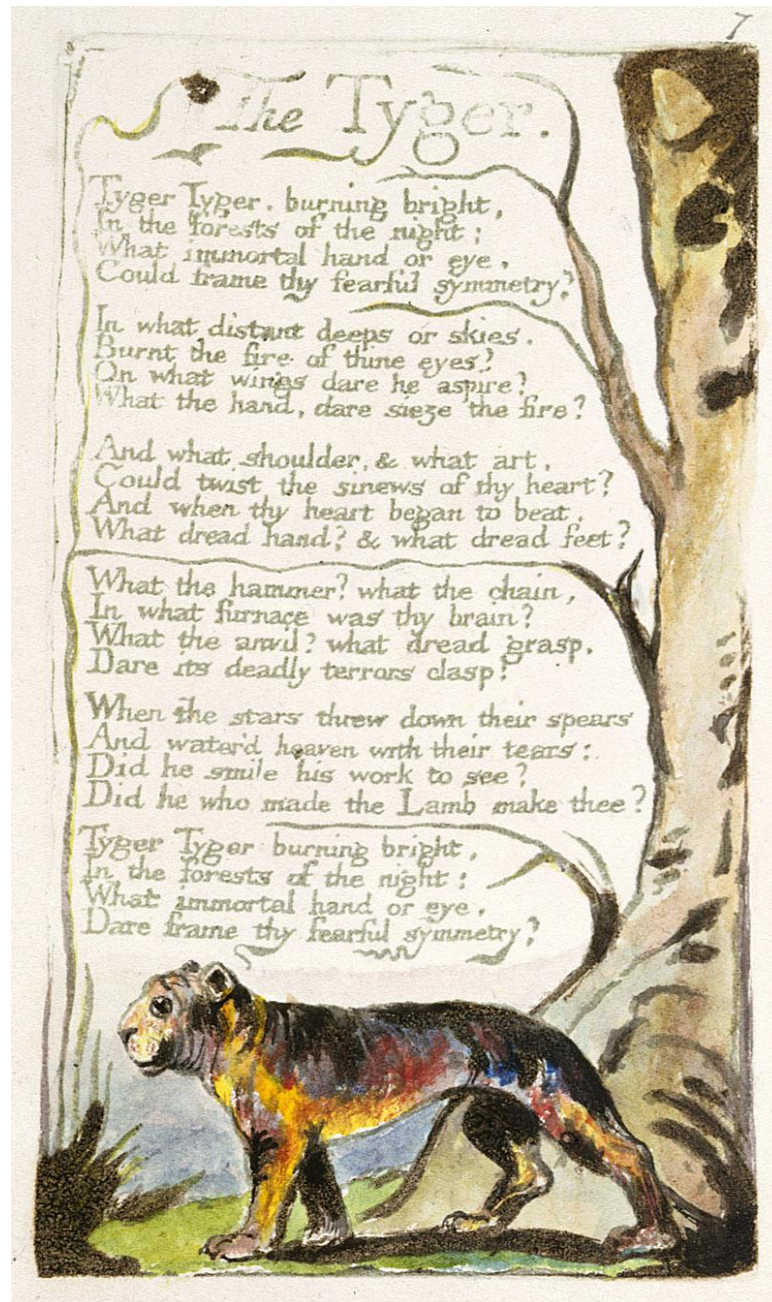
Invited, you came
food and warmth on the house
help yourself if you need more
you'll stay nine months, won't you?

Then one day in February or March
you'll emerge
and finally
we'll meet.

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THE TYGER

BY WILLIAM BLAKE



Copy A of Blake's original printing of *The Tyger*, 1794. Copy A is held by the British Museum.
See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tyger

[Selected by the editor]

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