

# New Books from Israel • Fall 2018



THE INSTITUTE FOR THE TRANSLATION OF HEBREW LITERATURE





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# NEW BOOKS FROM ISRAEL

Fall 2018

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BESTSELLER



## *Once There Was a Woman*

Tel-Aviv, Achuzat Bayit, 2018. 253 pp.  
a novel

*Once There Was a Woman* is an incomparable book about an incomparable woman. Over the past ten years, Yael Neeman has been researching the story of an intriguing and mysterious woman who left behind no immediate family, no property, nothing of what she had created. Neeman spoke to her surviving relatives, her lovers, her neighbors, a doctor who treated her, the people she worked with, and her childhood friends—many of whom were, like her, born to parents who were Polish Holocaust survivors. From what these people told her, she has woven the story of the woman's life, and theirs.

Once upon a time, it transpires, there was a woman living among us who was blessed with talents, full of contradictions, brilliant and creative, a gifted translator who loved literature and writing, but who systematically destroyed everything that she ever committed to paper. With the help of those who participated in her life and who come together for the first time in the pages of this book, places and events to which this woman was connected to are vividly depicted, while at the same time the riddle of her life only broadens and deepens.

Why write about someone who wished to wipe herself out of the world is a question that is addressed in *Once There Was a Woman* and that echoes throughout the book: "I am still interviewing, still trapped in her web without being able to give a satisfactory reply to the question that I am asked again and again: Why am I doing this?" writes Neeman. In her one-of-a-kind style, lucid and trenchant, Yael Neeman paints a portrait of a remarkable woman, a portrait that is also a riveting document about the second generation, those who were born right after the war.

French language rights sold to **Actes Sud**, Arles.

**Yael Neeman** was born in Kibbutz Yehiam, Israel in 1960. She studied for her Master's degree in Literature and Philosophy at Tel Aviv University. Her novel *We Were the Future* was nominated for and received awards and was a best-seller in Israel. It has been published in French, Polish and English. Neeman's stories have appeared in *World Literature Today* and the *Chattahoochee Review*. She participated in the International Writing Program (IWP) in Iowa City, having been chosen by the Fulbright Foundation.

Her latest novel, *Once There Was a Woman*, was published in May 2018.

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PHOTO © TOWER EPELBAUM

Neeman's writing skill produces a very intense and unadorned prose that creates a great intimacy with the reader. This intimacy has a great deal of power and it seems to me that what stands out in this book more than anything else is the emotional jolt that it gives the reader.

**Haaretz**

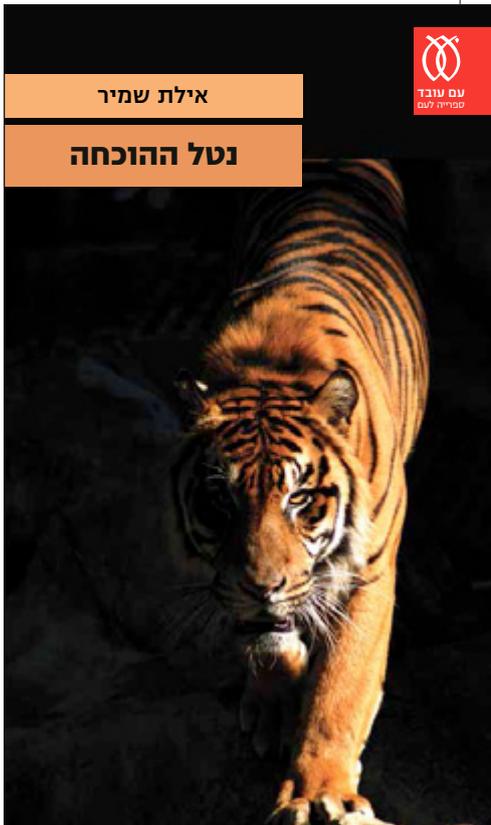
A book that is remarkable for its delivery and the way it traps the reader inside it.

**Musach Literary Magazine**

# Ayelet Shamir

## *Burden of Proof*

Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2018. 218 pp.  
a novel



**Ayelet Shamir** was born in Israel in 1964 and grew up in various parts of the country as well as in Africa. She received her Ph.D in Hebrew literature from the University of Haifa, where she also taught. At present, she is head of the Department of Literature and Creative Arts at Oranim College. Shamir has published fiction and non-fiction. She was awarded the Wiener Prize for a debut novel (2007), the Prime Minister's Prize (2009) and the Ramat Gan Prize for *The Bed You Make* (2014). Shamir's novel *Piano in Winter* has been published in French (**Christian Bourgois**, Paris).

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**R**omano, a divorced, middle aged Haifa lawyer, is embroiled in the fight of his life. For years he has been slogging around in the margins of great events, until being engaged to defend Ismail, an Arab carpenter charged with involvement in a violent incident. Romano realizes that he is trapped in a moral and emotional web whose dimensions he had not foreseen. What had at first seemed to be a business dispute reveals another aspect from the moment its roots in the past are uncovered, from a time when Ismail's employer went under another name. It emerges that he used to be an interrogator for the security services, and that he had abused Ismail while questioning him. Three decades later, it becomes clear that nothing of what happened then has been forgotten. Romano discovers a notebook that Ismail kept while he was in prison, revealing information about everything that happened then. Now, Romano is endangering his career and his reputation over this case.

The story is told from Romano's point of view as he gradually uncovers all the details, with Ismail's notes from his prison diary introduced to give his account of what happened.

Can it be that now, from depths of time past, yet another, graver, crime will arise? Or perhaps the opposite will occur? Will mitigating circumstances be discovered instead? Perhaps it will not be resentments of the past that are decisive, but rather the facts of the present, and unconditional love.

In her third book, Ayelet Shamir isolates a sample taken from the core of Israeli life, and in her powerful prose she succeeds in illuminating the complexities of that life.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS.



PHOTO © DAN FORGES

No reviews yet.  
For *The Bed You Make*:

A fine, subtle and precise Faulknerian novel... a powerful, heart-rending story ...

**Author Amos Oz**

The rare and inspired quality of Shamir's narrative prose... creates a rich visual and emotional world.

**Author A. B. Yehoshua**

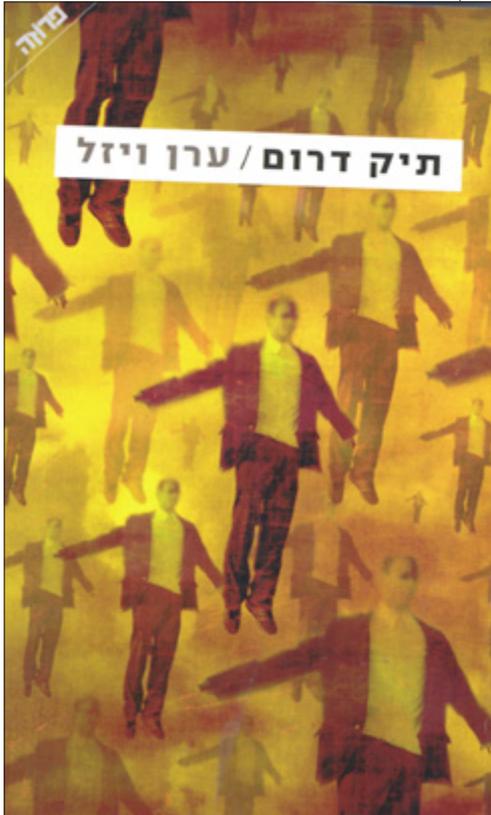
Reaches a rare profundity of plot, of emotion and of ideology that exposes the hidden layers of Israeli existence.

**Haaretz**

# Eran Viesel

## *Darom's File*

Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2018. 253 pp.  
a novel



**Eran Viesel** was born in 1972 at Kibbutz Netiv Halamed Heh, where he still lives today. He received a PhD in Biblical Studies from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and is a member of the faculty of the Department of Bible, Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies of Ben Gurion University in Beersheba. His researches focus on Jewish biblical interpretation throughout the ages. Viesel only recently began writing poetry and fiction. He has published two books of poetry, *We Have Come Far Thus Far* (2012) and *Awaiting a Wolf* (2016), and two novels: *In Praise of Loneliness* (2016, winner of the Acum Prize for an anonymously submitted work of literature, 2015) and *Darom's File* (2018).

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No reviews yet.  
For *In Praise of Loneliness*:

It is actually an essay about emptiness, impersonation and losing grip under the guise of a suspense novel. A book that is hard to let go of during reading, and which haunts the reader after it is finished.

**Acum Prize Committee**

*In Praise of Loneliness*, Eran Viesel's debut novel, weaves a suspenseful plot at the center of which is a unique anti-hero.

**Israel Hayom**

# Judith Rotem

## *Come Back, My Soul*

Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2018. 255 pp.  
a novel



**Judith Rotem** was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1942. As a baby, she was taken on the “Kastner train,” she spent several months in Bergen-Belsen, and then in a refugee camp in Switzerland. She arrived in pre-state Israel at the age of three. Later, she married an ultra-Orthodox yeshiva student, and supported the family as a teacher while raising her seven children. In 1983, she divorced her husband and left the ultra-Orthodox community, taking her children with her. She subsequently wrote and edited hi-tech publications, published articles on various subjects and, as a ghost writer, she has written a number of autobiographies for Holocaust survivors.

Rotem has published novels, a collection of stories, non-fiction books and books for children. She has been awarded the Book Publishers Association’s Gold and Platinum Prizes for her bestseller, *I Loved So Much* (2001; 2004), the Prime Minister’s Prize (2002), the Book Publishers Association’s Gold Prize for her bestseller, *Craving* (2004), the Ramat Gan Prize for *Whom My Soul Loveth* (2010) and the Arik Einstein Prize (2014). Her books have been published in English, German, Italian and Hungarian.

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**T**wo fates, the life stories of two women, unfold alongside each other in this book by Judith Rotem. One of the women, Yuli, is a migrant worker from Ukraine, escaping a life of penury and deprivation and from the treacherous father of her children. She comes to Tel Aviv with her younger son, 5-year-old Dima. Yuli wanders around the old bus terminal, an area inhabited by migrant workers and misfits, and strives to create a livable situation for her son and herself. The book tells of her efforts to find a job and decent accommodation, and how she tries to protect the child in a harsh and cruel neighborhood. She meets a man called Barry, who helps her in a number of ways. Yuli is compelled to depend upon him, and ultimately discovers that this reliance has a terrible price. She meets an Eritrean asylum-seeker, Koplom, whose situation is also desperate.

The other woman, Shelly, is much older than Yuli. She was widowed several years previously and she has given up on religion, in order to gain freedom and seek a loving and creative way of life. As she struggles with her memories of the past and with her longing for her dead husband, she is swept into a disconcerting, emotional and stormy late-life romance that threatens her world and her psyche—with the same Barry who Yuli has encountered.

On the surface, there’s no connection between the two stories, which are played out in two worlds that are remote from each other and with two heroines who very different. But nevertheless, despite the differences there is an invisible cord linking the two: Barry, an Orthodox Jew, a seductive, multifaceted character enters both of their lives, and functions inside them as a mysterious character with a deceitful charm.

Freedom, choice, passion, survival and enslavement are discussed in a book that takes an unwavering look at contemporary Israel society.



PHOTO © DAN FORGES

No reviews yet.  
For *When will You Come to Me*:

Captivating, jolting, heart-gripping, consoling.

**Author Haim Be’er**

I read it without stopping. A story woven into another story... the impossible becomes possible.

**Haaretz**

You’ll read this book with bated breath and it will remain with you for a long time after you’ve reached the last page.

**Global Report**

# Haim Lapid

## *The Doctor's Woman*

Jerusalem, Keter, 2018. 220 pp.  
a novel



**Haim Lapid**, writer, scriptwriter and social psychologist, was born in Ramat Gan, Israel, in 1948. He studied psychology at Tel Aviv University and has taught social and behavioral psychology. At present, Lapid lectures on negotiation theory and is an organizational consultant for hi-tech companies. He also teaches screenwriting at the College of Management and holds writing workshops. Lapid was awarded the Prime Minister's Prize in 2002. His novels have been published in English, French, German and Italian.

**S**himon Karni, a 19-year-old soldier, is involved in a turbulent, fraught love affair with Adva, an experienced woman 11 years older and an intern at a psychiatric institution. She is also his cousin. The relationship is all the more complicated and problematic because it entangles Shimon in the unresolved issues he has with his father. This romance becomes an arena of lust, guilt and death, from which Shimon will be trying to escape for the rest of his life. Telling this love story is Prof. Rafael Bar, a director and a psychiatrist who, through the character of Shimon Karni, is actually telling his own story and his own tragic love affair. However, the manner in which Bar chooses to confess to his role in the death of his cousin raises misgivings and questions.

The last three parts of the novel fire ironical barbs at the first part and dispel the cloying atmosphere of the somewhat hackneyed love story. Haim Lapid alludes to multiple explanations for what happens between the soldier and his cousin in that romance and for what takes place in its wake—psychological, literary and philosophical explanations, all of which are paths in the journey toward understanding the soul of the soul doctor, who also is also trying his hand at being a writer.

Haim Lapid has written a sophisticated, complex novel that deals with the human psyche, its desires and secrets, but which is also about the psyche of the author and what happens between an event and what is written about it. There are no simple answers in this story, just as there is no one truth as of the moment it is written down and recounted. This is a novella about writing itself, and the passions that drive it.

In his ninth book, Haim Lapid builds a deceptive and beautiful puzzle that turns itself over in the reader's mind time and again... Lapid has written a very intricate Lapid shakes the dice all the time, and he does not allow the readers to place their chips quietly on the gaming table. He signals to them that it is very much worth their while to remain focused.

**Haaretz**

Writer and psychologist Haim Lapid wrote a clever and sophisticated book, which turns out to be a parody.

**Ynet**



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# Dror Burstein

## *Man in Space*

Tel Aviv, Babel, 2018. 286 pp.  
stories and essays



**Dror Burstein** was born in 1970 in Netanya, Israel, and lives in Tel Aviv. He first qualified as a lawyer, then he left the legal field and started studying literature. He received a PhD in Hebrew literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2001 and now teaches at Tel Aviv University. A writer, poet, literary editor and curator of exhibitions, Burstein writes literary and art reviews for the Hebrew press, translates poetry from English to Hebrew and has also edited programs for Israel Radio's music station. Since 2011 he is editor of the poetry journal *Helikon*.

Burstein has been awarded the Jerusalem Prize for Literature (1997), the Ministry of Science and Culture Prize for Poetry (2002), the Bernstein Prize for his novel, *Avner Brenner* (2005), the Prime Minister's Prize (2006) and the Goldberg Prize for *Sun's Sister* (2014). His books have been published in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Turkish.

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“Space is like a great exhibition in a museum which is open all night and entrance is always free, but the museum is almost always empty and very few see the exhibition, even though everyone sleeps in the museum every night.”

Dror Burstein takes the reader on a thought-journey through time and space, and offers us new, exciting observations and connections. As in his previous books, he brings together philosophy, art, literature and astronomy to contemplate questions about the universe, stars and space, and man's relation to them.

For example, in one chapter that begins with a photograph of Saturn, Burstein passes via Peter Greenaway's film *The Draughtsman's Contract*, and via the Book of Genesis, to Orpheus's look back at Eurydice, and then returns to the photograph of Saturn. Thus, the book roams across the realms of thought and of space in a journey filled with discoveries and surprising connections that link visual images, artistic methods, literary and cinematic criticism, astronomy, poetry, Jewish philosophy, Japanese haiku and other unexpected and intriguing combinations.

*Man in Space* was written during the nights. It's a book about the stars from a literary point of view. The man in this title can be anyone whom the stars are dear to, every man or woman who wish to think about their place in this vast universe.

Burstein gazes at the stars like someone at prayer, and he reads the greatest authors and philosophers like someone painting on a page—with originality of thought, sensitivity and insight. This is a book about space and literature, about a human lifting his eyes unto the skies, and about an author bending his head over the page.



First of all, it must be said that *Man in Space* by Dror Burstein is a very impressive book, in the way it was produced and printed: full of magnificent pictures of space and intriguing works of art. It is superbly written and thought provoking. Burstein is manifestly the most refined, sophisticated and influential of the local writers who were born in the 1970s. He is a truly outstanding author.

**Haaretz**

# Noga Albalach

## *The Old Man (Farewell)*

Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2018. 118 pp.

a novella



**Noga Albalach** was born in Petach Tikva, Israel, in 1971 and now lives in Tel Aviv. She received an MA in economics from Tel Aviv University and worked for several years as an equity analyst. In 2005, she left this field and started studying literature. She received her MA in literature from Tel Aviv University and at present she works as a literary editor. Albalach has published a novel, collections of short stories and novellas as well as books for children. She has been awarded the Ministry of Culture Prize for Debut Literature (2011) and the Prime Minister's Prize (2016).

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A daughter accompanies her father in the last months of his life. She watches as he becomes ever more confused, and wishes to preserve something of his personality, disappearing before her eyes. The more he forgets, she remembers; the further he drifts away, she senses a new closeness between them; and as her father's hold on life is loosened, its meaning is revealed to her.

In clear and lyrical prose Noga Albalach draws a portrait of her father, tells his life story and examines the relationship between them. She takes a deeper look at their family and the people who surround them, and the way those delicate relationships change as her father's illness progresses. Through memories and tragic-comic everyday moments, poetic in a mundane way, Albalach pieces together a lively portrait of a brave and humble man and the painful process of watching him slowly disappear. His life, illness and death shed a new life on the daughter's life and bring new insights.

*The Old Man (Farewell)*, a story about one man, is actually about every man, every parent and child, every family affected by the inevitable passing of time, by illness and death.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS



PHOTO © TAL MOLCHO

This book is, to my mind, a masterpiece.

**Author Dror Burstein**

A beautiful and minimalist distillation of the existential absurdity of human life, which chokes the throat as it is read.

**Haaretz**

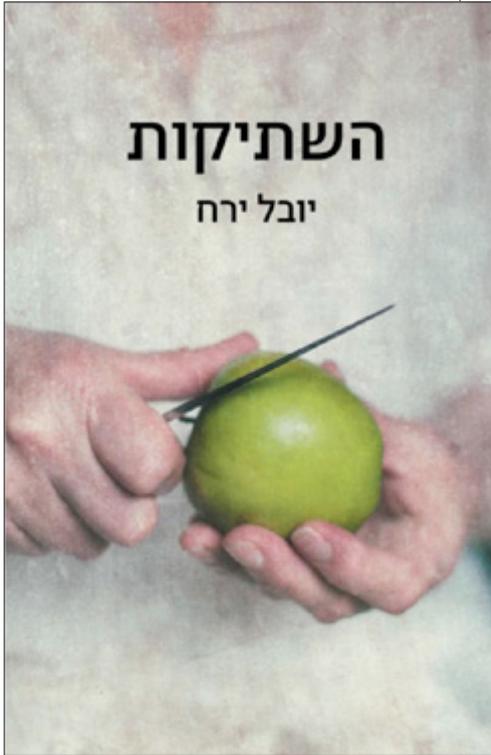
If selection of the recipient of the Israel Prize for Literature were up to me, I would award it today to Noga Albalach. A rare literary gem. It is slender and unassuming, full of attention; free of embellishment, full of wonderful insights and compassion.

**Journalist Yigal Sarna**

# Yuval Yareach

## *Subhistory*

Tel Aviv, Kinneret Zmora-Bitan, 2016. 560 pp.  
a novel



**Yuval Yareach** was born in 1971 in Hod Hasharon. Graduated Haifa University with a degree in social sciences. After working in I.T. for over a decade, in recent years he has been teaching high school. He and his classes won the CISCO national telecommunication competition for schools in 2017 and 2018. To write *Subhistory* he carried out research for some ten years, including meetings with the descendants of the people who saved his grandmother during the Holocaust.

The author of the historical-biographical novel *Subhistory* is a young man who was born and grew up in Israel. The book was written out of his experience of the great silence of his grandmother, Manya, and is about what she went through during the Second World War. She survived labor camps, concentration camps and death camps, and said nothing about it until the day she died. She was silent about her childhood, her youth, her first marriage, and the story of her eldest daughter. This silence on the part of his grandmother was what ignited the imagination and the curiosity of the writer, and set him off on his journey into history and the fate of his grandmother and her family. Although it is written from a great distance—many years and many miles from what it describes—it gives one the feeling that it emanates from the events themselves.

The novel begins with an account of a Jewish family as it journeys across Europe until it settles in Cracow, Poland, and up until the darkest moments in the history of the human race. Manya was 19 years old when the Germans conquered Poland. From Cracow she and the family were resettled in a ghetto, moved to the labor camp at Plashow, and later to Auschwitz. The last part of the novel takes place in Israel, and it describes how Manya rebuilt her life with her daughter Lala, who survived thanks to a Polish family that took her in and protected her during the war.

The story cleaves faithfully to the historical events and presents characters who are profound, human and touching, all of which merge to form a gripping work of fiction that nevertheless reads like a diary or a newly discovered testament. This book is a notable and surprising landmark in Holocaust writing that fluctuates between literature and history, and this unique combination produces a narrative of descriptive and emotional depth.



This book is a landmark in Holocaust literature.

**Haaretz**

Yareach has created an entire world, and we are drawn into it, absorbed by the cracks, down to the roots of the hairs and the marrow of the bones of the living body that arises before us out of the text.

**Alaxon**

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# Lilach Nethanel

## *Sleepless People*

Ben Shemen, Keter, 2018. 178 pp.  
a novel



**Lilach Nethanel** was born in Netanya, Israel, in 1979. She received a BA and MA in French literature from the University of Paris and a PhD from the Department of Jewish Literature at Bar Ilan University, where she now teaches Hebrew and Yiddish literature. During her research, she found the manuscript of a previously unknown novel by the classic Hebrew writer David Vogel in the literary archives, and contributed to its publication in 2012 under the title *Vienese Romance*. Nethanel is also a translator from French to Hebrew. She received the Ramat Gan Prize for Debut Literature for her first novel, *The Hebrew Condition* (2010), and the Bernstein Prize for her second novel, *The Old Homeland* (2015).

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**E**itan and Leah Oved are tired. Tired because of their age, tired because they can't fall asleep, tired since the daughters they raised are no longer with them. They live in a village in Israel's coastal plain, in an old farm building that they converted into a home after they got married. Leah has been bedridden since the previous summer and Eitan looks after her with the help of a nurse. And it is precisely now, in the silence of Leah's last months of illness, that disturbing things are happening. Someone is moving household objects around, turning chairs upside down, burying the laundry in the yard, locking the door from the outside. Worse than all of this, Eitan's parents' home, which has been standing closed and neglected in the center of the family allotment, has been reopened. Various objects from inside that home are discovered in the surroundings, creating a mystery, one that gets deeper and deeper and farther and farther from any simple, concrete solution.

This is a dark novel about the place of the home in Israel today. With virtuosity, Lilach Nethanel links a traditional Gothic style of writing and the Israeli farming community. She depicts a twilight situation between life and death, not only of the dying Leah but also of Eitan, who is the same age as the State of Israel; of the farming village that is a bastion and symbol of the healthy, rural Israel, and of the home where Eitan grew up and where he lives in today. This is a grim and hypnotic book, written with clarity and succinctness that only intensify the horror that lurks beneath the surface.

This is Lilach Nethanel's third novel.



PHOTO © SHLOMO ABRAMOV

The main enjoyment this book provides has to do with the succinct language that is Nethanel's trademark as a story teller. Sentences that are mostly short, simple, and focused.

**Ynet**

## Galit Dahan Carlibach

*It's Me, Iowa*

Tel-Aviv, Graff, 2018. 126 pp.  
a novella

**R**epresentatives of thirty countries have come to the celebrated writers' workshop in Iowa. Galit Dahan Carlibach is one of them, and she makes herself the heroine of this novella. She arrives at the workshop, where an unexpected tale of obsession, passion and menace commences. The author, a married woman, falls madly in love with a young man at the workshop and is swept away into a love affair that reopens old wounds. She is sucked deeper and deeper into this destructive relationship, until its deadly denouement.

This is a passion-filled novella by one of the most interesting writers in Israel today. It begins as a memoir about the writing experience, the journey to the renowned Iowa writing program, the encounter with writers from so many, so different countries. But in a manner that is full of humor and self-awareness, the author gradually deviates from the expected, respectable and commonplace story and takes her readers into the unanticipated realm of obsessive love. Dahan Carlibach's writing is muscular and painterly, and the choice of allowing the heroine to stray so far is a courageous one.

**Galit Dahan Carlibach** was born in 1981. She grew up in Sderot, Ashdod and Jerusalem. She has published three novels, two novellas and two fantasy books based on Moroccan tales which were told by her grandmother. Her stories, poems and essays are published on different platforms including *Haaretz*, *Alaxon*, *Maariv*, *929* and more. In addition, Galit facilitates writing workshops and lectures and takes part in *Persona Non Grata*, a literary-musical duo, as a singer and guitarist. Dahan-Carlibach has been awarded the Prime Minister's Prize (2014) and the National Library of Israel Pardes Prize (2014). She was a participant in the International Writing Program in Iowa and the Shanghai Writing Program. Her last novel, *Alice's Storm*, was longlisted for the 2017 Sapir Prize.

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PHOTO © GAL HERMON

Dahan Carlibach rises above the provincial and sweeps the reader away with her toward the bloody and wonderfully enjoyable collision.

**Yedioth Aharanoth**

*It's Me, Iowa*, which takes place on foreign soil, differs in its content from her earlier books, but not in the acrobatic, at time virtuoso Hebrew which once again succeeds in reinventing itself... In this short novella, she positions herself as a promising writer who has kept her promise.

**Makor Rishon**

The story takes us far away to the cornfields of the United States, only to shine a searing spotlight on the Israeli reality in which the personal and the public are always comingled.

**Haaretz**

SAPIR PRIZE WINNER 2012



## *Mox Nox (Night, Soon)*

Or Yehuda, Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2011. 255 pp.  
a novel

A boy from a small town in southern Israel spends the summer working at a kibbutz factory. We see his relationship with two other boys working there, and with the factory secretary, a single woman with whom his father—an angry, Orthodox man—may have had an affair. At the same time, there is another story, told by the narrator as an adult. By now he is a successful author who runs writing workshops for well-off women and is involved in a relationship with an older woman that tests the limits of intimacy and his certainty about the world. As the two narratives interweave, going backwards and forward in time, Adaf creates the personality of a young artist confronting the residue of childhood suffering and the inscrutable traditions bequeathed to him by his despotic father as a sealed-off way of life. He decides to break away entirely and to adopt a different lifestyle.

In this novel, Adaf deals with major issues in contemporary Israeli experience: secularism and religion, outlying areas versus the center of the country, authenticity and puritanism versus the phony and debauched. And as always with Shimon Adaf, the fantastic permeates reality and undermines it.

*Mox Nox* is the second part of the *Rose of Judea* trilogy, but it also stands as an independent novel.

Adaf's earlier detective trilogy will be published by **Farrar Strauss**, New York.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

**Shimon Adaf** was born in Sderot, Israel, in 1972 to parents of Moroccan origin and now lives in Jaffa. He began publishing poetry during his military service. A poet, novelist and musician, Adaf studied in the program for outstanding students at Tel Aviv University, simultaneously writing articles on literature, film and rock music for leading Hebrew newspapers. He was also a founding member of the literary group "ev" whose aim was to find a new poetic interface between classical and modern Hebrew. Adaf worked for several years as literary editor at Keter Publishing House, and has also been writer-in-residence at Iowa University. At present, he lectures on Hebrew literature at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and is head of the creative writing program there. Adaf has been awarded the Ministry of Education Award (1996), the Prime Minister's Prize (2007), the Yehuda Amichai Prize for Poetry (2010), the Sapir Prize for his novel *Mox Nox* (2012) and the Neuman Prize (2017). His latest novel, *Tolle Lege*, was shortlisted for the 2017 Sapir Prize. His books have been published in English, French, Italian and Spanish.

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PHOTO © DAN FORGES

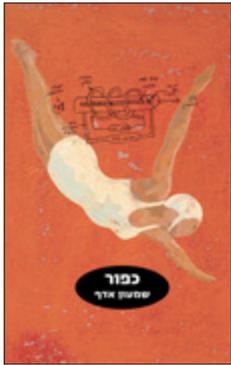
There is no argument about Adaf's talent, his sensitivity, or his ability to create a world that is both material and spiritual, concrete and poetic.

**Haaretz**

One of the most creative, brilliant, and challenging writers in Israel today.

**Haaretz**

# Shimon Adaf



## *Frost*

Or Yehuda, Kinneret Zmora-Bitan, 2010. 285 pp.  
a novel

In five hundred years' time, in Tel Aviv, a number of Jewish religious seminary students begin showing signs of mysterious body changes. A genius in Torah and science, Yehezkel Ben Gerim is rushed to the scene, asked to diagnose the strange disease and find a cure. In his search for a remedy, he travels to the lands of the Gentiles, and when he returns to Tel Aviv he is followed by a young Gentile woman who clings to him like a shadow.

Meanwhile, the works of an anonymous poet are heard in the city and he is denounced as a rebel, for poetry is forbidden to those who have not been ordained as poets. The investigation into the poet's identity and the arrival of the Gentile woman in Tel Aviv undermine the stability of the city and seal the fate of many characters in the story. The events are narrated by Doron Aflalo, a young poet from the southern town of Mavo-Yam, modelled on today's Sderot. When Doron returns to his parents' home, memories of his dead sister Miryam, who took her own life at age 17, come flooding back. Doron was 14 at the time, and his mourning for her loss becomes a central theme of the book.

Adaf's fantastical detective story, a highly imaginative and thoughtful artistic fable, presents existential and moral issues that Israeli literature hardly ever deals with.

*Frost* is the first part of the *Rose of Judea* trilogy, but also stands as an independent novel.

Who else but Shimon Adaf could produce such powerfully imaginative Jewish science fiction?... *Frost* is driven by a desire to smash the conventions... to put past and present at odds, and to create new Hebrew literary, linguistic and technological worlds. Adaf is at the spearhead of literary innovation in Israel.

**Haaretz**



## *About the Undercities*

Or Yehuda, Kinneret Zmora-Bitan, 2012. 333 pp.  
a novel

During a stay in Berlin, a young Israeli—the narrator—sees a symbol that makes him feel anxious and he decides to look into its history. At the same time, we meet a brother and sister, Tveria and Akko Asido, whose childhood and adolescence are marked by their father's attraction to an unknown, occult Jewish belief. Between the narrator's story and that of the two siblings, the reader is led to make certain connections, leading to possible answers, but they are not accessible to the characters.

This is a mesmerizing novel about a passion to understand the world, and about the distortions that are bound up with that passion. Like all great tragedies, it grows out of the most important questions: Are we doomed to take on an identity that has come down to us through family heredity, even though it is clear to us that certain aspects are flawed or coincidental? Or should we try to develop an identity based on an alternative system offered to us by human culture? *About the Undercities* is the final part of the *Rose of Judea* trilogy. Like the other parts, it can also be read independently.

Superlatives have long been heaped at poet Shimon Adaf's doorstep, and in the novel *About the Undercities* he once again proves that he is worthy of them. One cannot but be impressed by his brilliant mastery of the Hebrew language.

**Ynet**

*About the Undercities*, the last part of Adaf's trilogy, is an invitation to rethink memory as well as its importance to, and impact on magic. But at the same time, its significance for current Jewish-Israeli reality. All this in a radical version of the Bildungsroman in the age of the internet.

**Haaretz**

# Michal Zamir

## *Five Meals a Day*

Jerusalem, Keter, 2018. 128 pp.  
a novella



**Michal Zamir** was born in Tel Aviv in 1964 and holds an MA in literature from Tel Aviv University. She worked for several years for the culture supplement of the daily *Maariv*. At present, Zamir gives courses on Yiddish literature and hassidic stories at Tel Aviv University. Michal Zamir's novels have been published in German translation.

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A woman is attending to her mother, whose personality, mind, and body are gradually failing due to Alzheimer's disease. She is undergoing this deterioration as an inmate in an institution, moved upward from floor to floor as the disease progresses, until she reaches the fifth and final floor. The daughter, the narrator of the novel, is forced to watch as her mother is gradually stripped of everything she knew and loved. She can no longer recognize her daughter or other people close to her, and she becomes almost a stranger, a new being, someone who must be contended with.

The daughter has been taking care of her mother for some eighteen years, since the onset of the disease. She describes down to the smallest detail what she and her mother go through, as well as the institution and the other patients who are being treated there.

With a sharp and critical eye and with impressive literary ability, Zamir portrays the slow and painful journey of the two women, and the way in which the disease sometimes bares the true selves of the sufferers and of those surrounding them. The story is written from very close up, but also with trenchant irony and heart-wrenching honesty as it gazes unflinchingly at the most difficult period in the lives of two people who are inextricably bound together. As they make this distressing journey, parent and the child experience the disease from two different perspectives. The daughter says about her mother: "Through the cracks that opened up in her judgment, all kinds of stories began to leak out. Stories that I never knew about and that I didn't want to know about, and indeed that I would never have believed she knew about." This book is the story of these impossible stories, as well as an attempt to rescue the mother's identity before it is wiped out by the disease.



PHOTO © DAN PORGES

It has been a long time since I encountered in Hebrew literature so marvelous an ability to construct scenes which cause both rollicking laughter and searing pain... each sentence is filled with beautiful venom and a tragic pleasure.

**Haaretz**

...a refreshing wave of a middle finger to the sanctimoniousness, the artificial, faked consolation, and the automatic correctness of the response to the tragedies of others... it is written with such unfettered spontaneity.

**Haaretz**

# Gabriela Avigur-Rotem

## *King of Gold and Blood*

Tel Aviv, Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2017. 460 pp.  
a historical novel



**Gabriela Avigur-Rotem** was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1946 and came to Israel in 1950. She holds a degree in Hebrew and English literature. She has taught literature at high school and directed writing workshops at Haifa and Ben Gurion Universities. She now works as an editor at Haifa University Publishing House. Avigur-Rotem published her first book of poetry in 1980 and her first novel in 1992. She has been awarded the Peter Schweipert Prize for Young Writers, the Rabinowitz Prize for Poetry (1990), the Prime Minister's Prize twice (1992; 2001), the Keshet Publishers' Gold and Platinum Book Prizes as well as the Goldberg Prize for her bestselling novel *Heatwave and Crazy Birds* (2001), the President's Prize (2002), the WIZO Prize (France, 2006) and the Geffen Prize for *Every Story Is a Sudden Cat* (2014).

Avigur-Rotem's novels have been published in English, French, Italian, Portuguese, German, Chinese and Arabic.

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**K***ing of Gold and Blood* plunges the reader into a fascinating, important era in the history of the eastern Mediterranean basin, laying out before us the days of the reign of Herod the Great, the King of Judea who built the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the amphitheater in Caesarea. Herod was a monarch who knew how to get along smoothly with his masters in imperial Rome, but who treated subjects who he thought were threatening his reign with great cruelty, including members of his own family. The book begins in the turbulent times that followed the death of Herod, delves back into the period of his monarchy, and ends with the marriage of his offspring and the murder of John the Baptist. In so doing, it highlights historic events that affected the future of Christianity and the entire western world.

With a plot steeped in intrigue and conspiracy, it is reminiscent of the labyrinthine political world of works such as the "Game of Thrones." It is narrated by Herod's scholarly counselor and advocate, Nicolaus of Damascus, who became a major figure in the historical events of his times. After tutoring the children of Anthony and Cleopatra, Nicolaus performed the same role for Herod's children.

The author succeeds impressively in blending into her prose the language of the Hebrew Sages as well as words and phrases in Latin and Greek, in order to evoke the unique 2,000-year-old style of Nicolaus. She depicts, credibly and convincingly, a bygone world, rich in detail, in a manner that makes it relevant to our own times.

*King of Gold and Blood* is Gabriela Avigur-Rotem's fifth novel.

I have followed her writing from one novel to the next... Gabriela Avigur-Rotem is a great artist of language and of prose.

**Haaretz**

Each sentence and paragraph in the book is a delight. Avigur-Rotem's book is worthy of standing alongside the masterpieces of historical novels by Robert Graves and *Augustus*, the superb epistolary work by John Williams.

**Makor Rishon**

Any book by Gabriela Avigur-Rotem is a monumental masterpiece... She has attained an achievement the likes of which we have not seen before.

**Hashiloah**



PHOTO © ITAMAR ROTEM



## Uri Nissan Gnessin

### *Beside & Other Novellas*

**Uri Nissan Gnessin** (1879-1913) was born in Starodub, Ukraine. Self-educated in secular subjects such as classical and modern languages and literature, he was attracted to the Enlightenment movement and was influenced by Russian literature. At age 15, together with Yosef Haim Brenner, he started publishing a literary weekly for a small number of friends and readers. At age 18, he joined the editorial staff of a Hebrew newspaper in Warsaw, where he published poems, literary criticism, stories and translations. In 1907 he moved to London, where he assisted Yosef Haim Brenner in the publication of a Hebrew periodical.

Although Gnessin was provincial, he became a sophisticated romantic writer. Recognized as one of the fathers of modern Hebrew literature, he was among the first to introduce psychologically-oriented fiction into Hebrew literature, and his stream-of-consciousness technique has greatly influenced contemporary authors.

The three novellas: *Sideways*, *Beside* and *The Time Before*, are his best literary achievements, and of the most remarkable in Hebrew literature.

Gnessin's novellas have been published in English, Spanish, French and Yiddish.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE



## Asher Barash

### *Sketches from the Brewery*

**Asher Barash** (1889-1952) was born in Lopatin, Galicia. He was well-acquainted with modern Hebrew literature from an early age. He began publishing in Hebrew in 1908, and in 1914 moved to pre-state Israel where he taught Hebrew and literature. He composed poems and prose for adults and children, wrote criticism, translated, and edited several publications. He was active in organizing the Hebrew Writers Association and also established the bio-bibliographical institute, Genazim, which now bears his name. In his work he describes the world he left behind, as well as the first days of Tel Aviv. He also wrote historical stories based on events in Jewish History. He was awarded the 1940 Bialik Prize.

The collected short stories show the best literary writing of one of the first and important writers of Hebrew literature.

Barash's books have been published in English, Dutch, Russian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian and Italian.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE



## Dvora Baron

### *Selected Stories*

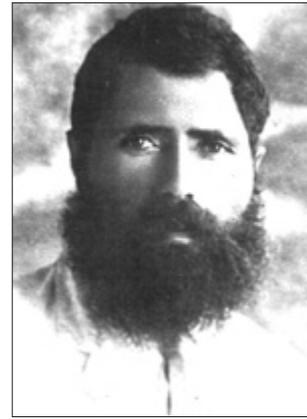
**Dvora Baron** (1887-1956) was born in Belorussia to a rabbinic family, and immigrated to pre-state Israel in 1910. Baron began writing at an early age: her first stories were published in 1902. Later, she edited the literary section of *Hapoel Hatzair*, a weekly published by her husband, and continued to work as an editor until his death in 1937. Fluent in several languages, Baron also translated the works of Flaubert, Chekhov and Jack London, as well as many others, into Hebrew.

As one of the first women writers of Hebrew fiction, Dvora Baron occupies a special place in Hebrew literature. She grew up in a Lithuanian *shtetl*, and the suffering people who came to her father, a rabbi, for advice and support are an integral part in her work. Baron was the first recipient of the Bialik Prize (1933) and was also awarded the Brenner Prize. *The First Day and Other Stories* is included among "The Greatest Works of Modern Jewish Literature" (2001).

The collected short stories are her best literary writing.

Baron's books have been published in English, German and Italian.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE



## Yosef Haim Brenner

### *Breakdown and Bereavement*

**Yosef Haim Brenner** (1881-1921) was born in Novi Mlini, Ukraine. He published his first story in 1900. He immigrated to pre-state Israel in 1909.

Brenner initially worked as an agricultural laborer in Hadera but later taught Hebrew grammar and literature in high school. Essayist, critic, commentator, translator, novelist and poet, Brenner was the most prominent literary figure in pre-state Israel in his day and, in effect, shifted the center of Hebrew literary activities away from Europe.

Brenner, killed by Arab rioters in 1921, expounded apparently paradoxical views. An ardent Zionist who passionately encouraged immigration, he was an equally fierce critic of both Zionism and Jews. A scathingly honest pessimist by nature, his prose nonetheless professes a belief in artistic truth when all other faith fails. In Brenner's vision, life is comprised of never-ending hardship and disaster; it is nothing more than a struggle for existence in a world of darkness and illusion. His characters, skeptical and hesitant, flee into madness and death, and Judaism is portrayed as fading.

*Breakdown and Bereavement* is Brenner's last novel. It is set in a Jewish settlement in Palestine in the years before World War I, when the tragic pattern of Arab-Jewish relations was taking shape. Much more than an absorbing period piece, it is a story of the individual suffering and loneliness that are part of the human condition. The hero, Hefetz, is desperate to build a new life in Palestine symbolizes the Zionist experiment as a whole. The novel has been published in English and Chinese.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

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**Meir Weiseltir** • *Selected Poems*

**Zelda** • *Selected Poems*

**Almog Behar** • *Selected Poems*

**Raquel Chalfi** • *China and Other Poems*

**Dahlia Ravikovitch** • *Even for a Thousand Years*

**Amir Gilboa** • *Selected Poems*



## Zelda

In the far-off places of creation exists  
 A strange light  
 Which only snakes can discern  
 In the dark (by natural means)  
 Only the snakes –  
 A strange light  
 Which flickered in the halo of the violent  
     Energy  
 Of the man with the flame red-hair

*Trans: Edna G. Sharoni*

### ENGLISH AND FRENCH TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE

**Zelda** (Shneurson Mishkowsky) (1916-1984) was born in Chernigoff, the Ukraine to a famous Hassidic family. Her father was a rabbi and her mother, devoutly Orthodox, was also well-read in modern Hebrew, Russian, and European literature. They immigrated to Jerusalem in 1926. She studied at a religious school for girls and then at a teacher's seminary. She then studied art and painting in Tel Aviv and later moved to Haifa, where she worked with handicapped children. When her husband died, she returned to Jerusalem and worked as a teacher; she retired after almost 50 years. Known simply as Zelda, she began composing poetry as a teenager but began publishing only in 1968. She published six books of poetry during her lifetime. She was awarded the Bialik Prize.

A complete collection of her work was published posthumously. Acclaimed for her directness, precision and simplicity, and well-loved by the predominantly secular Israeli readership, Zelda's memory and symbolism are steeped in traditional and Hassidic allusions.



## Meir Wieseltier

### Song of Envy

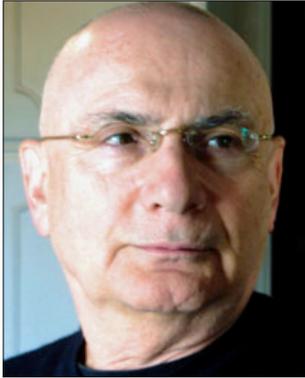
I envy myself on account of my sweet sleep  
 On a dusty mattress on the floor in a room open to the  
 Sea  
 Estranged from people homeless young and hungry  
 At my side a loaf of bread lifted from a storefront

*Trans: Gabriel Levin*

### ENGLISH AND FRENCH TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE

Poet **Meir Wieseltier** was born in 1941 in Moscow, Russia, and came to Israel in 1949 as a child, after spending two years in Poland, Germany and France. He grew up in a kibbutz and in Netanya, and moved to Tel Aviv at age of 14. He studied philosophy, history and English at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and later lived for several years in London and Paris. In the 1960s Wieseltier was the central figure in a group of artists known as "the Tel Aviv poets" and he edited a number of literary magazines. He was also co-founder of the literary magazine *Siman Kriah*, and from 1986 to 1989 he was the poetry editor at Am Oved Publishing House. For a number of years he taught literature at the University of Haifa and is now Professor Emeritus. Wieseltier has translated English, French and Russian poetry into Hebrew, as well as seven of Shakespeare's tragedies, two plays by Christopher Marlowe and novels by Virginia Woolf, Charles Dickens, E.M. Forster, Aldous Huxley, Malcolm Lowry and others. He received the Prime Minister's Prize three times (1977; 1993; 2011), the Elite Jubilee Prize (1984), the Bialik Prize (1995), the Israel Prize for Literature (2000) the L'Olio della Poesia Prize (Italy, 2004) and the Neuman Prize (2015). His poems have been published abroad in some 20 languages.

Wieseltier has consistently taken a nonconformist literary stance. His passion for Tel Aviv plays an important role in his writing and expresses itself in a love-hate relationship. He often uses ironic imagery and a sarcastic, despairing tone to demand complete awareness of life's unavoidably painful realities, and urges full emotional and philosophical involvement.



## Mordechai Goldman

### Not to feel

Not to feel a thing  
 Or not to feel defined things  
 Or not to feel undefined things  
 Not to feel the final thing  
 Not to feel the prior feeling to cancel feeling;

*Trans: Lisa Katz*

ENGLISH, FRENCH AND PORTUGUESE  
 TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE

**Mordechai Goldman** was born in Germany in 1946 but has lived in Tel Aviv since the age of three. He began publishing poetry in 1966. Goldman has a BA in general literature and an MA in clinical psychology; he works as a psychotherapist. He is also an artist and photographer, as well as a curator of Israeli art. Goldman is the author of several volumes of poetry as well as of psychoanalytic literary theory; he also writes articles and art criticism for the Israeli press. Goldman has received the Chomsky Prize for Poetry (1983), the Prime Minister's Prize (1996), the Brenner Prize (1998), the Amichai Prize for Poetry (2005) and the Bialik prize (2010).



PHOTO © ALIZA AUERBACH

## Hedva Harchavi

### Go Wherever You Go, Just Go

You try with a Man who doesn't exist  
 The man you want doesn't exist  
 It's that way, it's that way, this one doesn't exist  
 So why are you trying with a man who doesn't exist

*Trans: Linda Zisquit*

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

**Hedva Harchavi**, Israeli poet and artist, was born in 1941 in Kibbutz Degania Bet, She is a mother of one. She has lived most of her life in Jerusalem.

Harchavi is a graduate of the Bezalel Academy of Art, Jerusalem. Her artworks have been exhibited in one-person shows in Israel and in many group shows in Israel and abroad.

Her first poems, published in the Hebrew daily *Al-Hamishmar* (1967) were submitted for publication by the eminent Hebrew poet Leah Goldberg (1917-1970). Goldberg later selected and prepared for publication Harchavi's first book of Hebrew poetry, *Ki Hu Melech (Because He Is a King)*, 1974, which received the Rachel Newman Poetry Prize. Her poems have been translated into many languages including English, Arabic, Russian and German and have appeared in numerous publications and anthologies.

Harchavi has won several prizes in poetry, among them the Prime Minister Prize for Poetry in 1982 and again in 1993; and the prestigious Yehuda Amichai Prize for Poetry in 2010.



PHOTO © MOTTI KIKAYON

## Almog Behar

### Lines to Primo Levi

In the place where no prayer can save  
all words are prayers, and drinking  
soup from a dish also becomes a melody of prayer.  
And the blows, and the cold, and the hunger and the number  
tattooed on your arm  
are taken from the prayer book too.  
When the heavy gates of Auschwitz opened and the shadows  
of the people emerged  
God sat near the opening and wept and begged forgiveness  
and prayed to his people to absolve him. It is inevitable  
that men forgive one another,

there is nothing worse than forgiving God

*Trans: Vivian Eden*

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

**Almog Behar** was born in Netanya in 1978 and lives in Jerusalem. He studied philosophy and Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and completed his PhD in Hebrew literature at Tel Aviv University. Behar taught philosophy in high school and Jewish liturgy at Bar-Ilan University and Tel Aviv University. He later taught Hebrew literature at Cornell University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at other academic institutions. He is currently a Polonsky postdoctoral fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute.

Behar has published books of poetry, a collection of short stories and a novel. In 2005, he won the *Haaretz* Short Story Competition for his story "Ana Min Al-Yahoud" ("I am one of the Jews"), which was published in the well-known journal *Al-Hilal* in Cairo, and generated considerable interest in Egypt and the Arab world. Behar has received the Bernstein Prize for Poetry (2010), the Prime Minister's Prize (2010) and the Ramat Gan Prize for debut book (2011).



PHOTO © ZVI PFEFFER

## Lali Tsipi Michaeli

### The Mad House

I thought people wouldn't live in a house like this  
They would only visit during opening hours  
And before they leave they write a few words  
in a big notebook

When I entered I understood that there isn't  
Any big notebook holding a pen  
There is toilets, a kitchen, a bedroom  
And walls covered with the live imagination  
Of dead artists

*Trans: Michael Simkin*

ENGLISH AND FRENCH TRANSLATIONS  
AVAILABLE

**Lali Tsipi Michaeli** was born in Georgia in 1964, and moved to Israel as a child. She studied Comparative World Literature, Sociology and Anthropology at Bar-Ilan University, and Television and Radio Narration. She taught Hebrew in Bar-Ilan and Tel Aviv Universities.

Lali lived a few years in Georgia during the 1990s, working for the Jewish Agency, and in Denmark between 2005 and 2007, where she edited human rights texts.

Lali's poems were published in literary journals and in the press, and in a video art project, and were translated to a few languages. She participated in local poetry festivals and readings, and in international poetry festivals in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Sde Boker and Mrar, and is a known lecturer on poetry.