NEW BOOKS FROM ISRAEL
Fall 2015

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Pain

a novel

On the bestseller list since publication, March 2015!

Ten years after she was seriously injured in a terrorist attack, the pain comes back to torment Iris, the heroine of Zeruya Shalev’s new novel. But that is not all: Eitan, the love of her youth also comes back into her life. And although their relationship ended many years ago, she was more deeply wounded when he left her than by the suicide bomber who blew himself up next to her.

Iris’s marriage is stalled. Her two children are grown up and almost independent; she herself has become a dedicated, successful school principal. But now, after years of living without passion or joy, Eitan brings them back into her life. Unhappily, she must concoct all sorts of lies to conceal her love from her family, and the lies become more and more complicated. But can one ever restore the love of one’s youth? Iris is in an impossible predicament, and in order to decide she tries to fathom whether her love with Eitan could heal all her pain, and more essentially, whether she would have to hurt the people who are closest to her.

**Foreign rights sold:** German (Berlin Verlag), French (Gallimard), Romanian (Polirom)

**PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE**

Zeruya Shalev was born at Kibbutz Kinneret. She has an MA in Biblical studies and works as a literary editor. Shalev has written six novels, poetry, and two children’s books. Love Life, Husband and Wife and Late Family (Tiber) have been bestsellers in several countries. Love Life is also included in Der Spiegel’s prestigious list of 20 Best Novels in World Literature over the last 40 years. Husband and Wife was included in the French Fnac list of the 200 Best Books of the Decade. And The Remains of Love was featured in The Independent’s Books of the Year in Translation, 2013. Shalev has received the Book Publishers Association’s Gold and Platinum Prizes, the Corine Prize (Germany, 2001), the Amphí Award (France, 2003), the ACUM Award (1997, 2003, 2005), the French Wizo Prize (2007), the Rome-Jerusalem Prize (2014), and the Prix Fémina (2014). Her books have been published abroad in 25 languages.
Eshkol Nevo

Three Floors Up

a novel

Israel’s #1 selling book for 2015 (fiction). On the bestseller list since publication, February 2015

“Something is going on. I can’t tell anyone about it. But I feel I must.”

One can never tell exactly what goes on behind a neighbor’s door. Eshkol Nevo’s new novel interfaces the breathtaking confessions of three residents in an apartment building, and exposes the lies and secrets that permeate family life.

He takes us on a journey to the undercurrents of middle class existence and once again exhibits his spectacular talent for storytelling, shedding light on the darkest corners of human nature.

Three Floors Up is a dazzling book that launches its characters into moral booby traps, making readers wonder if they would have acted differently.

Foreign rights sold: German (dtv), French (Gallimard)

COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Eshkol Nevo was born in Jerusalem in 1971. He studied copywriting at the Tirza Granot School and psychology at Tel Aviv University. Today, Nevo owns and co-manages the largest private creative writing school in Israel and is considered the mentor of many upcoming young Israeli writers. His previous novels have all been top bestsellers in Israel. Nevo has received the Book Publishers Association’s Gold and Platinum Prizes (2005; 2008; 2011), the FFI-Raymond Wallier Prize (Paris, 2008), the ADEI-WIZO Prize (Italy, 2011). Homesick was a finalist for the prestigious Independent Foreign Fiction Prize (UK, 2009), and World Cup Wishes was a finalist for the Kritikerpreis der Jury der Jungen Kritiker (Austria, 2011).

Nevo’s books have been translated to English (Chatto & Windus; Dalkey Archive), French (Gallimard), Italian (Mondadori; Neri Pozza), German (dtv), Polish (Muza), Turkish (Can), Spanish (Duomo, Spain), and Arabic (Kul-Shee). They have been bestsellers in several of these countries.

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Orly Castel-Bloom was born in Tel Aviv in 1960 to parents from Egypt. Since the publication of her first book in 1987, she has been a leading voice in Hebrew literature, constantly expanding the boundaries of narrative style. Castel-Bloom has lectured at Harvard University, UCLA, UC Berkeley, New York University, Oxford and Cambridge; at present she teaches creative writing. She has published novels, short stories and a children's book. Her postmodern classic, Dolly City, is one of UNESCO’s Representative Works and was listed by Tablet Magazine as one of the 101 Great Jewish Books in English translation.

Castel-Bloom has received the Tel Aviv Foundation Award (1990), the Alterman Prize for Innovation (1993), the Newman Prize (2003), the French WIZO Prize (2005) and the Leah Goldberg Prize (2007). Her books have been published in 13 languages.

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Orly Castel-Bloom

An Egyptian Novel

a novel

The protagonist has Egyptian roots going back many generations: on her father’s side, to the expulsion of the Jews of Spain in 1492 when seven Kastil brothers from Castilla landed on the Gaza coast after many trials and tribulations. Her mother’s side goes back even further—3,000 years before that—for she is a descendant of the only family that Jewish history has ignored: the one that said ‘No’ to Moses and stayed in Egypt. This family migrated to Israel in the 1950s and settled on a kibbutz, but they were soon expelled for Stalinism and moved to Tel Aviv. Mixing historical and biographical facts, made-up legends plus other fictions and exaggerations, Castel-Bloom writes an unconventional saga of her family, the Kastils. As in other sagas, there are family meals and get-togethers, deaths and funerals, sayings and stories, and things that are not to be mentioned because they disgrace the family. But here these elements all slip and slide sideways into parody and the absurd.

In this colorful book, a series of deaths becomes truly comic. But ultimately, it is about financial ruin, the downfall of ideals and great dreams, and the irrelevance of innocence in Israel today. With great daring, Castel-Bloom takes her talent to new heights.

Foreign rights sold: French (Actes Sud)

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Castel-Bloom’s most radical work to date... A wild, eccentric and brilliant literary presence.

Haaretz

A unique reading experience.

Ynet

An astonishing book, funny and horrifying...Her ancestors’ lives appear like under the light of an operating theater.

Yedioth Ahronoth

A writer with a mind unlike any other...A wild, complex parody of every family and Zionist ethos under the sun.

Mako
Yishai Sarid

was born in 1965 in Tel Aviv. He studied law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and received a graduate degree in public administration from Harvard University. Sarid has worked in the State Attorney’s office as a prosecutor for criminal cases; he now works in the private sector. He also contributes articles to the Hebrew press. His second novel, Limassol, won the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière for Best Foreign Crime Novel (France, 2011), the SNCF Award (France, 2011), the Maria Giorgetti International Award (Italy, 2013), and was shortlisted for the prestigious IMPAC Award (Dublin, 2012).

Limassol has been published in German (Kein & Aber; Piper), French (Actes Sud; Babel), English (Europa, NY; Europa, London), Italian (e/o), Spanish (Mondadori, Mexico), Chinese (Hunan People’s Pub), Danish (Ferdinand), Catalan (Club Editor), Turkish (Koton Kitap) and Polish (Filo).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

The Third

a novel


Startling events take place in the near future, and are documented by Jonathan, a Jewish prince imprisoned in the citadel of Jaffa after the destruction of Israel by its enemies.

Some twenty years earlier, Tel Aviv and other coastal cities have been destroyed in a nuclear attack, and in its wake Yeho’az, a charismatic junior officer, has seized control of the armed forces, expelled all non-Jews and founded the Kingdom of Judah. Crowned king, he builds the Third Temple in Jerusalem, with sacrificial rites conducted as in Biblical times and now the central feature of national life. Yeho’az is assisted by his sons: David, his strong and handsome firstborn, in charge of the military; hedonistic Yo’el, responsible for Temple worship, and the youngest, loyal and trusting Jonathan, who manages the Temple calendar.

Jonathan has been physically handicapped since childhood, following a terror attack intended to kill his father. Now, however, he learns that his father fled from the attackers, leaving him behind. His father’s image is further tarnished during the critical weeks of a military campaign. More and more soldiers are killed, David is critically wounded, Yo’el flees the country with his family, and famine spreads. But Yeho’az, who has delusions of grandeur, refuses to surrender and in an appalling moment, prepares to sacrifice his infant son—born to his second wife—in order to appease the deity. And then, the kingdom falls…

A courageous, disconcerting and powerful novel, a dark futuristic allegory, a warning sign for the present.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

The Third will generate extensive literary, theological, cultural and political discussion. It… continues to hold the reader in its grip long after reading.

Haaretz

A flowing and touching piece of literature…The amazingly complex character of Jonathan is pure literary pleasure.

Blogspot

A compelling read… Basically an allegory of fundamentalism… Highly recommended.

Tomer Persico
Savyon Liebrecht

Pearls in Daylight

stories

An idealistic young female soldier is posted to a community in southern Israel to serve as a teacher at the local school. She is given the rowdiest class and breaks down during her first lesson. A Canadian pediatrician comes back to the small underprivileged town in Israel where she grew up, and suggests setting up a treatment center for autistic children. An ultra-Orthodox woman in Jerusalem visits her homosexual son in a hospice where he is dying of leukemia, after years without contact between them. A small fair-haired street boy who struggles to survive waits in vain for his father, who has disappeared. An Israeli tourist in Italy looks for the Roma woman who saved her life in Auschwitz. In the title story, a Polish family takes over an abandoned Jewish home during the Holocaust, after its owners have been sent to their death. The mother finds a pearl necklace hidden in a closet, but is too frightened to wear it openly. Years later, her daughter dares to wear it on a visit to Israel, and no one comes up to her to claim ownership.

The stories in this incisive collection explore the interface between the prosperous center of Israel and its less affluent periphery from a cultural and psychological perspective. They peek into the world of the marginalized, minorities and the weak. Even after the protagonists escape and improve their lot, memories of the past continue to haunt them. This collection shows beyond the shadow of a doubt that Liebrecht is a master of short story writing.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

The stories in this collection are a sublime embodiment of the short story genre – and this is without mentioning Liebrecht’s other qualities as a storyteller.

Makor Rishon

Each one of the stories...could serve as an example.

Mako
Mira Magen

*The Carpenter’s Sister*

a novel
Tel Aviv, Zmora-Bitan, 2015. 231 pp.

Nava’s life is in ruins after she loses her husband and their little boy in an accident. At age 39, she rejects life, moves into a seniors’ living facility among people twice her age, gives up her job as an interior designer and becomes a cashier in a supermarket. But reality knocks on her door and transforms her choices: No matter how hard she tries to close out the world, people are drawn to her and she seems to have a magical effect on their lives. Men are attracted and arouse her desires, a conflicted colleague relies on her, her neighbors in the old folks’ home want to be close to her, children love to be with her, and her carpenter brother Hanan, who is happy in his marriage and work, strives to get her back into the cycle of life.

*The Carpenter’s Sister* is a gripping, female version of the biblical Book of Job, modern, daring and clever. Here too fate behaves in an arbitrary manner, but powerful forces rise up against it—forces of kindness and friendship, of vitality and love. And Mira Magen orchestrates them with superb skill.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Mira Magen was born in Kfar Saba, Israel, to an Orthodox family. She studied psychology and sociology before turning to nursing. She worked as a nurse at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. Magen started writing in the early 1990s. She has published a number of bestselling novels and a book of short stories. She has been awarded the Prime Minister’s Prize (2005) and the Book Publishers Association’s Gold Book Prize five times (2001; 2004; 2005; 2011; 2012).

Magen’s novels have been published in German (*dtv*), French (*Mercure de France*) and Italian (*Atmosphere Libri*).

Magen creates flesh and blood characters...A convincing and moving picture, full of life.

Haaretz

A pleasure!... Beautiful language, and a story that is so moving... touching, sad and hard, so full of pain and emotion, but also of hope.

Salomega
When it comes to humor there aren’t many Israeli writers who can compete with Benny Barbash, and his new book is further proof of it.

Zahava, married with two grown children, finds a blonde hair on her husband Dov’s undershirt. She suspects that he has a mistress and starts to investigate. Married for over 30 years, she has long lost interest in the man who snores next to her at night. Gone is the attractive guy for whose sake she gave up everything and became religiously observant. Now, Dov has left religion, lost his looks and developed irritating habits, and she is just a bored, frustrated housewife. So she feels compelled to expose her husband’s treachery.

The methods Zahava uses to solve the mystery of the blonde hair and the mad scenarios that cross her fertile mind make for a hilarious plot. Odd clues bolster her suspicions: a pistol that she didn’t know about, and a mysterious box that she finds in his desk. But despite all her efforts, she can’t open it, and even an expert from the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem finds it impossible.

To crack the secret of the box, readers have to get to the end of the novel, and on the way they will have a hilarious read.

Foreign rights sold: French (Zulma)

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

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Benny Barbash

Life in Fifty Minutes

a novel
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth/Ex Libris, 2015. 270 pp.

Benny Barbash was born in Beersheba in 1951, and currently lives in Tel Aviv. He holds a BA in history from Tel Aviv University. During the 1980s and 90s, Barbash was a leading figure in the Peace Now movement, and was involved in many initiatives, both local and international, to further Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. He has written fiction, plays and screenplays, including the script for Beyond the Walls, a landmark in Israeli cinema which won several international prizes. Barbash has received the ADAI-WIZO Prize (Italy, 2006) and the “Public’s Favorite” Prize for My First Sony (Paris, 2008).

His books have been published in seven languages, among which: English (Headline), German (Berlin Verlag; Ullstein; List), French (Zulma; Points), Italian (Giuntina).

His bestselling novel, My First Sony, is forthcoming in Spanish (Blackie Books).
Itamar Levy was born in Tel Aviv in 1956, and studied theater at Tel Aviv University. He is a novelist and playwright and also writes radio scripts. Levy lives in Moshav Tzrufa; he owns a second-hand book store in Haifa and a website, ‘Itamar’s Bookstore’. Hugo’s Earthquake is his sixth novel, not including a memoir (2000). His most notable books are Zelig Mainz and His Longings for Death, The Legend of the Sad Lakes and Letters of the Sun, Letters of the Moon. Levy received the Prime Minister's prize for Hebrew Literature in 1992.

Levy's books have been published in French (Liana Levi; Actes Sud), German (Suhrkamp), Italian (Bompiani), Spanish (Circulo de Lectores).

In this wild and funny novel, a playwright named Itamar Levy has written a play with the same title as the novel. He is active at rehearsals and fills in for the lead actor when the latter gets sick. Hugo, the protagonist of the play, is a 70something Holocaust survivor, and the action takes place in the Tel Aviv apartment of his neighbor, Rivka. One day, Hugo sneaks into her living room while she is taking a shower, and in a closet he finds an amazing machine that can simulate earthquakes. Hugo activates the machine…and the whole building collapses. However, he survives and finds himself alone with a hand—not his—sticking out of the ruins. He imagines that it is Rivka’s and by the time rescue workers get to the scene, Hugo has established a relationship with it and regaled it with his feats of heroism, including revenge on his caretaker’s Thai boyfriend, and rescuing a young girl from a terrible fire. Itamar the playwright’s feats are no less amazing: he discovers that a dead friend’s body has been replaced by an unknown woman, who is buried instead of him. But only Itamar knows about this. On the other hand, the whole country has read in the press that he tried to murder the lead actor in his play. (In fact, the actor tried to commit suicide and Itamar saved his life.) In the meantime, as Itamar’s involvement in the production grows, Hugo slowly starts to control him. But who does all this happen to? And how is Itamar Levy the playwright connected to Itamar Levy the author of this novel?

A bold book that presents life as a drama of the absurd—and ourselves as actors going around in masks.
Nurit Zarchi

In Her Shadow

stories
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2013. 101 pp.

The stories in this collection fuse into a kind of novel, in which Nurit Zarchi journeys back to the world of her childhood. Her father was a writer. After his death, her mother ruled all. Twice widowed, she is depicted as a domineering, emasculating woman, who has had to give up her own artistic ambitions to cope with the harsh demands of Israeli life. Although she insisted on having a piano in her home, she transmits a clear warning to her daughter to steer clear of the arts. But her daughter—the narrator—cannot accept a life of stifling mediocrity and longs to escape to loftier, more satisfying worlds. As she matures, she becomes aware of similarity between herself and her mother. Both grew up without a father, in the shadow of a dominant mother who was hardened and emotionally dulled by the hardships of life. Unlike her mother, however, the narrator is not prepared to surrender her hope of salvation through literature. But her attitude towards it is ambivalent: although it gives her moments of happiness and sublimity, it also entails frustration, loneliness and personal sacrifices.

An absent father and the suitcase of manuscripts that he left behind, life in the shadow of an active, troubled mother, the fraught relationship between a woman writer and her poet husband, a brief romance between a teacher and a young man many years her junior—all these and more are the subjects of Zarchi’s unique and inspired writing.

COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Nurit Zarchi is born in Jerusalem in 1941 and grew up at Kibbutz Geva. She studied psychology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and later literature and philosophy at Tel Aviv University. Zarchi has worked as a journalist and holds creative writing workshops for children and adults.

Zarchi has published novels, short stories, poetry, a collection of essays and over 100 books for children. Her many prizes include the Prime Minister’s Prize twice (1980; 1991), the Ze’ev Prize (five times), four IBBY Honor Citations (1980; 1984; 1998; 2004), the Bialik Prize (1999), the Education Minister’s Prize for Lifetime Achievement (2005) the Amichai Prize (2007), the Ramat Gan Prize (2010), the Lea Goldberg Prize (2011), the Landau Prize for Poetry (2013) and the Devorah Omer Prize for Lifetime Achievement (2014). Her books have been published abroad in 10 languages.

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

Nurit Zarchi is the Amos Oz of female Israeli literature… Magnificently written…refreshes our conception of what a book really is.

Makor Rishon

Zarchi’s stories stand out for their rare beauty, for the sadness that is both seductive and intolerable...The reader finds himself wishing they will not end.

Maariv

A remarkable collection...Always the same Zarchi quality, the sense of hovering lightly over reality...the quality of poetry, of mystery.

Haaretz
Sami Berdugo

An Ongoing Tale on Land

a novel

At age 48, Marcel Ben-Hammo still doesn’t know what to do with his life. He lives alone in lodgings, estranged from his father and especially from his sister, who is bringing up his six-year-old son alone. Now he goes back to revisit places where he found life’s intensity in unexpected and at times bizarre situations. Setting out from northern Israel and traveling south, his journey is mostly to marginal locations that Hebrew literature tends to ignore. Marcel wants to find out what has changed and whether he could make a new beginning in any of these places where in the past he had avoided making a choice. Thus, he wanders around a community where the parents of a girl he was once going to marry lived; he visits the grave of his mother, who died when he was a year old; he recalls Lufti, an Arab construction worker with whom he had a close and passionate relationship. But he cannot find himself. Meanwhile, he disfigures himself, cutting himself with a knife at each stop and deriving masochistic pleasure from it.

Berdugo’s travel literature is excitingly different—engrossing and unique in its observations and in the existential questions it poses. Electrifying Hebrew prose of a kind that only Berdugo can produce.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Every encounter with Berdugo’s work creates great intellectual enjoyment…His poetic style is mesmerizing.

Ynet
He has a distinctive voice, a language of his own.

Haaretz
A remarkable book.

Time Out
Yonatan Berg

Five More Minutes

a novel

The novel follows two childhood friends, Bnaya and Yoav, who grew up in a religious West Bank settlement.

Bnaya, a young rabbi and family man, finds himself in the middle of arguments between the extremist “Hilltop Youth” and his more moderate neighbors in the settlement, between the demands of religion and everyday life, and between ignoring the Palestinians and acknowledging them, all while under the threat of eviction from his home—which motivates him to take action to stop the situation escalating out of control.

Yoav, a film student living in Tel Aviv, is making his first steps in the secular world. As a result of using drugs, he re-experiences a trauma from his army service—an arrest that went wrong during which his friend the commander and a Palestinian terrorist were killed. He sets out on a quest to come to terms with his past. He visits the parents of the dead officer and, despite the danger, attempts to reach the Palestinian village where the arrest took place. There the two childhood friends, Bnaya and Yoav, meet again after years of separation.

Five More Minutes deals with the trauma of war and bereavement. It also explores the lifestyles of religious Jewish families in West Bank settlements and of party-loving youngsters in Tel Aviv who don’t want to settle down.

An ambitious first novel drawing on the author’s intimate knowledge of two contrasting worlds.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Yonatan Berg was born to a religious Jerusalem family in 1981 and grew up in Psagot, in the West Bank. He later gave up his religious lifestyle and now lives in Tel Aviv. Berg holds a BA in creative writing and an MA in bibliotherapy. A poet and novelist, Berg writes a weekly opinion column for the popular Walla website and has written literary reviews for the Israeli press. He has published two books of poetry and is the youngest poet to receive the Yehuda Amichai Poetry Prize for his debut collection, Hard Sails (2013). His short story, “Elegy,” won the prestigious Haaretz short story competition. Berg’s first novel, Five More Minutes, won Am Oved’s “Debut” competition (2012) and the Ministry of Culture Prize (2015). He is currently working on his second novel.

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Asaf Schurr was born in Jerusalem in 1976 and has a BA in philosophy and theater from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has worked on the editorial staff of the magazine Kahnu for human and animal rights and environmental issues, and as editor for the culture, art and politics website Maarav. At present he is a translator and writes literary reviews for the Hebrew press. Schurr has received the Bernstein Prize (2007), the Minister of Culture Prize (2007) for Amram, and the Prime Minister's Prize for Motti (2008). Motti was also a finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize (USA, 2013).

His novel Motti has been published in English (Dalkey Archive), German (Berlin Verlag), French (Actes Sud) and Italian (Voland).

The Building
a novel

Omer visits the building where he lived as a child and looks for a spare key to the apartment he grew up in, which still belongs to his family. The apartment has been rented out, and Omer is there to evict the tenant’s bad-mannered boyfriend, Aner, who has barricaded himself inside and refuses to open the door. As Omer knocks on the door of each apartment, trying to locate a key, a gateway opens up to his childhood, for the people he knew then still live there. The children are now adults, the adults have grown old, and each one has a story that he wants to tell.

The atmosphere of the novel is oddly surrealistic, and the people Omer meets are flawed and menacing. His nightmarish ramble from apartment to apartment lasts three days, the bleak uncertain present highlighting the memory of a childhood that was remarkably innocent, warm and secure. Now, the apartment house feels like a seething inferno, a disaster zone, and Omer’s journey is both enjoyable and painful as he wanders like a sleepwalker through the shadows of daily life, exposed to old, dark secrets that lurk beneath the surface. And over it all hovers a riddle that will be solved at the end, after a surprise discovery in the basement.

In his unique and brilliant style, Schurr takes a profound look at human life and at the world of writing.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Literature at its finest... This book is superb.
Makor Rishon

The dynamic nature of the text is its striking achievement.
Haaretz

Both youthful and mature... a serious literary talent.
Yedioth Ahronoth

Captures the tension between urban alienation and togetherness.
Megafon
Deakla Keydar, author, screenwriter and editor, was born in New York in 1975 and grew up in Israel. She studied screenwriting at the Sam Spiegel Film & Television School in Jerusalem and writes for adults as well as for youth and children. Keydar has published a novel, a collection of short stories, two best-selling books for youth and books for children. She has also written screenplays for TV, and several of her short stories are included in anthologies, both in Israel and abroad. Keydar lives in Tel Aviv and holds creative writing workshops.

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**Other People’s Homes**

a novel

One day in early summer, Yoram leaves his wife Ruthie and daughter Julie without any warning or explanation. Ruthie, in her 40s, and Julie, 17, become outsiders in the sleepy, family-oriented village where they live, but they are determined to heal their disrupted lives. Unexpectedly, Julie encourages her mother to find a new man, and Ruthie, an attractive woman, soon nabs Amnon and finds consolation in his arms. But Julie hates him from the first moment, and Ruthie's ability to find new interest in her life only highlights her daughter's fragile state. Shortly after Amnon walks out stormily, Motti appears, looking like an ideal solution. Apart from an odd obsession with his appearance, he seems to be the perfect man. But he brings with him his sensitive son Jonah who has suicidal tendencies and lives in a special hut that Motti builds for him in the garden. And yet, amidst the strange relationship that develops between Jonah and the rest of the household, Jonah and Julie—surprisingly—fall in love.

Other People’s Homes courageously tackles the cost of love between couples, and between parents and children. Deakla Keydar creates one-of-a-kind characters in the shadow of disaster. With rare honesty, she shapes dramatic scenes and humorous, sometimes grotesque situations. An enthralling plot that leaves a deep impression.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Keydar [is] tempestuous and talented...Her dark imagination...feels like a huge ocean at nightfall...A powerful book.

*Haaretz*

Few books enter your heart like this one.

*Author Eshkol Nevo, Ynet*

A magnificent book...marvelously written.

*Israel Radio 2*

Strips bare burning emotions...Keydar knows how to find the special, the unexpected in [daily life].

*Yedioth Ahronoth*
Lilach Nethanel was born in Netanya, Israel, in 1979. She received a BA and MA in French literature from Paris University 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 Viennese 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 The Old Homeland (2015).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

The Old Homeland

a novel

Nissan, a gentle, 21-year-old Israeli philosophy student, leaves his conflicted homeland and his mother’s stifling love, and goes to Paris. There, he spends the winter with his gay friend Ogen, a former Israeli who washes dishes in a restaurant for a living. But Nissan cannot love him, so he rents an attic from 90-year-old Madame Titi, who lives below him in the old house. Although her husband has been dead for twenty years, she complains that he gets into her bed every night, clings to her body and won’t let her sleep. Nissan, alone in the attic, also struggles with desire. He is repulsed by physical contact, and although women want him, they find that he can’t give them anything. Fiona, a poor migrant from Eastern Europe who sews at night on an old machine waits for him in vain, while Sophie, who has come to Paris from the countryside, resolutely invades his attic. But Nissan turns his back on her and later flees to wander like a ghost through the streets of Paris.

Lilach Nethanel has written a novel that is poetic and daring. Paris at the start of this century is depicted as a beautiful literary city, but also one that is tired and poisonous, attracting exiles who hope in vain for a new start; Nissan, in turn, recalls the alienated youths found in Hebrew novels of the early 20th century. His return to Europe—the old homeland—is an attempt to turn back the wheel of history.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Nethanel's literary talent is unequivocal… Her writing is polished.

Yedioth Ahronoth

A unique book in a unique style, very personal and rich… Engrossing, well written and warmly recommended.

Makor Rishon

One of those tender, alarming, beautiful novels… making understandable something that is chaotic, unclear and profoundly disturbing.

The Bernstein Prize Committee
Dorit Kellner

Valleyplast

a novel
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2014. 324 pp.

In the heart of the Jezreel Valley, in northern Israel, where pioneers once dreamed of building a model society, stands a dusty plant for plastic compounds. As raw materials are melted and mixed in steaming machines, the lives of the workers are also stirred up. There is Dafna, an ambitious young manager who has quit an academic career in order to improve her life and give the plant a boost; Nurit, an introspective engineer, who defies her family’s expectations and is having a secret affair; Yaeli, a receptionist who finds unexpected fulfilment in her work; and Shadi, a machine operator from an Arab village, who is torn between his traditional world of origin and the temptations of modern life, and becomes the victim of Israeli reality. All try to reach beyond their traditional identities, and all pay a price.

The plant, where these passions and power struggles play out, is the other face of Israel: an outlying town with immigrants from Russia and Ethiopia, Arabs and especially women trying to prove themselves at jobs usually done by men. Through them, the novel examines Israeli society with its tensions, its values and flaws. And all the while, in the background, there are terror attacks, a war breaks out with Lebanon, and the political situation becomes entangled with the conflicts inside the plant.

Valleyplast uncovers an intriguing new literary voice. With great narrative skill and emotional precision, Dorit Kellner opens a window onto a world that has never before been explored in Israeli literature.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Haaretz
Wonderful, magnificent, you read it in one go!  
Kol Israel 2
Great persuasive power.  
Maariv
One of the most impressive first books in recent times.  
Israel Hayom

Dorit Kellner was born in Rishon LeZion in 1959 to a family of educators. Fascinated by both literature and science, she eventually chose the latter and studied toward a PhD in chemistry at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology. Following a post-doctorate in Canada she returned to Israel, established a home in the Galilee and since then has held senior positions in Israeli industry. In 2010-2011, she attended a creative writing workshop with poet and novelist Shimon Adaf. Valleyplast is her first novel.

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Ariella Goldminz

Relay Race

a novel
Tel Aviv, Zmora-Bitan, 2015. 231 pp.

In an old Haifa neighborhood, there’s a famous patisserie that has seen better days. Karol Schmidt, who came from Europe, opened it over fifty years ago, and people who appreciate good cake and don’t care about their waistlines are loyal clients to this day. Karol, a widower since the death of his unhinged wife, is attracted to his waitress Betty who has also seen better days. But her heart belongs to Yossi, the head baker, who loves her in return. Meanwhile, Ionel, a devoted customer and a good friend of Karol’s, has fallen in love with Deborah, who is taller than him and unattractive to boot, but she’s a pleasant, friendly woman. Karol’s daughter Ossie welcomes the new woman in her father’s life, but his late wife’s ghost is watching and plotting revenge. Ossie isn’t happy with her love life either: She is having an aimless affair with Omri, an art lecturer who is married with no thought of divorce. And incidentally, Omri’s wife is in love with Dan, the city veterinarian, and the two celebrate their romance with pastries at Karol’s bakery.

All this and more takes place against the backdrop of a city-sponsored family relay race. In fact, Goldminz’s fine-tuned, humorous book is shaped like a relay race, each character passing the baton to the next, with dovetailing plotlines. Bitter or sad events wind in and out of the patisserie, but the relay race of life goes on—happiness takes over from sorrow, and sweetness from bitterness. At the end, the desire for life and love wins out.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Enjoyment in heart-warming and cheeky abundance…A sweet and delicious novel.

Haaretz

One of the best Hebrew books to come out in recent years.

Author Amos Oz

Splendid, so full of good things!

Kol Israel 1

Ariella is blessed with the ability to weave characters that stay with you.

Author Eshkol Nevo
Merav Halperin

My Husband’s Away

a novel
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2014. 222 pp.

No butterflies here, or romantic sunsets. Instead a fast and hilarious book that you can’t put down except to laugh out loud. The heroine is a successful lawyer who has always done the “right thing,” until one day her husband leaves her for an older, less attractive woman and she tries to understand where she went wrong.

Halperin gives us a wonderful portrait of this woman who apparently has everything. She is wealthy, attractive and fashionable, has a high-octane career, two teenage children who drive her crazy, and an eccentric mother—an aging diva—who lives in an old folks’ home and flirts with all the men. She has to juggle all this, as well as her search for a new husband, without losing her cool or creasing her designer blouse. She fights on all fronts and fails on all of them, but she doesn’t break. Cynical and uninhibited, she dares to speak about things that everyone else hides: Why kids don’t bring happiness, what routine sex with a husband is like, how to live with betrayal, what women are prepared to sacrifice for marriage, and what men are prepared to do for sex.

Mercilessly and with infectious humor, Halperin follows the heroine’s juggling act, which is also the story of an entire generation of frazzled women, the first to be told that they could have it all—marriage, a home, children and a career as well as looking like a million dollars.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Merav Halperin was born in Haifa in 1960 and lives in Tel Aviv. A graduate of Tel Aviv University, majoring in history, she has worked as an editor at the Israel Defense Forces radio station, then as editor-in-chief of the Israel Air Force magazine. In 1988 she won the Yitzhak Sadeh Prize for military literature, for G-Suit, written with Aharon Lapidot. Today she works as an editor of biographies and other non-fiction.

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Avi Garfinkel

Only Child

a novel
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2015. 373 pp.

Everybody wants something from Eliran Zinawi: his mobster father, Israel’s No. 1 crime boss, expects him to take part in a major fight against a rival gang; a vengeful and oversexed woman wants him to kill her ex, who is deputy head of the Mossad; his girlfriend, a Tel Aviv student, keeps insisting that he tell her the truth about himself, and the army has called him up for reserve duty and a military operation in Gaza. And what does Eliran Zinawi want? Just the usual things: money, great sex, and for everyone to love him.

Only Child is a thrilling, fast-paced novel that also takes a courageous look at nagging topical issues in Israeli society, such as links between criminals and politicians, ethnic tensions, intolerance, and the exclusion of the “other.” The voice of the hero, Eliran Zinawi, has the clear and sharp tone of today’s Israeli youth: ambitious, shrewd, refusing to grow up. But he is also a complex and tragic figure, torn between loyalty to his family, his moral conscience and the need to rebel against his father.

When Eliran finally grasps the extent of the treachery and danger in the criminal world, he turns his back on it, but pays a heavy price. From his prison cell, he makes a clean breast of things; he tries to explain his actions and his motives, and surprisingly he succeeds in arousing our sympathy.

Relevant, suspenseful, entertaining and astute.
Haaretz
A vibrant novel that touches the bare nerve ends of Israel today.
Mako
A gifted storyteller. He knows how to develop a story and to create suspense.
Time Out
A great basis for a Tarantino movie…pacy and suspenseful…Simply fun to read.
Kore Basfarim
Edna Shemesh

Hotel Malta

a novel
Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2015. 403 pp.

Hotel Malta is an enjoyable dramatic novel about Eva and Ernest Blum, whose lives were disrupted by World War II, and their grandson Amotz whose family is in crisis. Powerful but suppressed emotions push Ernest to ask his grandson a favor related to the past: On the eve of his migration to Israel in the 1950s, in Naples, and already married to Eva, Ernest had three days of wild passion with a girl named Nora, who was also on her way to Israel. Now, toward the end of his life, he wants to meet her again. Amotz is intrigued and determined to track her down. His search for Nora and his meeting with her granddaughter Gonnie drive the plot toward its unexpected climax. Meanwhile, Ernest’s life changes and so do the lives of other characters, both close and far.

Between the lines, the book raises a variety of questions: What is unfulfilled love and what effect does it have? What do three days of bliss signify, compared to an entire lifetime? What will happen to the younger generation of Israelis, with their ethical, economic and personal difficulties? And—perhaps most heart-wrenching of all—is it possible to die happy?

With rare descriptive ability and a discriminating eye, Shemesh weaves a complex and compelling plot. Her heroes have real psychological depth and she leads them through tangled events while keeping track of their rich and fractious inner worlds, full of open and hidden passions.

No reviews yet.

For The Sand Dunes of Paris: Shemesh’s language is rich and [she has an] impressive ability to braid together the poetic, the sublime and the mundane… Sometimes it seems as if Charles Baudelaire were sitting on her shoulder… An interesting and overwhelming read. A rich and intriguing story.

Ynet

A superb book!

Yedioth Ashdod
Yossi Waxman

The History of Art

a novel
Tel Aviv, Xargol/ Modan, 2015. 284 pp.

How can the history of art—not “respectable” art, but forgotten, wild art—be told in a novel? This is the story of a bunch of passionate freaks who sought refuge for their passions and fears at the edge of the world.

In a move that seemed natural in Israel of the 1950s, a group of artists including immigrants and natives resettled an abandoned Arab village on the slopes of Mount Carmel. In time, they built galleries and a museum, created arts and crafts, and beautified the village.

More than half a century later, after a huge forest fire devastated the village, Shlomi and Yedidia were forced to abandon their home and became refugees, at least for a while. The disaster made them look in a mirror that both focused and distorted the story of that village.

The History of Art speaks in many voices: the voice of Shlomi, who settled in the village against his will; of the artist Dina-Dada who talks about the early settlers and her numerous lovers; of Zakaria, an old Arab, who in his youth was Dina-Dada’s devoted lover and soulmate; of the wild boars and forest spirits; and the voices of paintings and sculptures that come to life and speak in human tongues. They offer various angles and stories of secrets and passions, going back and forth between the innocent olden days and now, between art and living bodies, the personal and the political, and between impossible love stories and a routine—almost obvious—love.

Engrossing and sophisticated…
The voice of the fire raging on Mount Carmel is one of the most magnificent and powerful beginnings I have ever read.

Haaretz

It’s great to come upon something like this. A fun, clever book…A read that has value.

Yedioth Ahronoth

Excellent…Recalls Dylan Thomas’s Under Milkwood…and its acute ironic perceptiveness.

Author Nizan Weisman
Zadok Zemach

The Last Painting of Jacopo Massini

stories
Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2014. 166 pp.

Jacopo Massini, a poor and unknown Renaissance artist wants to paint a fresco in a monastery in Milan. His dream of creating a masterpiece is finally about to come true, but Jacopo is weak and unwell and the inflexible abbot of the monastery tries to tell him what to paint and how... Ezra Na’im, an elderly Jerusalemite, goes shopping in the market and is dazzled by the beauty of a young woman in a red car; what happens between them leaves the old timers with their jaw dropping... Claire, formerly Batya, escapes from her poor childhood neighborhood in South Tel Aviv and begins a new life in Paris, but one day she longs for her parents, and makes a phone call... A modest old woman, Masleha, joins an outing of her retirement home to the Dead Sea. On the way she gets a stomach ache but is too shy to ask the bus driver to stop, until she can’t hold it any more and, for the first time in her life, she breaks free... Elazar, a divorced man, causes an uproar in his host’s home in Germany, involving his ex-wife and his son, an Arab migrant accused of theft and two police officers. Although Elazar wants to come to the Arab’s defense, he can’t find the courage and remains silent...

In vivid language, with enormous imagination and compassion, Zemach spins dramatic stories about small, weak people. They cultivate dreams, they long for a little beauty in their dismal lives, and sometimes they enjoy moments of grace.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

His style is mature, virtuoso, varied... A rare surprise... a gift of beauty that should be announced from the rooftops.

Haaretz

A novella of rare beauty... Zemach [has a] dramatic talent for creating emotional tension and release.

Makor Rishon

Writes brilliantly... A wondrous world of tender, heartbreaking stories.

Kol Israel

A literary gem... I was captivated by its magic.

Blogspot
Yael Dayan, novelist, daughter of the legendary Moshe Dayan, and a public figure in her own right with an illustrious political career behind her, looks back at her life, scrutinizing it without illusions.

Once a desirable, free-spirited young woman and a successful author, she lived with the sense that she held the world in the palm of her hand. And the world adulated both her and the young state she came from. She was an officer in the Israel Defense Force, the daughter of a renowned general, a successful writer—Death Had Two Sons, A Soldier’s Diary: Sinai 1967—much in demand on the lecture tour, and a star of the gossip columns.

Now in her 70s, she admits with touching honesty to missing both the vibrant 20-something she was, and the sober woman she became—a fierce political activist and parliamentarian for the left, a fighter for justice, women’s rights and peace. Having resigned her last public position, she must reconcile herself to being a mentor, a participant instead of a leader, yet remaining center-stage on the Peace Camp scene.

The narrator’s warm, intimate voice and her rich intellect, as well as her insights, make for a powerful reading experience.

COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

In [this book] there is much love and an unquenchable thirst for life …written throughout in a spirit that is bold and lucid.

Author Amos Oz

A brave book by a brave woman which describes, with honesty and talent, a life experience that is both exhilarating and painful.

Author Etgar Keret

Written with honesty and wisdom…by an intriguingly talented writer, with sadness and reconciliation.

Author Orly Castel-Bloom
Ronit Matalon looks at Israeli life and culture and interprets them through stories about her family and childhood in a rundown immigrant neighborhood populated mainly by Mizrahim, Jews from Arab countries. It opens with a series of autobiographical essays, each of which can be read as a short story. These are followed by essays on photography and the plastic arts, thoughts about people coping with various situations, political essays, and comments on literature. There are also portraits of writers, artists, and intellectuals sketched with powerful imaginative force. The book as a whole portrays the “Israeli condition” with its rifts and contradictions, its stormy drama of identities and the dialogue between its Mizrahi voice and hegemonic Zionist discourse.

A central theme is Matalon’s engagement with Middle Eastern identity and the positive aspects of the meeting between Western and Oriental cultures—the intellectual openness, sensitivity to the suffering of the other side, and understanding for the positions of those considered the enemy. Her political essays deal with the First Intifada and describe visits to Gaza and Palestinian refugee camps that leave impressions still relevant today.

In Matalon’s work, there is no distinction between the personal and the national, and she reveals unexpected convergences in a warm tone full of humor, sympathy, and compassion.

Hats off to Ronit Matalon for this impressive collection of essays... A very wise woman [who writes] with sensitive relevancy...

Haaretz

[Here] everything, even the highly personal, immediately converges with the political...in a rationalist, analytical, precise style that makes no concessions to the reader.

Yedioth Ahronoth

Matalon writes with vitality, strength and humor...[she is] blessed with...many talents for different kinds of writing. And this abundance is infectious.

Prof. Nissim Calderon

Ronit Matalon was born in Ganei Tikva, Israel, in 1959 to a family of Egyptian-Jewish descent. She studied literature and philosophy at Tel Aviv University. Matalon has worked as a journalist for Israel TV and for the daily Haaretz, covering Gaza and the West Bank during the First Intifada. At present, she is senior lecturer in Hebrew and comparative literature at Haifa University. She also teaches creative writing there as well as at the Sam Spiegel Film School in Jerusalem. Matalon is a member of the Forum for Mediterranean Culture at the Van Leer Institute. Two of her novels have been bestsellers in Israel. Matalon has received the Prime Minister’s Prize (1994), the prestigious Bernstein Prize (2009), the Newman Prize (2010) and the Prix Alberto-Benveniste (France, 2013) for The Sound of Our Steps. In 2010, she received an Honorary Doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Matalon’s novels have been translated in 6 languages. The Sound of Our Steps has appeared in French (Stock) and Italian (Atmosphere Libri); forthcoming in English (USA, Metropolitan) and Turkish (Yapi Kredi).

Ronit Matalon

Read & Write

effects

In this collection, Ronit Matalon looks at Israeli life and culture and interprets them through stories about her family and childhood in a rundown immigrant neighborhood populated mainly by Mizrahim, Jews from Arab countries. It opens with a series of autobiographical essays, each of which can be read as a short story. These are followed by essays on photography and the plastic arts, thoughts about people coping with various situations, political essays, and comments on literature. There are also portraits of writers, artists, and intellectuals sketched with powerful imaginative force. The book as a whole portrays the “Israeli condition” with its rifts and contradictions, its stormy drama of identities and the dialogue between its Mizrahi voice and hegemonic Zionist discourse.

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PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE
Raquel Chalfi

Selected Poems

poetry


Already when her first book was published, in the mid-1970s, Raquel Chalfi’s poetry stood out for its poetic distinction and the originality of its worldview. Indeed, her poetry reflects a rich, emotive and chaotic inner world: Gazing at the outside world with wonder and curiosity, Chalfi is vulnerable and shifting, without clear boundaries and riddled with inner contradictions. She questions the intriguing similarity between self and cosmos, and the urge to merge with the world creates exciting but also perilous experiences. Fusion with the cosmic or social is multi-faceted, and her attitude toward it is ambivalent. For these are experiences that threaten the “I” with loss of control and a collision that may lead to the brink of insanity. These fears are expressed, for example, in the flora and fauna that populate her poetry—real, imaginary or hybrid creatures, sometimes marvels full of vitality and at others monsters. Chalfi’s witches play a similar role—these poems have aroused much interest and become very popular among readers. But her witches express ambivalent qualities: daring, power, creativity, sexual independence and a revolt against repression on the one hand, and on the other: vulnerability, resignation, victimhood, and painful crashes to the ground of reality. Thus they are both wondrous and mundane; they soar to heights, but then sink down to reality, are defeated and pay the price.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF SELECTED POEMS AVAILABLE

A lyrical poet, subtle and precise, whose work radiates warmth, life, and wisdom.

Author Amos Oz

Chalfi has a remarkable talent for enabling the poem to morph into a living illustration, a spectacular show of verbal animation.

Yedioth Ahronoth

Chalfi’s verse contains both independence and risk... No one else writes like this. Chalfi doesn’t follow fashions or join camps. Her poetry is very unique and interesting.

Prof. Gabriel Moked
Etgar Keret

Breaking the Pig

illustrated story book
Tel Aviv, Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2015. 28 pp.
AGE: 6 UP

"Dad wouldn’t buy me a Bart Simpson doll. Mom really wanted to, but Dad wouldn’t, he said I was spoiled. ‘Why should we?’ he said to Mom. ‘Why should we buy it for him? He just snaps his fingers and you jump to attention.’ Dad said I had no respect for money and that if I didn’t learn when I was little when was I going to learn? Kids who get Bart Simpson dolls at the drop of a hat turn into punks who steal from convenience stores, cause they wind up thinking they can have whatever they want, just like that. So instead of a Bart doll he bought me an ugly porcelain pig with a slot in its back.”

Breaking the Pig introduces three heroes to its readers—a boy, a dad, and a china piggy bank. It is a very special triangle, charging the story with intense emotion, humor and compassion towards a small boy who is getting educated while he is fact seeking love. Translated into dozens of languages, this story by Etgar Keret (that first appeared in Missing Kissinger in 1994) has gained international success, crossing ages and cultures, and is considered an Israeli classic.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

I think Keret is a brilliant writer, entirely different from any other I know. He is the voice of the next generation.

Author Salman Rushdie

“One of the most important writers alive… enchantingly witty stories.”

Author Clive James

Etgar Keret is a genius… A powerful and unsettling voice.

New York Times

A great short story writer…To complain about Keret being Keret is like complaining about Chekhov being Chekhov.

The Guardian (UK)