

VOICES ISRAEL
GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026





VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

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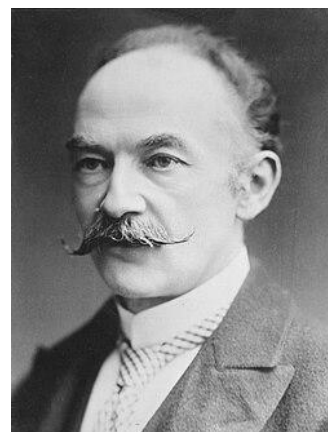
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Thomas Hardy

[Wikipedia]

Save these dates:

- **Anthology Launch**
Kiryat Motzkin and Zoom
Oct 14
- **Zoom EGM and Poetry Reading - Poems from "My Heart Speaks" workshop - Oct 28**
- **Zoom Workshop**
The Value of Repetition in Poetry – Nov 23



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

O hushed October morning mild,
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;
To-morrow's wind, if it be wild,
Should waste them all.

From October, by Robert Frost

Dear Friends,

With nine or ten group meetings each month, together with workshops, poetry readings and other events, it can be difficult to find available dates for additional activities. Despite this challenge, I'm pleased to tell you that the Anthology Launch and EGM are scheduled for this month. The EGM will be immediately followed by a reading of poems developed by participants in the recent workshop, "My Heart Speaks", inspired by the Psalms and presented by Elana Dorfman and Dina Yehuda.

Next month will begin with the first meeting of our Poetry Reading Group on 1st November, led by Deborah Golden. Later in the month, Susan Olsburgh will lead a workshop on "The Value of Repetition in Poetry".

Some members still haven't paid their 2026 membership fee. If you haven't already paid, please use this link for details of how to pay: <https://voicesisrael.com/about-voices-israel/membership/>, or telephone me for assistance on +972 (0) 54-307-3587.

Newsletter contributions are always welcome. Please continue sending your artwork, photographs, essays, letters and, of course, poems to newsletter.voices@gmail.com. Members greatly enjoy reading and viewing your work, and it is wonderful to celebrate the many and varied talents within our community.

Wishing all members a great month, with good health, happiness and successful writing.

Kind regards,



Julian Alper,
President, Voices Israel.



OCTOBER BY FRENCH ARTIST JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE
[WIKIPEDIA]

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MEETING DATES, TIMES AND PLACES

October 2026

SOUTHERN	Meeting via Zoom Sunday, October 18 at 5:00 PM	Coordinator: Miriam Green	miriamsgreen@gmail.com
TEL AVIV	Meeting via Zoom Thursday, October 29 at 7:15 PM	Coordinator: Mark L. Levinson Tel: 054-444-8438	nosnivel@netvision.net.il
JERUSALEM	Meeting via Zoom Monday, October 26 at 7:30 PM	Coordinator: Avril Meallem Tel: 02-567-0998	aemeallem@gmail.com
UPPER GALILEE	Wed, October 21 at 10:30. at the home of Reuven and Yehudit in Tzfat	Coordinator: Reuven Goldfarb Tel: 04-697-4105 or: 058-414-0262	poetsprogress@gmail.com
HAIFA	Tuesday, October 20 at 7:00 PM at Naomi Yalin's home	Coordinator: Naomi Yalin Tel: 054-794-3738	naomiyalin@gmail.com
NETANYA/SHARON	Tuesday, October 20 at 7:00 PM at Susan Olsburgh's home	Coordinator: Susan Olsburgh Tel: 054-919-3575	olsburgh.susan@gmail.com
GLOBAL GROUP 1	Meeting via Zoom Thursday, October 29 at 19:15 Israel time	Coordinator: Shoshana Kent Tel: +972-52-808-9365	y2nosh@gmail.com
GLOBAL GROUP 2	Meeting via Zoom Sunday, October 18 at 19:30 Israel time	Coordinator: Judy Koren Tel: +972-54-741-7860	koren.judy@gmail.com
GLOBAL GROUP 3	Meeting via Zoom Thursday, October 8 at 19:30 Israel time	Coordinator: Julian Alper Tel: +972-54-307-3587	julian.alper@gmail.com
POETRY READING	Meeting via Zoom Sunday, November 1 Time to be confirmed	Coordinator: Debbie Golden	deborahg@edu.haifa.ac.il

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

➤ **Heidi Joffe** of West Vancouver, Canada

SAD NEWS

We were saddened to learn of the recent passing of our dear member, **Raymond Isakow z"l**. We send our sincere condolences to Raymond's family and hope that they will be comforted by happy memories of him.

We intend to pay tribute to Raymond and his poetry in our next Newsletter.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS

- To - **Isaac Cohen** for his many successes during the month.
- To - **Bob Findysz** – whose poem “A Balkan Magic Carpet Journey” was published in the “Joy Issue: Fall 2026 of Flowers of the Field” online literary journal. You can see the full issue here -> <https://flowers-of-the-field.com/fall-2026%3A-joy> – and Bob's poem is included in the Poet's Corner section of this Newsletter.
- To - **Esther Cameron and Mindy Aber Barad**, who have just published the latest edition of The Deronda Review. The full edition can be read here -> <https://www.derondareview.org/vol11no2.pdf>.
- To - **Hayim Abramson, Julian Alper, Miriam Alper, Hannah Amit, Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman, Mindy Aber Barad, Esther Cameron, Judy Koren, Alyssa A. Lappen, Rumi Morkin and Pesach Rotem** who have had poems published in the latest edition of The Deronda Review. The full edition can be read here -> <https://www.derondareview.org/vol11no2.pdf>.
- To - **Fran Levin, Mark L. Levinson, Elana Dorfman, Ann Bar-Dov, Judy Koren, Pesach Rotem and Julian Alper**, who have all had poems published in the online journal “Sheltering in Place” edited by Haya Pomrenze of Babka Press – you can read the whole journal here: <http://Babkapress.com/sheltering-in-place>.
- To - **Yiskah Rosenfeld**, whose poem “Permission” is published in the online Quartet Journal – the poem can be found here -> [Fall Issue 2026 | Quartet Journal](#). And Yiskah's poem “String Quartet # 2 in D Major” was published in the “Unbound Ink” journal. It can be read here -> <https://unboundink.org/issue1-string-quartet-2-in-d-major/>.
- To - **Bruce Black**, whose poem “A Fingernail Moon” was published by “Kind Over Matter” – the poem is here -> <https://kindovermatter.com/a-fingernail-moon/>.

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EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Voices Israel – Zoom Workshop

Monday, November 23rd at 7:30pm (Israel time)

The Value of Repetition in Poetry

Led by Susan Olsburgh

Have you ever considered the value of using repetition in writing your poems?

This workshop will explore traditional repetition patterns examining a range of poems in the English literary canon.

It will give participants the opportunity to experiment in using repetition in ways they may not have tried before.

Registration Details will be sent soon, but meanwhile, save this date in your diary.

NB - there will be a reading of poems produced during and after the workshop, a few weeks after the workshop.

Amazon

We're investigating how we can publish our Anthologies on Amazon.

Do you have experience of self-publishing on Amazon?

If you do, please e-mail president.voices@gmail.com.

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Voices Israel EGM Extraordinary General Meeting

In light of rising costs, particularly for overseas postage, we will have to increase the membership fees for 2027. Members will have an opportunity to discuss the proposed increase at an EGM on Zoom on Wednesday 28th October at 7:30pm (Israel time). The EGM will be followed by a reading of Poems from the recent Workshop "My Heart Speaks" inspired by Psalms. Full details to follow soon.

Good Poems in Good Company Voices Israel Poetry Reading Group

There is so much knowledge and love of poetry among our members that we thought it would be a wonderful idea for Voices Israel to set up a **Poetry Reading Group!**

We plan to meet on Zoom once every two months, on the **first Sunday of every second month**, starting on **Sunday, 1 November**, in the early evening, for an hour. For each meeting we will decide on a poet in advance and will spend our time together reading and discussing their work.

If you're interested in taking part, please contact
Debbie Golden - deborahg@edu.haifa.ac.il

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.



Beware of Scams

There are unscrupulous scam operators emailing poets about publishing their books.

If you receive an unexpected email, don't open it, and certainly don't click on any links in the email.

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ANTHOLOGY 2026 - LAUNCH

Our beautiful *Voices Israel Anthology 2026* has now been distributed. If you haven't received your copy yet, it should be arriving soon.

Congratulations, and heartfelt thanks, to our Editor-in-Chief and Anthology Producer, Judy Koren, and to the Editorial Board—Deborah Golden, Avril Meallem, and Elana Wolff—for their outstanding work in bringing this anthology to life.

Congratulations, too, to all the poets whose work was selected for inclusion.

The Anthology will be officially launched at a special event on **Wednesday 14th Oct**
At 6pm-9pm in Kiryat Motzkin near Haifa – a 2-minute walk from a train station
And at 7:15pm - 9pm on Zoom

If you haven't already registered, please use this link:

<https://forms.gle/BYwhbAUgoCwuJ2Qi7>

Voices Israel Anthology 2026



*Poetry from Israel & Abroad
Volume 52*

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PAM AYRES - THE DINNER PARTY



<https://youtu.be/mYeVhBUhITI?si=yBYnFtXokLlofwzx>

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CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Reuben Rose Memorial Poetry Competition



The 37th annual Reuben Rose Memorial Poetry Competition is open for entries

Entry fees for the 2026 competition:

US\$6.00 for 1 poem; US\$14.00 for 3 poems; US\$19.00 for 6 poems.

Prizes: First prize: \$500; Second prize: \$200; Third prize: \$100. Ten Honourable Mentions will also be awarded.

The judges for the 37th (2026) competition will be:

- Mark Elber and
- Anne Myles: both prize-winning U.S. poets.
- Wendy Blumfield, a British-born Israeli poet and journalist.

For more details about the competition and how to submit, please look at this page:

<https://voicesisrael.com/reuben-rose/submit-to-the-reuben-rose/>

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The Jewish Writing Project - <https://jewishwritingproject.com/>

The Jewish Writing Project was created to give Jews from assorted backgrounds the chance to share their experiences and explore, through their writing, what it means to be Jewish today. It's our hope that through the process of writing and revising, a writer's words can lead the writer (and reader) to a deeper understanding of his or her connection to our Jewish heritage. Here at The Jewish Writing Project, we invite you to tell others about a particular Jewish experience that may have shaped your understanding of what it means to be a Jew. Perhaps you might explore a memory about being Jewish that holds a special place in your heart or you might want to express thoughts about how being Jewish has enriched your life or made your life more difficult. Whatever you decide to write and share with the project—a poem, a story, an essay—please remember to keep the focus on *your* experience of being Jewish. It's our hope that the project can offer both writers and readers new ways of understanding what it means to be Jewish today. Thank you for thinking of The Jewish Writing Project as a home for your work. B'shalom, Bruce Black, Editorial Director *For more information about The Jewish Writing Project, write to Bruce Black at: bruceblack@ymail.com*

Ahavah: Jewish Love is an international anthology exploring love through Jewish life, culture, memory and imagination, inspired by the 2026 European Days of Jewish Culture theme, LOVE. We welcome poetry, short fiction, essays and memoir from writers worldwide. Writers do not need to be Jewish, but submissions should engage meaningfully and respectfully with the anthology's Jewish theme and context.

I serve as Ireland Coordinator for the European Days of Jewish Culture, and the anthology is being developed by Ring of Culture as part of our wider work promoting Jewish culture, literature and dialogue.

Deadline: 15 November 2026

Early-bird submission fee: €8 until 31 October

Publication: Paperback and ebook

Approximately 20 contributors will be selected

Full submission guidelines:

<https://www.ringofculture.com/ahavah-submission-guidelines>

Submission form:

<https://www.ringofculture.com/ahavah-submission-form>



**A Submission Call
for a special folio from Calul
Journal**

The State of the World

We are looking for poems that reflect the world today, poems that address rising antisemitism, ongoing armed conflicts, weakening democratic institutions, AI, partisanship, and the erosion of norms that once gave us security. We are all feeling the trauma. Here is the place to express it.

**Send 3-5 poems before October 5th to
caluljournal@gmail.com**

For more information – see <https://calul.substack.com/p/new-submission-call-from-calul-journal>

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Syncopation Literary Journal – A Literary Journal for Musicians and for Writers Inspired by Music, seeks submissions for **Volume 6, Issue 1: Women in Music** by NOVEMBER 1st, 2026. For more information see: <https://syncopationliteraryjournal.wordpress.com/call-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](#).

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.

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/>

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.

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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/>

Better Than Starbucks Journal is accepting submissions for the Sep 2026 Autumn Issue.
<https://www.betterthanstarbucks.org/submission-guidelines>

Persimmon Tree is accepting submissions from women over sixty.
<https://persimmontree.org/submissions/>

Life and Legends is now accepting submissions on Submittable. We welcome submissions in Poetry, Poetry in Translation, Book Reviews, Interviews, and Essays from writers and translators worldwide. Submit your work at: <https://silentrivier.submittable.com/submit>

Rawhead is currently accepting Poetry, Visual Art, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, & Hybrid submissions – for more details see <https://rawheadjournal.org/submit-to-rawhead/>

Check out Erika Dreifus' Jewish Literary Links

See - <https://www.erikadreifus.com/2024/09/jewish-literary-links-233/>

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ART BY OUR MEMBERS

Cover Picture by Judith Fineberg

The quote below of G-d speaking to Abraham was the inspiration for my painting. The Hebrew lettering in my painting is that quote.

"He took him outside and said, 'Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.'" (Genesis 15:5)

Other references that inspired my composition included the Hubble telescope's magnificent captures of distant galaxies; I chose the Orion galaxie as my starting point, although my acrylic rendering is barely a distant approximate of the online photo). Abraham peeking through earth's atmosphere is my Judaized take off from a medieval wood cut. Finally, Michalangelo's well known hand of G-d touching Adam's finger had to find its way in! Alas, Ecclesiasties tells us, **"there is nothing new under the sun"**.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I would like to share something a little different with you—something that grew out of the same place where much of my writing begins: memory.

On September 25, I released *La Novia de Las Piletas*, a nine-track instrumental concept album inspired by a childhood memory from San Jorge, El Salvador.

When I was about six years old, I remember hearing adults speak about a young university student who had died in a terrible bus accident. I was too young to understand everything that had happened, and after all these years I no longer remember her name. What remained were only fragments: a young woman, a bus, a driver who lost control, a ravine, and a life ending far too soon.

Decades later, those fragments became the seed of a fictional story.

I gave the young woman a name, Miriam, and imagined Ricardo, the man who loved her. From there came a wedding dress she would never collect, the house they would never build, a man carrying her absence through the rest of his life, and Las Piletas—the hill near my hometown that I walked countless times as a child.

Eventually, I realized that I wanted to tell the story in another way: without words.

The album is entirely instrumental. The nine compositions form a narrative through their titles, atmosphere, and recurring images:

El Vestido Que Nunca Llegó — *The Wedding Dress That Never Arrived*

Duelo — *Mourning*

La Casa Que Soñamos — *The House We Dreamed Of*
Viento Entre los Mangos — *Wind Among the Mango Trees*

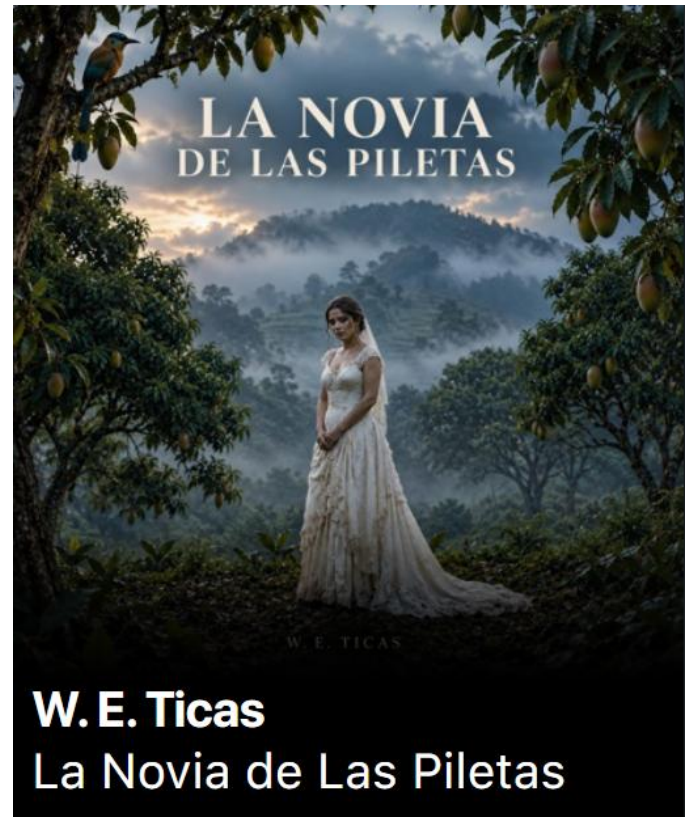
Donde Ella Todavía Espera — *Where She Still Waits*

El Torogoz Me Llamó — *The Torogoz Called Me*

Susurros en Las Piletas — *Whispers in Las Piletas*

Ella Volvió por Él — *She Came Back for Him*

La Sonrisa de Ricardo — *Ricardo's Smile*



The torogoz, El Salvador's national bird, becomes part of that landscape of memory. So do the mango trees, the wind, the hill, and eventually the silence surrounding Ricardo as he grows old.

I have always been interested in what remains after people and events have disappeared—the fragments that survive in memory even when names and details are lost. With this project, I wanted to see whether music could hold some of those fragments in a different way.

Memory gave me the beginning. Storytelling carried it somewhere else. And music gave it a voice without words.

If you would like to listen, here is the album:

<https://music.ink.to/9CAeE1>

Yours,

W. E. Ticas (Walter Gonzalez)

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MIRIAM JASKIEROWICZ ARMAN

THE TANGLE ABOVE THE LIGHT by Maria Grazia Carnà

A review of Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman's recent Art exhibition at Jerusalem's Sherover Theatre. Reproduced here with the kind permission of the author Maria Grazia Carnà.

While politics dictates and ideology strays, Art perseveres in its teaching, learning from error itself to guide humanity toward a domain defined not by rigid righteousness, but by unvarnished truth. Upon her return to Israel, Prof. Jaskierowicz Arman reclaims both the urgency and the desire for self-expression, along with the profound joy of offering her work to others. Gone are the alluring falsehoods of an Italy steeped in hypocrisy from which she fled; in their place are the authentic gazes of those who find answers in art, grasp its deeper resonance, and comprehend that inner fire which, once ablaze, bursts forth seeking only its way home.

tradition, the Holy City embodies a dual nature: a heavenly Jerusalem, pure, intangible, and promised and an earthly Jerusalem, wrought from dust, conflict, tears, and ancient stones exuding history. The art of Prof. Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman inhabits this precise sacred fissure, serving as a bridge between the frailty of matter and the absolute of the spirit.

To traverse this exhibition is to undertake a pilgrimage into the "tangle of existence". Just as the stones of Jerusalem shelter within their grooves centuries of prayers, grief, and hope etched into the rock, so do the artist's canvases and forms welcome the weeping colors and tormented contours of a humanity striving for redemption. This is no pursuit of polished or comforting aesthetics; it is the building of the sacred upon its polar opposite, an act of love and defiance wherein the agony of living becomes the sole veil through which divine light can ultimately filter.

Within this exhibition space, every work transforms into a fragment of that cosmic restoration (*Tikkun Olam*), imparting the truth that the Divine lives within art. Just as it is within the walls of Jerusalem, it is only by confronting the night and the weeping that the mind opens wide to the miracle of vision.

The paintings on display engage in a silent dialogue, driven by a constant tension between the serenity of the landscape and the affliction of the soul. The sinuous, twisted lines of the central figures

intertwine like fractured memories, lending form to figures that seem to surface from lost epochs to recount tales of forgotten sorrow. Across the figurative faces and



Jerusalem is no mere expanse of stone and memory; it is a dimension of the spirit, the threshold where the heavens bow to touch the human wound. Within Jewish

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darker brushstrokes, the tones slip downward, resembling weeping pigments flowing like the tears of a God watching human fragility in powerlessness.

Prof. Jaskierowicz Arman's works possess the compelling force of an initial visual complexity that gradually unravels, revealing the layered convergence of distinct eras and realms: on one side, the deceptively peaceful nature of the landscapes; on the other, the profound disquiet inherent in existence. This art shuns superficial or easy solace; rather, it sinks its roots into the cruelty of the night and the ferocity of one's own fears. It is precisely by building upon ugliness, suffering, and bitterness that the canvas undergoes its metamorphosis, transmuting pain into a brutally honest aesthetic where salvation and the "miracle of love" emerge as the sole light capable of dispelling the illusions that obscure the mind.

Her works thus become a cathedral and a testament to an ever-present God who lives through art, the supreme message carved behind the tangle of existence. Within that weave of tormented lines and saturated fields of color, the divine does not manifest as an untouched dogma; it reveals itself in the very flesh of the paint, in the capacity to absorb every wound only to transfigure it. The creative act becomes the locus where cosmic chaos finds meaning, and painting endeavors to become a visual prayer, reassembling the scattered fragments of the human soul, cleansing it of past and present lives, and restoring the bare dignity of the eternal.



Prof. Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman deploys her intellect and passion to grant every onlooker the power to perceive that which remains unseen, she teaches that to interpret the world, the enchantment of beauty is insufficient; one must draw from the agony of living from those who, weeping through the crystalline veil of sorrow, can truly behold all things.

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No one leaves this exhibition unscathed. Here, Art ceases to be mere contemplation and becomes *Akedah*, that binding and sacrifice of what we hold most precious upon the altar of truth. It is a fierce, desperate alchemy, where hatred for the ruins of existence clashes and fuses with an all-encompassing love for the redeeming light. If Jerusalem teaches us that the holiest stones are those bathed in human tears, these works

remind us that there is no salvation without the wound. Let those seeking a comforting refuge turn their gaze elsewhere; those with the courage to look God directly in the eye will find Him here, within the folds of the canvas, alive in every color, bleeding and loving.



"MOSHE RABBEINU" - THREE-DIMENSIONAL GLASS FUSION BY MIRIAM ARMAN

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WHY POETRY?

By Bruce Black

Wandering through a local bookstore the other day, I came across Dorianne Laux's *Finger Exercises for Poets* (Norton, 2024) on the poetry shelf, and, intrigued by the title, read a few pages and couldn't resist buying the book and taking it home.

Laux, a poet whose work includes *Only as the Day is Long*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, teaches in the low residency MFA program at Pacific University. Her book is filled with the kind of wisdom about writing and poetry that will inspire you to rush to your desk and begin writing.

"This is what I think all poetic narratives seek to do," writes Laux, "create stories within stories, layer upon layer of feeling and meaning, spinning it out like a spider, weaving this delicate net that holds time and space, image and language, clarity and mystery."

Have you ever wondered what happens when we write a poem?

Here's Laux's response to that question:

"When we write a poem, we dissolve into the universe, and wake up refreshed and alive."

"Each poem," according to Laux, "is a thank-you note to that miracle. To each day we have been given as a gift."

And if you've ever wondered why we write or read poetry, you might enjoy what Laux has to say in the section of her book, "Why Poetry?":

You may as well ask, Why sunsets? Why bicycles? Why gnats and human beings? Why trees? Why the small and larger things that make up this world? Why stars? Why dust? We swirl around and inside of chaos. The word we're born into is a noisy, messy, confusing place full of moments of boredom and surprise. We are in the center of our lives always, and yet there are times we feel on the outside looking in, a question on our lips, unable to formulate it, or if we do manage to find words, speak them, we can only hope they can capture some of what that chaotic world inside feels like. And if we do, if we are able, for a moment, the world both without and within simultaneously stills, sits motionless between ourselves and others,



ourselves and the world. We feel a semblance of satisfaction and achievement, something like joy.

And she shares what Tu Fu, who is considered one of China's greatest poets of the Tang dynasty, has to say about poetry: "Poetry is like being alive, twice."

In Laux's words, "poetry is a place set aside in the imagination, in the soul, for pure making, pure being. Most of our lives are spent in prescribed fashion, where to go, what to wear, who to meet when, to what purpose? Our thoughts are taken mostly with questions of preparation, execution, completion."

"This is *why poetry*: to carve a moment out of the chaos," writes Laux, "to live the moments we are most alive into what we are built to be, sense-making and nonsense-making machines, all our powers working together: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, fully being in this world we've been given as a gift, making it ours through art, and then giving it away."

For more information about Dorianne Laux and her work, visit: <https://www.doriannelaux.net/>

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

DEAR SAL

By Peter Brav

I came across your name on Facebook, a website that can bring people together or drive them apart, depending on who we are talking about. Apparently, we are the same age, 71 years old give or take, and seem to have grown up in the same neighborhood on Long Island. Maybe we knew each other, by name, by face, back in the day.

At the time of the 25th anniversary of 9/11 just past, you chose to comment on a posted photo of 3rd grade students from my old neighborhood elementary school back in 1973, fifty-three years ago. These school photos do tend to look alike, an earnest teacher standing by twenty or so smiling, enthusiastic youngsters with open eyes to hopeful days ahead. In this particular photo, the one that drew your attention, one of the youngsters was fondly remembered for his kindness, his intelligence--- and his tragic demise 28 years later in one of the World Trade Center towers. The comments to the post were all one would hope for in a mournful time of tragic remembrance.

Except yours.

You wrote simply *how nice all white kids* with a smiling emoji of a kid that quite frankly, Sal, appears to be yellow.

People called you *moron, stupid, idiot, insensitive*.

You called them *low life* and extolled the virtues of living now in your all-white Florida neighborhood.

I'm not going to go there with you, Sal. There is no point. Perhaps you've worked hard, been good to the people in your life, enjoyed grandchildren who revel in the spring training Mets games you take them to. Just maybe they're in 3rd grade now like those 1973 youngsters in the photo taken 53 short years ago. Perhaps they call you Papa and think you are the greatest. I don't know. I don't know you. Don't know anything about you beyond what I've said.

And those five words.

That is enough to know that anything I say will be rejected by you out of hand as I am a Jewish man whose



mother survived the Holocaust to work with and enjoy friendships with as many people as possible of all religions and colors, from Black to white and everything in between.

As we both know, Sal, virtually everyone who hates Blacks and wants them as far away as possible feels the same way about Jews.

So, Sal, I am really writing to those grandchildren, all the grandchildren really.

Kids, Sal is Italian and I am Jewish. We both grew up in a suburban neighborhood that was a pretty good place to grow up. Jews, Italians, Irish, Blacks, all going to the same schools, playing on the same ballfields, going to the same hamburger joints, pizzerias and movie theatres. It wasn't perfect. Some people had more money. Some people did better in school. Some were better athletes, more popular, more confident. People were teased, sometimes worse, for their voices, their eyeglasses, their acne, their religion, their color, their clothing, their choice of friends. We were, after all, just kids.

I was accosted on occasion in the middle school boy's room by an Italian American classmate who regularly forgot his lunch money and wanted some of mine. I was once mugged, they called it *jumped*, by a group of

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Italian American peers who walked around 9th grade with fancy leather gang jackets that seemed to give them superpowers. It didn't make me dislike Italian Americans. In fact, I married one and we're still at this love thing 43 years later. Her Italian American father had been confronted with the same decisions a generation earlier---follow the leader and do wrong or make good individual choices based purely on character---and you know what he did. Her Italian American mother was possibly the smartest person I have ever met. I miss them both terribly.

I live for Italian food. I consider Italy my favorite place in the world to escape to. I think Leonardo da Vinci may have been the most talented human being ever. I fantasized on more than one youthful occasion about Sophia Loren and Claudia Cardinale. You get the picture.

And I'm well aware, and you should be too, that Italy was not Italy for thousands of years, divided among Papal States, Byzantines, Lombards, and more kingdoms and trade groups than I could ever keep track of. That Italy lies smack in the middle of a European continent that has been at the country border shift and ruler-encouraged hate game for so long amidst thousands of years of war.

So that was, and remains, America's promise. Oceans away. Younger, unburdened by generations of passed-down prejudice and pure greed. One nation. But too often, we have been at war all over the globe for what we're told is national self-interest that has done little for the nation or the self. And perhaps more damaging in the long run, we have been at war with ourselves, with those beautiful ideals we set down long ago in writing.

Black/White. Republican/Democrat.
Southern/Northern. City/Rural. Rich Beyond
Reason/Everyone Else.

We will always have differences. Differences make for better food, better music, better conversation, greater learning opportunities. We just cannot have one nation when the differences rule.

So kids, love your Papa for who he is. Your grandfather. The guy who helped put that roof over your heads, put that food on your table, put that pen and paper in your knapsack, got you that iPhone. And then run, don't walk, to the nearest library and open your eyes and minds to all of the unbelievably heroic and brilliant things Black men and Black women have done, against all odds of oppression sent their way for hundreds of years. Get out there and dance with anyone and everyone, to music sent your way by anyone and everyone. Learn a second language, any one of hundreds out there. Then learn a third, the language of love that requires you to stop putting generations of frustration and the ignorance and hatred of your own grandfather on anyone else. It's surprisingly easy to learn.

Part of the aftermath in the still vivid horrors of 9/11 is that we absolutely must find a way to minimize the hatred, especially organized hate, and quickly. It has beset every inch of this world of ours for thousands of years and it will be up to you to realize that it is the hatred itself that never produces a happy ending. Be kind. Be the leader of your own life. Resist the easy temptation of blaming someone else. It doesn't work. Ultimately somewhere inside you will know you're not fooling anyone, especially yourself, and it will eat away at your soul like acid. Take a real good look at and real good listen to Papa Sal. You'll know what I mean. Kindness is so much more enjoyable and sustainable and shockingly contagious.

We're counting on you.

Peter Brav is the author of the novels *ZAPPY I'M NOT*, *THE OTHER SIDE OF LOSING*, *SNEAKING IN*, and *331 INNINGS*. His shorter work has appeared in *Black Fork Review*, *Green Prints Magazine*, *Nine Mile Magazine*, *Saranac Review*, *Kelsey Review*, *Monarch Review*, *Bookends Review*, *Assignment Literary Review*, *Echo Magazine*, *US1 Magazine*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, and other publications. He is the child of a Holocaust survivor from Poland and a WWII war hero from Brooklyn which helps explain why much of his writing concerns social justice. He is a 1977 graduate of Cornell University and a 1980 graduate of Harvard Law School and lives with his wife Janet, a retired college professor.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

FROM LONDON TO GEDERA IN 1970

by Michele Bustin

What was it like for a girl of 22 to "land" in Gedera, a sleepy village in Israel, in 1970 directly from London, where I was born and had lived most of my life? In a word – a shock, a culture shock, if you will. I didn't know Hebrew, had been brought up and lived in a completely different environment with a completely different mentality.

I arrived alone on August 20 1970 (my husband-to-be Yaakov whom I had met in England was staying there for a few months longer) at the hottest time of the year, but at that time the heat didn't bother me – they say English people yearn for and worship the sun. As the English composer Noel Coward wrote "Mad dogs and English men go out in the midday sun".

I was welcomed most warmly by Yaakov's family. His brother and sister-in-law helped me adapt and we communicated comfortably in English. Fortunately, I was fluent in German so could easily converse with his parents, Holocaust survivors from Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia), and was introduced to their group of German-speaking friends, who examined me from top to toe – an English girl with a university degree in Gedera! One of the German ladies once touched my sweater in awe (an ordinary inexpensive one from Marks and Spencer) probably expecting me to dress as English royalty and asked: "*Ist dass echte Kaschmir?*" (Is that real cashmere?) It wasn't of course. In fact, the clothes I wore at the time were nothing out-of-the ordinary in England, but here in the small village of Gedera in the early 70's they looked most expensive and sophisticated.

The population of Gedera in 1970 was about 5000, a big village or small town, and had all the features and characters of such. What a change from the huge city I had lived in! Our first house was at the end of a dirt path – there were few paved roads here at the time – my parents were shocked when they saw where I was living. After that we moved to our own small flat – there were very few apartment buildings in Gedera at that time, and many people had no idea how to live and behave in them – most had been brought up in small private houses – and their notion of cleanliness in the public areas was a far cry from mine. The neighbours were very nice, the insides of their houses were spotlessly clean and but the day my small son picked up a razor blade someone had thrown out of the window



was the day we decided to move.

We did all our shopping in the nearest *makolet*. You would pay once every week or 2 weeks for your shopping and completely trusted the sums which were written in the shopkeeper's own special (often illegible) way on a card and put in a card file.

There were the colorful local characters, reminding me of the village of Clochmerle in the book of the same name by Gabriel Chevalier or "Scenes from Village life" by Amos Oz. There was the simple-minded Puyo who used to call after every young girl "Blonda, Blonda" (some memory from the past probably), there was the local gossip who knew everything about everyone and if she didn't, she made sure she found out. There was the neighbour who would give me a ride on his motorcycle whenever he saw me walking along the hot streets. I remember the post office clerk who took ages to give service because he used to close the account book and put it back carefully in its place on the other side of the office after one customer, only to have to go and get it for the next customer. There was the butcher who kept me the chicken feet (best for chicken soup) even after they were not allowed to be sold (for some hygienic reason I was told). There was the clerk at the clinic who

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everyone was in fear of because he was the one who decided how long you would wait to get a doctor's appointment, according to criteria of his own.

Everyone knew everyone. When a stranger asked where a certain street was, you would ask who they were looking for, not the address, because it was easier that way.

Soon after I arrived I went to my first Israeli wedding in a neighbouring moshav. It was in a barn, the whole village was invited as well as outside guests and, in fact, anyone hearing of a *simcha* just came along; the marriage ceremony could be neither seen nor heard – there were so many people and such a lot of noise, no one thought they should listen and be quiet during the *chupa*. I swore I wouldn't get married in Israel if it was like that. In fact, Yaakov and I had a lovely wedding with only 70 guests in the yard/garden of a small guest house here in Gedera (the place is now a care home – we half-joke that we started our time together here and here it will end). It was a simple wedding – long wooden tables, a modest menu but it was intimate and happy and just the way we wanted.

It was in Gedera that I learned the true meaning of "Who's last in line?" – and it was always me! It was here that I learned the mysteries of how to light a paraffin heater without choking myself. (I'd come from a home with central heating!).

It was in Gedera that I made my first acquaintance with the school system and indeed the school that would eventually become my "home". It was in 1971 when I, fresh out of *ulpan*, was asked by the local high-school principal to substitute for an English teacher who had been called up for reserve duty. I was so excited but my excitement was short-term. Here I understood that I would be called by my first name and not Mrs. Bustin, that being quiet during a lesson was a recommendation only, that running up and down the staircase was

normal, that uniform meant a light blue shirt and jeans (unlike the strict dress code that I had had at my school – tie, hat, uniform dress and shoes, special gym outfits – the whole set sold exclusively and expensively by the



MICHELE AND HER FAMILY

school outfitters!), that discipline was a far cry from what I had known at my British Grammar School. But eventually I was able to find the happy medium between what it was and what I expected.

My three children had a happy, simple childhood in Gedera's 70s, 80s and 90s. The schools still taught handwork and music and agriculture, the youth movement was their second home and, living opposite the clubhouse, our house was the place the kids came to when they needed something or had to call home (pre-cellphone days). The children spent hours on the nearby basketball court, were always outside playing, inventing and creating whole imaginary worlds. They would walk around the village or ride their bikes and come home when they were hungry. We would go for lovely walks in the fields at the end of our road which filled with wild flowers in the spring (now houses fill those fields.)

Even though things have changed I have always loved living here for the atmosphere, the quiet, the people, the sense of community.

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August 20th 1970

The hottest time of the hottest month.
It's two o'clock on August 20,
as I step unsteadily off the ship into my new life,
into the unfamiliar heat, the sweating crowd,
onto the sweltering dock - such strange sights, smells, sounds.
1970 the first year of a new decade.
Behind me a youth of sober disposition and unassuming culture,
before me years of scorching summers and unpredictable character.
Senses assailed, I make my way uncertainly, yet purposefully.
Words are spoken in a language so foreign yet so familiar,
an unseen, yet evident obstacle which I will someday overcome
unlike this intense, overpowering heat which I will never master.

A bit about myself. I was brought up in the East End of London - a true Cockney. I attended an excellent grammar school and then went on to Leeds University where I earned a degree in French and German. In Israel I became a High school English teacher and *mechanechet*. I have 3 wonderful children and 10 incredible grandchildren , aged 6 to 23. I enjoy a happy and active retirement.

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BOOK REVIEW BY WENNDY DICKSTEIN

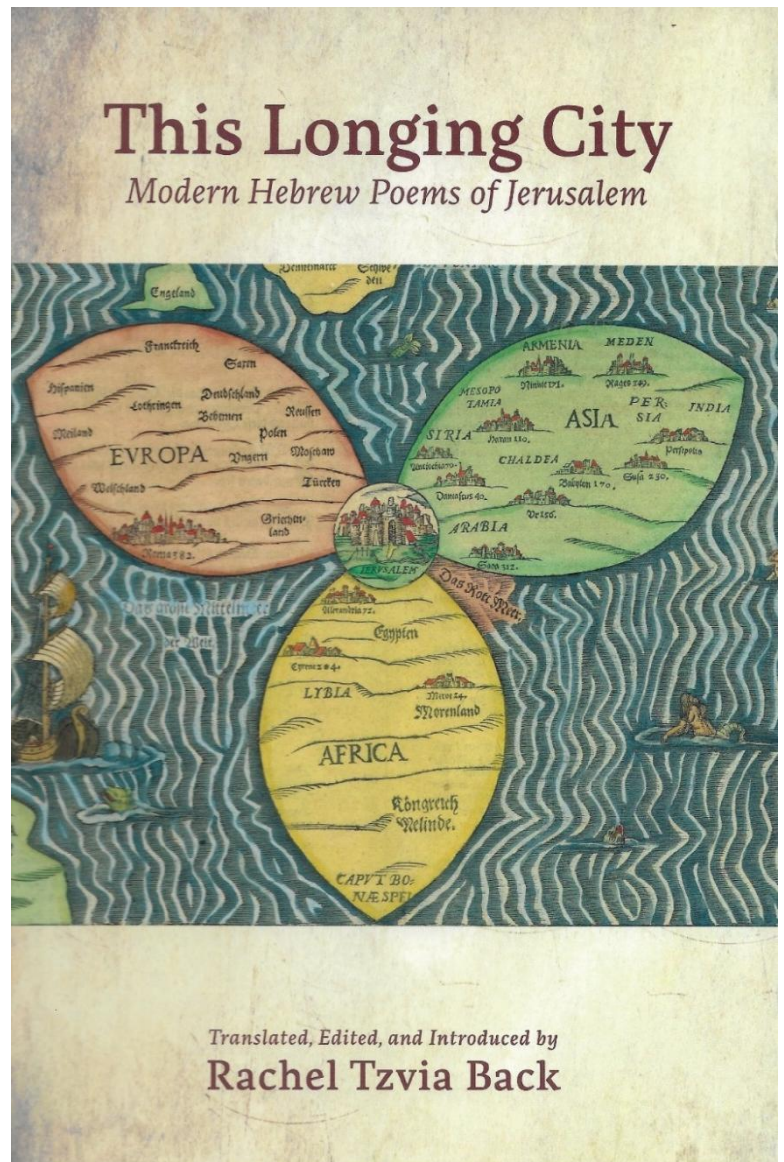
This Longing City: Modern Hebrew Poems of Jerusalem Translated, edited and introduced by Rachel Tzvia Back

Published by Hebrew Union Press, this anthology features 77 poems by 41 poets, spanning nearly a century of literary expression—from the 1930s to the present. The Hebrew originals appear alongside Back's English translations, making the collection accessible to both scholars and general readers. It offers English language readers an expansive and nuanced portrait of Jerusalem through the voices of modern Hebrew poets. Back's introduction and annotations provide extra context.

Moving beyond familiar names, it also includes lesser-known Hebrew voices. The book introduces a broad spectrum of poetic perspectives that reflect Jerusalem's layered identity—historical, spiritual, political, and deeply personal. The collection captures the evolution of modern Hebrew poetry while illuminating the enduring power of Jerusalem as both a real and imagined city. The collection is thoughtfully curated and opens a window into the evolving literary imagination of Jerusalem. Rachel Tzvia Back is a poet, translator, and professor of literature at Oranim College. She lives in the Galilee.

Back's translations preserve the texture, rhythm, and emotional resonance of the original Hebrew, offering readers an authentic encounter with the poems. Her introduction and annotations provide literary and historical context, guiding readers through a body of work shaped by nearly a century of cultural and political change.

As she writes in her introduction: "Jerusalem, the paradox: the place one goes in order to transcend the limits of place. It is to this Jerusalem, and these many Jerusalems, the poets are drawn; it is about this Jerusalem, these many Jerusalems, the poets cannot help but write their poems, their psalms and songs."



As Voices' poets and readers well know, Jerusalem is a theme that resonates deeply with our creative and spiritual sensibilities, and this new volume is highly recommended to enhance our own personal engagement with Jerusalem.

This Longing City can be purchased from Amazon (including on kindle) using this link - <https://a.co/d/04ZZZ3iD>

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BOOK LAUNCH – EVERYBODY KNOWS A GHOST

Elana Wolff in conversation with Brenda Clews



<https://youtu.be/005QTYzDv2Q>

Elana also spoke about her book at an ESRA “Meet the Author” event in Haifa – she’s seen below (second from the left) together with Judy Koren (third from left) and Wendy Blumfield (fourth from left).



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ELGIN ROOM

The Trustees in the Temporary Elgin Room, 1819, by Archibald Archer, depicts the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum surrounded by museum staff, a trustee, and visitors.



On Seeing the Elgin Marbles by John Keats

My spirit is too weak—mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep,
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—
A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

*Poem and
painting from
Wikipedia
(selected by the
editor)*

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