NEW BOOKS FROM ISRAEL
FALL 2012

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Alona Kimhi

Victor and Masha

a novel

Victor and Masha, a brother and sister, live with their grandmother Katerina in an immigrant neighborhood near Haifa. The two came to Israel from the Soviet Union with their parents, only to be orphaned in a road accident two years later. After stints at a boarding school, then on a kibbutz, they are finally taken in by their grandmother when she too comes to Israel. It is 1977, and the Labor Party, which has ruled Israel since it was first established, is about to lose its power to the right wing, headed by Menachem Begin. Sixteen-year-old Victor, and Masha, age seventeen, are trying to find their place in a divided, destabilized Israeli society, made up of new immigrants from Eastern Europe, slightly more veteran immigrants from Middle Eastern countries, and veteran Israelis with clear identities and ideals who are gradually losing their dominant position.

Kimhi has written a penetrating, critical novel about immigrant life, that brilliantly analyses Israeli society. But it is also the personal story of Victor and Masha, who have an almost symbiotic relationship. Masha, the stronger of the two, is a rebellious, blunt young woman with a strong sense of identity, who guards her independence and rejects any attempt to approach her. Victor is gentle and delicate, eager to integrate and be liked. The closer his friendship—and then love—for his classmate Nimrod, a proud sabra, the weaker his ties with his sister become. But Masha refuses to give up her hold on her brother. Whether it is from a selfishness that interferes with Victor’s happiness or a desire to protect him from inevitable disappointment—either way, she struggles to bring him back to her and restore him to his roots.

Fascinating, captivating and original characters… Alona Kimhi delights fearlessly in the deviations, weaknesses and vices of her characters… A wonderful novel.

Haaretz

Kimhi’s new novel is her best… The first encounter of its kind with the story of the Russian immigration… It stays with you long after you’ve finished reading it.

Maariv

A marvelous novel… Absolutely Chekhovian… It is impossible not to fall in love with Victor and Masha, and with the amazing [narrative] voice that guides them.

Ynet
David Vogel (1891-1944) was born in Satanov, Podolia (now Russia) to a religious family. At the age of 20, Vogel started traveling to centers of Jewish culture in Eastern Europe. The start of World War I found him in Vienna where he was arrested as an enemy alien. Vogel published his first book of poetry in 1923, and in 1925 he went to Paris where he lived for three years, devoting part of his time to writing fiction in Hebrew. In 1929, Vogel came to Tel Aviv but left for Berlin after a year and later settled in Paris. After the outbreak of World War II, he was imprisoned by the French as an Austrian citizen, and later by the Nazis as a Jew. In 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz, where all trace of him vanished.

Vogel's fiction is being republished on the occasion of his newly discovered novel.

Viennese Romance

a novel

Literary Israel is abuzz with the discovery of this previously unsuspected novel, recently found in an archive a hundred years after it was written. Although Vogel wrote in Hebrew, he lived most of his adult life in Vienna and Paris, and his novels are essentially Central European, belonging to the group that included Stefan Zweig, Arthur Schnitzler, Franz Werfel and Joseph Roth. Like Married Life, which established Vogel as a major writer, Viennese Romance reflects the obsessive-destructive loves and the pervasive decadence of the time.

Michael Rost, an 18-year-old Jewish youth hungry for experience comes to Vienna and forms passing relationships with everyone who crosses his path: whores, revolutionaries, paupers, army officers and rich men who frequent cabarets and gambling dens. When Peter Dean, a shady businessman, takes the penniless Rost under his wing, he rents a room in the home of an affluent bourgeois family. He is seduced by the lady of the house, Gertrude, while her husband is away on business, and shortly after starts an affair with her 16-year-old daughter as well. This love triangle threatens to destroy the entire family, and when the master of the house returns home, Rost is forced to move out. In his new lodgings, his loneliness, his nocturnal wanderings and casual romantic encounters become second nature. Some twenty years later he moves to Paris, drifts around between prostitutes and occasional love affairs, impoverished by gambling yet unable to find a home.

Like in the work of Vogel's contemporaries, Rost reflects the tortured relationship between cosmopolitan Jewish intellectuals and early 20th century Europe.

Rights sold in English, French, German, Italian, Turkish, Macedonian.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE
David Vogel continued

**Married Life**

a novel
330 pp.

The central character in this famous novel is Dr. Gurdweil, a young Jewish writer married to a Christian aristocrat, Thea. She enjoys humiliating him and has little motherly feeling for their son. Betrayal is a permanent feature of this miserable marriage, with Thea's frequent infidelities and Gurdweil's desultory affair with the Jewish Lotte, who really loves him. The setting is Vienna between the wars, and the novel abounds with descriptions of the city and its various inhabitants. Among the characters are a repulsive bookseller who is in love with Lotte, a philosopher-shoemaker, and Thea's sadistic brother. The central story, however, concerns Gurdweil's loneliness and unhappy love for his wife which impel him to take revenge. The passages which depict his suffering are among the most compelling in the novel.

*Published in English, German, Spanish, Italian, French, Dutch, Chinese, Russian, Turkish.*

A masterpiece, a find.

_**Die Presse (Vienna)***_  
Both extremely beautiful and troubling... A great book in the manner of Kafka, a chronicle of horror foretold.

_**Le Monde***_  
One of the most important works of the 1930s... Vogel was one of the first writers to give literary form to themes that so occupied intellectual Vienna.

_**Nieuwe Rotterdamsse Courant***_  
Vogel maintains a masterful balance between convincingly random confusion and subtle symbolic resonance, in which the early Freud influence is unmistakable.

_**Los Angeles Times**_
David Vogel continued

**Facing the Sea**

*a novella*


Written in Paris in 1932, this is the story of a couple spending the summer on the French Riviera. Little of their past is revealed in the course of the story. The couple stays in the small hotel of a friendly, expansive landlady and meets other cosmopolitan, middle-class vacationers and the residents of the little village. The novella climaxes when a young French woman visits the husband, who is in bed with a cold, while his wife is away in Nice for the day.

*Published in French, English, Italian, Dutch, German, Spanish, Albanian.*

Vogel is a master… His great talent is expressed particularly in his silences, in what he does not say.

*Corriere delle Sera*

The story should be read as an impressionistic poem striking the senses and bypassing logic for feeling… The sensuality and poetry are part of a complicated moral vision… Best belongs with the early films of Fellini or Antonioni.

*American critic Alan Lelchuk*

**In the Sanatorium**

*a novella*


This novella—often compared to Thomas Mann’s Magic Mountain—is set in a charitable Jewish hospital for tubercular patients in Austria. The inmates move from bed to chair, sit in the sun wrapped in blankets, and look at the snow-capped mountains. Their isolation, their obsession with their symptoms and their twisted relationships are typical of the sickness, as is their intense eroticism in the face of death. Vogel depicts an adolescent hothouse atmosphere, in which men and women live on separate floors, under the sharp eyes of Fraulein Han, a 45-year-old virgin, and breaking the rules is exciting. The repression reaches its climax when a patient seduces an orderly and is expelled from the hospital. The novella ends when a patient, a hypochondriac addicted to his illness, is tempted by another patient to leave the sanatorium for an outing, but collapses on a mountain top and dies. Through the peculiar atmosphere of sensuality and death, the patients’ boundless appetite for food and ugly petit bourgeois mannerisms, Vogel describes Western decadence at the turn of the century with merciless irony.

*Published in French, German, Dutch, Italian.*
David Vogel continued

Poetry

_The Dark Gate_: Vienna, Mahar, 1923.
_Towards Silence_: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1983.

When first published in the 1920s, David Vogel’s poetry was acclaimed as outstanding in its originality and maturity, its concision, resonance and sensuality.

Emmanuel Moses was awarded the prestigious Nelly Sachs Prize for his translation of Vogel’s poetry into French.

_Selected Poetry_ published in English (_Menard Press_) and French (_Metropolis_).
Individual poems published in 12 other languages

A single and last carriage...

A single and last carriage is ready for the journey.
Let us get in –
It will not wait.
I have seen timid girls depart –
Their narrow faces
flushed and mournful
like scarlet sunsets;
and round and rosy children
innocently ride off
simply because they were called.

And I’ve seen men
who walked the streets of the world
proud and erect,
their large eyes piercing far
from where they stood –
they too got into the carriage leisurely
and drove off.

We are the last.
The day is ending
And one last carriage is ready for the journey.
Let us step into it quietly and start –
we, too –
because it will not wait.

_Trans. by Robert Friend_
Etgar Keret

Yours Insincerely
An almost true story

fiction

“I just got here an hour ago, all excited, with my wife about to give birth. And now I’m sitting in the hallway feeling glum. Everyone’s gone to treat the people injured in the terrorist attack. My wife’s contractions have slowed down, too. Probably even the baby feels this whole getting-born thing isn’t that urgent anymore.”

For six and a half years Etgar Keret has recorded his personal life, beginning with the birth of his first child and ending with his father’s death.

But Keret’s sad-funny book tells much more than the story of his family and his career. With an ex-settler, ultra-Orthodox sister who has eleven children and eight grandchildren; a peacenik, marijuana-legalizing brother and Holocaust-survivor parents, his personal story seems to tell the story of an entire society.

After all, when your child is born on the same day as a suicide bombing; when a chat among 3-year-old kids’ parents involves questions like “Will your son join the army when he’s eighteen?” and an old school friend is scared that his model Eifel tower—made of matchsticks—will be ruined by Scud missiles, the personal and the national are hard to distinguish, especially in this strange part of the world.

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

New York Times (US)

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

The Guardian (UK)

Huge and fantastic, aggressive yet sensitive, surreal yet incredibly authentic.

Sydsvenska Dagbladet (Sweden)

We go from laughter to tears. Keret has trapped us again. We forgive him. And we want more.

Le Figaro Littéraire (France)

If we keep turning the pages, it’s because we want to keep hearing Keret sound like Keret.

San Francisco Chronicle (US)

Keret is unclassifiable… an entire world all by himself, a brand name.

La Quinzaine littéraire (France)

Born in Tel Aviv in 1967, Etgar Keret is the most popular writer among Israel’s young generation and has received international acclaim. He has been published in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Le Monde, the Guardian, the Paris Review, among others. At present, Keret lectures at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Among his prizes: the Israel Cultural Excellence Award (2006), the Jewish Quarterly Wingate Prize (UK, 2008), the St. Petersburg Public Library’s Foreign Favorite (2010), the Cannes Film Festival’s Camera d’Or, with Shira Gefen, for their movie Jellyfish. And in 2010, Keret was awarded the prestigious French Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. His books have been published abroad in 30 languages in 34 countries.
Sarah Blau

*Those Well-Raised Girls*

a novel


At a high school for religious girls, 17-year-old Hava Keller is preparing to stage a play based on a story about 93 Jewish girls from Cracow, during the Holocaust, who took their own lives rather than be raped by soldiers. Before committing suicide, one of the girls, Haya Feldman, told the story in a letter that found its way out of the ghetto and into the newspapers, horrifying the Jewish world. Although it later emerged that this story of supreme chastity was invented, it became a defining myth among Israel’s religious community.

Hava Keller, the heroine of this novel, is a strong-willed, independent thinker. In the play that she is planning at school, she herself will star as the girl who wrote the famous letter, just as her dead mother was supposed to do, many years before. At the time, however, the school found out that she was pregnant, and the role was given to another girl, Hani Gross. But the play was never performed: Hani Gross disappeared and only her underwear was found in a city park. Now, one of the actors in Hava’s play also disappears and Hava, in shock, sees history repeating itself.

*Those Well-Raised Girls* combines dark suspense with a tale of sexual awakening. But it also has a more serious purpose: it explores the power of myths—including those from the Holocaust—that feed into young girls’ fears and repressed desire. Blau condemns this way of exerting control and of presenting chastity-unto-death as a model for emulation. With great courage, she also exposes the emotional manipulations and hypocrisy of those who exploit these myths.

An ambitious and impressive book. Blau makes bygone nightmares resonate clearly in the here and now.

**Yedioth Ahronoth**

A riveting book... An inspiring combination of Holocaust, Judaism, death, adolescence and erotica. It takes courage to mix everything together, and the outcome is both unsettling and comic.

**Author Alon Hilu**

Blau tackles the defining myths of religious society with the superb, poignant courage and honesty of one of Israel’s foremost writers.

**Walla**

Sweeping and powerful.

**Kol Israel Radio 3**
Ayelet Gundar-Goshen was born in Israel in 1982. She holds a BA in psychology and general studies, as well as an MA in psychology from Tel Aviv University. She later studied film and screenwriting at the Sam Spiegel Film & TV School in Jerusalem. Gundar-Goshen has written a number of screenplays, and has produced short films which have participated in film festivals in Israel and abroad. She has also written and co-written a number of TV series. Gundar-Goshen won 2nd prize at the IEMed European short story competition (Barcelona, 2010), the Gottlieb Prize for Screenplays (2010) and the Berlin Today Award for her short film Batman at the Checkpoint (Berlin, 2012). One Night, Markovitch is her first novel.

One Night, Markovitch

A novel

On the eve of World War II, a group of young men set out from pre-state Israel for Europe. Across the sea, a group of Jewish girls whom they have never met are waiting for them. The aim: fictitious marriages that will enable the girls to escape from Europe and reach the Jewish homeland, then under British rule. Two of the young men are close friends but very different from one another. Ze’ev Feinberg is a daring fellow, tall and muscular, who sports a mustache and is used to having women fall at his feet. The other, Ya’akov Markovitch, is a nondescript, drab guy without charisma; no woman has ever taken a second look at him. Nevertheless, it is Markovitch who is allotted the prettiest woman, Bella Zeigerman. He falls head over heels in love with her, and when they reach Israel, he refuses to give her a divorce. Markovitch suffers humiliation, threats, even beatings, and his friend abandons him too, but he persists and patiently hopes that one day Bella will love him. But it is not to be. Bella’s struggle for her freedom takes place against the backdrop of war in Europe and the Israeli War of Independence, and the plot shifts between the small individuals and the great events going on around them, which are described as if they were legends or myths.

Gundar-Goshen’s first book is a colorful novel that tells the Zionist narrative in a fresh and different manner, with a lot of humor. Historical fact and fiction become indistinguishable: Storied leaders make love to women whose skin has the scent of oranges; brave officers conquer fortresses with the help of cripples, drunkards and gamblers, and Ya’akov Markovitch wanders around among them, driven by his passion and stubbornly holding on to the beautiful Bella.

With the very first sentence, I began to feel the elation that grips me when a book really surprises me. The second was even better… This book is superb—trenchant and full of love, impressive in the wisdom that we find between the lines.

Author Eshkol Nevo, Yedioth Ahronoth

How does such a talent blossom, almost in secret?

La’Isha

The period of the British Mandate was never so sexy and funny.

Yedioth Ahronoth
Shifra Cornfeld

The Second Half of the Night

a novel

This is an original and intriguing first novel depicting a small ultra-Orthodox community in Jerusalem that is like a closed sect. It is a fascinating community, exotic and full of vitality, but also murky and morally rotten. At its head is the charismatic Rebbe Isruel Weisglass, an American Jewish guru with a shady past, who knows how to con people out of their money. He moved to Israel in the late 1960s, after the Six Day War, bringing with him his second wife and his children, but leaving behind Ruben, his eldest son from his first marriage. He settled in an abandoned Arab neighborhood on a hilltop in Jerusalem and gradually stray youngsters begin to gather round him: Jewish hippies from America who have found religion and seek inner peace through Torah study, blind faith in their Rebbe, and marijuana. The youngsters also pair off, have children and together create a special way of life, with a charming language that is a mixture of Hebrew, English and Yiddish.

And then appears the long lost son Ruben, now age 18, who falls in love with Deborah, the daughter of one of the community leaders. Deborah was a wild and inquisitive child who liked climbing on roofs, playing with the boys and exploring her surroundings. This is how she came upon an unusual woman in an isolated house who taught her the magic of reading books. But when she turns 15, the Rebbe decides to marry her off to his aide, Shimshon, an aging and half-crazy bachelor who sleeps with every new woman in the group.

Ruben and Devorah, the young lovers, rebel against the Rebbe—something no one has dared before—and take their fate into their own hands. Their struggle sweeps the readers along with it.

One of the most original books in recent times...gripping. It stands out for its freshness, human warmth and delicate humor.

Walla

Delicate voyeurism and a great deal of feeling. Its tone is somewhere between Hasidic tales, shetel stories and popular fiction.

Yedioth Ahronoth

Powerful and hard to put down.

Nana10

Shifra Cornfeld was born in Jerusalem in 1980, the second of eight children in an ultra-Orthodox family, and was raised in the Old City of Jerusalem. She holds a BA in industrial design from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. In 2008, she won the Big Brother reality show on TV, and used the prize money to sit down and write a book. Today, Cornfeld lives in Tel Aviv. The Second Half of the Night is her first novel.
Barak Hamdani

Yellow Rose

a novel

The events in *Yellow Rose* take us back to January 1943 in two places thousands of miles apart, where fantasy and reality face off. Oscar, a nine-year-old boy from Dresden, is sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp although he only has a Jewish grandfather. Every day he sees new things as he walks around the camp: he meets a lion, he watches a circus tent being put up, sees yellow roses being planted, observes preparations for a fair, and hears an orchestra rehearsing. Oscar, an imaginative boy, grew up on children’s books written by his townsman, Erich Kästner, and dreamed of writing adventure stories. Before saying goodbye to him, his mother gave him a notebook and told him to write. Now, Oscar feels that he is about to witness a mystery that he needs to solve. But the real explanation is simple: a Red Cross delegation is coming to inspect living conditions at the camp, and Deputy Commander Niemeyer, a veteran SS officer, has been ordered to show them a model ghetto—clean, well cared for, lively, with plenty of cultural activity and—of course—fictitious.

At the same time, DC Niemeyer’s son Hans is in a bunker at Stalingrad. He and his comrades are struggling against arctic cold and hunger; their physical and mental condition is deteriorating. A few days before the final defeat, their division commander, who has lost touch with reality, announces that the Russians have been defeated; Hans naïvely believes him and steps out of the bunker, only to discover the painful truth.

The illusions, fantasies and deceptions portrayed in this clever and moving novel are very different from one another, but in extreme situations, deception, self-deception and humor are all mechanisms that help the characters to cope.

Hamdani juggles greyish tints with impressive skill to create a work that is mature and a little unusual in the area of Holocaust literature.

**Yedioth Ahronoth**

An excellent writer... Fantasies and self-deception run wild on the Nazi side too, and allow Hamdani to express his comic talents... His writing is brilliant.

**Makor Rishon**

Make sure you don’t miss this book. In one word: Superb. In two words: Superb! Superb!!

**Yedioth Tikshoret**

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Barak Hamdani was born in 1975 in the port city of Ashdod to a family with six children and thousands of books. He holds a BA in industrial engineering from Tel Aviv University and an MA in business administration. He is a production manager at Teva Pharmaceuticals. A poet and fiction writer, Hamdani starting writing while still a student, and published his first book of poems in 2003. Yellow Rose is his second novel.
Ella Yablonsky

The Great Experiment

a novel

Paris, winter 1666. Marie Quaro, a talented girl of 15, is living in the house of the famous physician Jean-Baptiste Denys, doctor to the court of Louis XIV. She has miraculously recovered from the deadly pox, and Denys, who treated her, has invited her into his home to copy books and documents for him in her fine handwriting. His true intention, however, is entirely different: Denys plans to use Marie’s blood for his daring but controversial medical experiments.

This historical novel deals with an actual person, an ambitious and groundbreaking physician who believed that the remedy for disease and epidemics lay in human blood. Under the nose of the clergy who saw his work as heresy, he carried out pioneering research that included the transfer of blood from animals to humans, and was preparing for what he called “the Great Experiment”: blood transfers from one human being to another. But Marie, whom he intended to use in his research, spoils his plans.

In this enthralling, suspense-filled novel, the author draws us into the nooks and crannies of a turbulent period in the history of culture, science and religion. Only in a time of upheaval like this could a poor girl like Marie, the daughter of a mask-maker, die and come to life again, visit the Palace of Versailles, learn about life from a simple washerwoman who had traveled to the Holy Land, and love almost to death. The central question is: Will this man, who has dedicated his entire life to his mission and fallen along the way, also have room in his life for love?
Michal Pitowsky

Asphalt

a novel

To eleven-year-old Ofri, school is a battlefield that she suffers every day. The boys humiliate her, spit at her, punch her, threaten her with knives, and once even pushed her out of a moving bus. But the violence is not confined to just a few of the boys: They are all bullies, all the girls are harassed, and the relations between the sexes are shaped by brute force and aggression. Such is the situation at an ordinary school, in Jerusalem. Parents and teachers alike are busy with themselves and are blind to the children’s distress. But Ofri does not understand this code of behavior; the language of force is foreign to her. She wonders how it is possible to even like boys. So when she meets a boy who is different, who isn’t violent, she fights her feelings for him.

Parallel to Ofri’s story is that of Moran, a rebellious 15-year-old girl, who is independent and individualistic, unconcerned that she is not like the others. Attracted to the seamy side of life, she wanders the streets with other youths who spend their time smoking and drinking. When she meets Dov, a charming but manipulative young guy, his sadistic sexuality arouses her curiosity. The love that grows between them forces her into places where she finds both excitement and fear.

Asphalt describes a callous and obtuse Israeli reality, but Pitowsky refrains from judgement and avoids sensationalism. The tales of her two heroines gradually interweave, their vulnerability is touching, and the more we read, the clearer it becomes that in such a world, violence ultimately triumphs over those who try to avoid it.

Michal Pitowsky was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1984 to Israeli parents and grew up in Jerusalem. She has a BA in comparative literature and history of art from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During her studies, she worked as a deejay at various venues in Jerusalem. Asphalt is her first novel.
Miki Ben-Cnaan was born in Tel Aviv in 1963. An artist as well as a writer, she has exhibited her drawings in solo and group exhibitions, in Israel—the Tel Aviv Museum—and the U.S. Professionally, she has worked for many years as a stage and costume designer, particularly for young artists at the National Habima Theater. Ben-Cnaan has received many awards for stage design: the Acre Theater Festival Award (1984), Habima Theater’s Goldenberg Prize (2002), the Sternfeld Prize (2003), and the Fringe Theater “Golden Hedgehog” Award (2007). At present she also teaches stage and costume design at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and the Kibbutzim College of Education. In recent years Ben-Cnaan has established a start-up company to develop a medical device that she invented. The Grand Circus of Ideas is her second novel. Forthcoming in Italian (Giuntina).

The Grand Circus of Ideas

Tel Aviv, Achuzat Bayit, 2011. 422 pp.

Two aging women are found dead in a surrealistic old-age home in Jerusalem. One, a resident, is wearing a tattered elephant costume; next to her, an unknown woman is dressed up as a doll, in a frock with golden buttons and patent leather shoes. Although the cause of death is clear—asphyxiation from a gas heater—no one can explain why they look like they have just run away from a circus.

Thus begins a gripping mystery, the story of four residents who met in the home fifteen years earlier and established a choir, which inspired them and gave their lives new meaning. As the enterprise progresses, with songs ranging from Israeli classics to weird and charming rap, we hear their tragic yet miraculous life stories, full of twists, turns and magical realism which takes us back to the madness and radicalism of the 20th century. One woman was sent to the gas chambers as a child, but was saved by her elephant costume and a flock of crows that lifted her into the air and carried her away from the inferno. Another resident is a lapsed monk who has strange visions.

An amazing novel, in which the taken-for-granted becomes miraculous, and the surreal—flying elephants, chairs sprouting from a cherry tree—seems plausible. All together form colorful links suggesting the continuity of human memory based on great ideologies that either propel humanity forward or shatter it.

A book like this should be greeted with cheers... Ben-Cnaan stretches the imagination in an awe-inspiring way. Haaretz

Gripping. A superb, intriguing story... There is something hypnotic in Ben-Cnaan’s writing. Ynet

Imagination, daring, and a great deal of originality. Time Out
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 Kahn 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 Morti (2008). Thus Spoke Vincent is his fourth novel.

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

Asaf Schurr

Thus Spoke Vincent, the Stupid Cat

a novel


Asaf Schurr’s wonderful fourth novel focuses on an Israeli family in crisis and a remarkable kitten called Vincent. Amikam, a psychologist by profession, is facing a mid-life crisis: he is attracted to one of his patients and is trying to find back his youth with her. Neta, his wife, struggles to keep the family together, but worries that she has not done anything meaningful with her life and that it is too late to change. Their teenage daughter Matti, in conflict with her growing body, suffers from an eating disorder. And their eldest son Uriah hides from the world in the basement, turns to religion and looks after abandoned chicks and kittens. But although he tries to save them, he fails again and again. All four family members are lonely, yet from their fear and suffering grows a great desire for intimacy, which is the novel’s main strength. Amikam, for example, spends nights digging up the bathroom floor so that water will leak into the basement where Uriah is holed up. This is his way of trying to reconnect with his son. Meanwhile, in the basement, a dead kitten called Vincent comes alive and starts to philosophize and utter prophecies, baring in blunt, crude language what is happening in Uriah’s soul.

Schurr’s book is a biting, funny parody of a family drama, but it is also a touching and surprisingly delicate work.

Written with whimsical, spontaneous charm and refined sophistication.

Haaretz

Beautifully written, about all the things we hide from one other. Quite unique.

Yedioth Ahronoth

For Schurr, even family realism can be fantasy, and fantasy, expressed in stomach-churning scenes, can be horrifyingly realistic.

Israel Hayom

PHOTO © DAN PORGES
Bella Shaier

Children’s Mate

2 novellas and story

The novella *Children’s Mate* takes place in the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. Milotchka, a gifted and perceptive little girl, suffers from obesity, and when her family moves to a new town, she finds it difficult to make friends. The other children tease her and call her a “fat cow.” Milotchka also has another problem, which she tries very hard to hide: she’s Jewish. Borya, the boy next door, is also Jewish and when the other boys discover his secret—in the public bathhouse—they start bullying him. Little Milotchka doesn’t understand how they found out; her mother explains that when Jews get undressed, you can see they are Jewish. So when her mother takes her to the bathhouse and tries to undress her in front of everyone, Milotchka feels it’s the end of the world. With rare delicacy and compassion, Shaier sketches the world of children who are trying to survive and be accepted by a youthful society that persecutes anyone different.

The novella *Galit and Gordon* takes place in Tel Aviv years later, and Galit, who grew up in a dingy neighborhood, craves to belong and be accepted by Gordon, a thoughtless man she has been going out with for 25 years. On the surface, they are happy together, but there is a deep rift: Galit waits patiently for a proposal of marriage that never comes, while Gordon dreams of finding a glamorous woman from his own social class. This would satisfy his emasculating mother, who treats Galit with contempt. The reader follows Galit with anxious empathy: unlike the cynical and critical Gordon, she never loses the innocence of youth or her faith in human beings.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Leaves an impression of excitement, discovery, wonder…
This is superb literature.
Haaretz

Shaier is a rare phenomenon…
An important literary event.
Hurry up and buy this book.
Maariv NRG

Impressive and original … An astonishing talent.
Ynet

Bella Shaier was born in Czernowitz in the Soviet Union in 1957, and came to Israel at the age of 12. She holds an MA in literature from Tel Aviv University, and worked for over 20 years as a computer systems analyst. In recent years, Shaier has dedicated herself to writing. *Children’s Mate* is her first book.
Amir Ben-David

Falafel Oslo

a novel
Tel Aviv, Xargol, 2011. 322 pp.

Lennon Lombroso was born in Tiberias on the day John Lennon was shot in New York. He got his unusual first name because his father, a dedicated Beatles fan and the owner of the Fab Four falafel stand, was convinced that the soul of his favorite musician had been reincarnated in his newborn son. Relatives and rabbis warned that the name was a bad omen—a prophecy that comes true more than twenty years later, when Lennon falls in love with a young Norwegian girl working as a volunteer on a kibbutz. After a journey of self discovery to the Far East, he decides to follow his heart to Oslo, where Mona awaits him.

And it is in tranquil, tolerant Oslo that Lennon discovers the power of his Israeli heritage. He sets up a business—Falafel Oslo—hangs up a sign that describes falafel as “Israel’s national dish” and to his amazement is swept into a worldwide political and legal maelstrom. Among those involved are Palestinian activists who are angry at the description of falafel—originally an Arab food—as Israeli; xenophobic Norwegian right-wingers and European left-wingers who fight with them; cynical, publicity-seeking lawyers and media people, as well as zealous Israeli patriots unwilling to surrender a beloved national symbol.

Falafel Oslo—written before the terrible massacre in Norway in July 2011—is a riveting, insightful and sometimes satirical novel that examines notions of destiny and identity, and measures the similarities and differences between Oriental and Occidental cultures, between the longing for peace and infatuation with blind, violent force.

What an original, all-encompassing book this is! See for yourselves!

Haaretz

A dizzying journey in search of Israeli identity... Riveting.

Yedioth Ahronoth

Plumbs stormy human depths... A humdinger of a book.

Maariv NRG

Amir Ben-David, writer, screenwriter, musician and journalist, was born in Haifa in 1965. He holds an LLB from Tel Aviv University faculty of law. In the 1990s, Ben-David was a founding member of a successful rock band, for which he was also the lead guitarist and writer-composer. He has co-authored screenplays for major Israeli feature films, and won an Israeli Film Academy award for producing the soundtrack of “Vulcan Junction.”

More recently, he was editor-in-chief of Time Out Tel-Aviv, host of a cultural TV magazine on Channel 2 TV, and chief editor of a documentary series that aired recently on Channel 2 TV. Ben-David has published two novels, as well as a number of short stories. Falafel Oslo is his second novel.
Yoram Kaniuk

Almost

a novella

This is the incredible story of Orlev, an embittered elderly artist who sees his life as a failure. At the age of 75, he makes a living by painting dead people because, he says, they don’t see his work and don’t complain. “I’m a lousy painter, it is true,” he admits, but painting is what he likes to do.

When Orlev is asked by Magda, a pretty and mysterious woman, to paint a portrait of her recently-deceased husband, he discovers a secret from his past in her opulent home. At this point, he opens up and tells Magda the astonishing story of his life. His father was a German Nazi who informed on his wife—Orlev’s mother—to the Gestapo, yet she continued to love him. After Orlev and his mother reached Israel she abandoned him, married an Arab man and became a Muslim; one of her sons by him eventually joined the Fatah. Orlev, left alone, was baptized and raised in a monastery; when he grew up he became a painter and then married a woman who despised his work. She finally left him after their son Omri was born.

Orlev only met his mother again after the 1967 Six Day War, when she returned to Judaism. But she found no peace and committed suicide by jumping off the balcony of her house. Orlev’s son is all that he has left.

“You had true grit,” Omri tells him. “You wanted to fail.”

Now an old man, Orlev discovers that despite everything someone admired his art (and bought it anonymously years ago); he also realizes that he is loved and that he has a family. “I’m sad, but I’m alright,” he sums up. “I don’t envy anyone.”

In his humorous way, Kaniuk deals here with the value of life, the artist’s path, and Jewish destiny.

No reviews available yet.

For 1948:
An overwhelming experience, a stormy ocean of oblivion and memory.
La Repubblica
A magnificent novel in one voice.
La Stampa
A moving book that questions many accepted truths.
Le Monde
Daniella Carmi

**Goats**

a novella
Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2011. 130 pp.

This novella takes place in the Negev desert in southern Israel, in a wild and uninhabited area. Or almost uninhabited, because this is where the Bedouin roam and graze their goats since time immemorial. Three young Israelis meet there in a makeshift hut on a mission that they believe will make them rich: they have been hired to confiscate herds of goats according to a law enacted by the Israeli government in the 1970s. The purpose is apparently positive: to move the Bedouin into permanent housing, and remove the goats in order to protect the region’s natural vegetation. But the mission, carried out by force, goes against Bedouin culture and their way of life; in fact, the Bedouin lose their livelihood.

The three men are very different from one another. Arik, “a man of the world” is a macho, arrogant and shifty type who dreams of getting rich quick; Mickey, an unsophisticated kibbutznik, needs to make some money because he is getting married, and Azoulai, a Mizrahi Jew from an immigrant township and a dysfunctional family, has to earn a living for his family. And there’s also the boss, Naftali, a callous, cynical functionary who is determined to get a more senior position.

Arik, Mickey and Azoulai carry out their mission. Although it is legal, it is not ethical, and each in his own way reflects a brutal, apathetic and intolerant society that, in Carmi’s opinion, has undergone a rapid process of corruption.

Illustrations: Hilla Havkin

ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

I cannot recall another book like this… A total artistic achievement.  
Maariv NRG

A political novel, original and intriguing… Another outstanding work by Carmi.

Ynet

A work of morality… an honest, undistorted mirror.

Haaretz
Alon Altaras was born in Jaffa, Israel, in 1960. He specializes in modern Italian literature and culture, and translates Italian literature into Hebrew – Natalia Ginzburg, Antonio Tabucchi, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Tommoso Landolfi, to name but a few. Altaras has taught at the Universities of Trieste and Sienna, and writes for l’Unita and La Repubblica. He has published several novels and collections of poetry. Altaras has been awarded the Prime Minister’s Prize (2000), the Italian Ministry of Education Prize for his translations and for promoting Italian culture in Israel (2003), and the Dan David Foundation Award (2008).

His novels have been published in Italian (Voland; Atmosphere Libri forthcoming).

And Then We Were Alone, a continuation of Altaras’s first novel Maricika’s Revenge, is also a book that stands on its own. It begins with the sudden death of Maricika, the author’s much-loved mother, and maps the lives of her husband and son who have been “left alone,” showing how they cope. The narrator’s father is a hard man, egocentric, callous and dependent, who came to Israel from Romania the early 1950s. He never learned Hebrew but has nevertheless managed well. Soon after his wife’s death he finds a widow who speaks his language and moves in with her. A gaping chasm separates him from his Tel Aviv-born son, who seeks out various father-figures; they shape his spiritual world and wield considerable influence over his life. From the point of view of the narrator-son, he and his father are as far apart as Bucharest is from Tel Aviv, but it slowly dawns on the reader that the distance is not so great at all.

The surprising similarities between the two lives—the son’s decision to leave Israel, to live and study in Italy, for example—shed new light on the course of events and add an ironic dimension as well as psychological complexity to the narrative. The son’s first—and unsuccessful—marriage reveals different aspects of his personality. Yet despite his negative attitude toward his father, he continues to fulfill his filial duties. 

And Then We Were Alone is a mature work, lucid and meticulous.

Written with great sensitivity and astonishing skill, it truly endeared itself to me.

Kol Israel 2

I can say with certainty that everyone who liked Maricika’s Revenge will love this book as well.

IDF Radio

This book works!... Pure realism with characters whose lives are shaped by compromise and unglamorous survival tactics.

Yedioth Ahronoth
Emuna Elon was born in Jerusalem to a family of rabbis and scholars, and was raised in Jerusalem and New York. She teaches Judaism, Hassidism and Hebrew literature, and has served as advisor to the Prime Minister on the status of Israeli women. Elon has published essays, short stories, eight popular children’s books and three bestselling novels. In the past she also wrote a weekly political column in the mass circulation daily, Yedioth Ahronot. Her novel If You Awaken Love (Amazon Crossing) was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award (2007). Elon was awarded the Book Publishers Association’s Gold Book Prize for her novel Inscribe My Name (2010).

**Emuna Elon**

**Beyond My Sight**

a novel
Tel Aviv, Kinneret, Zmora Bitan, 2012. 270 pp..

Liraz, a very Orthodox young woman, is devoted to two men: Aviv, the man she loves, and Naor, her twin brother. Born and raised in a non-religious family, she is not afraid to act unconventionally or to question common beliefs, and is in constant search of the secret key to joy, love and spiritual fulfillment. In her youth, Liraz stands at a junction between two ways of life and of realizing her potential. From here on, Emuna Elon juxtaposes two parallel worlds, and in each one Liraz lives a different life. In the first, she marries Aviv, becomes a mother, and together with her husband and brother, she establishes a revolutionary Hassidic seminary for the study of Judaism in the Galilee. But while the two men work to create a new Judaism in the spirit of the Talmudic period, sweeping youngsters from all over the country along with them, Liraz slowly gives up her intellectual aspirations. In the other world, she meets Aviv in India but their love does not lead anywhere. She returns to Israel alone and remains single, devoting her life to study and writing. Eventually, she becomes an admired lecturer who influences many women. In the first plot, Liraz is Eve, the mother of human life, created from Adam’s rib; in the second she is Lilith, who in Jewish myth was Adam’s first partner but threw off her obligations toward him and chose independence.

Emuna Elon makes these two ways of life into a compelling and contemporary story, whose narrative constantly returns to Jewish sources and touches upon issues that challenge both women and men.

Elon is a skilled storyteller. She moves freely between periods, builds up suspense and develops relationships that reflect and illuminate each other.

**Haaretz**

Here is a book that really jolts you... The plot contains deep historical reflections, an ancient and powerful story bubbling away in the background.

**IDF Radio**

Profound writing, sweeping... a book worthy of the reputation Elon has earned. Authentic, audacious and touching.

**Wordpress**

Emuna Elon makes these two ways of life into a compelling and contemporary story, whose narrative constantly returns to Jewish sources and touches upon issues that challenge both women and men.
Aner Shalev

Mother

a novel

Mother is a sweeping confessional novel with which many readers will empathize. Strewn with autobiographical fragments, it centers on the writer’s courageous confrontation with his mother’s death and, in its aftermath, with his own life and its meaning. But it is also an essay, a memoir, a portrait of a family, with many characters and generations, and a record of mourning that is personal yet ascetic.

When the narrator is told that his mother has died, he suddenly finds himself trapped in a situation where nothing is certain anymore: not his relationships, nor his memory, not even language itself. The narrative thus includes direct appeals to his mother—but in the absence of a response, they become fantasy sequences, fluctuating between borderline surrealism and cold quasi-logic.

He also experiences a sense of abandonment, and the loss of a witness to (and storyteller of) his life. And for this reason, he feels compelled to tell his own story, from the beginning. The text is constructed like a Pandora’s box that holds an entire world. Shalev tells us about his mother, an artist born in a kibbutz on the shore of Lake Tiberias, and his father, an eccentric literary scholar; his grandfather, a model of uncompromising idealism and one of the founders of the kibbutz; his grandmother, a vigorous Zionist activist, and his sister, a successful writer with whom he shares childhood memories.

Grief and a disconnect from the past dictate the branching paths of the narrative. There are lyrical digressions, disjointed fragments of personal and family history that combine to form a heartbreaking collage. From section to section, from level to level, the author descends to the depth of absolute zero—the ultimate freezing point—that must perhaps be reached before he can put the pieces together again.

The life of the mother, born on Kibbutz Kinneret, represents the life of an entire generation. Anyone who has lost a parent can identify.

Maariv
Shalev conveys very well that it is impossible to prepare oneself for a mother’s death, that even if it is anticipated it comes as a complete surprise.

Haaretz
This is everyone’s truth... grasps the reader in a powerful and painful grip.

Kol Israel

Aner Shalev was born at Kibbutz Kinneret in 1958. He studied mathematics and philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and received a PhD in pure mathematics in 1988. In 1992, after a postdoctoral fellowship at Oxford, he joined the Einstein Institute of Mathematics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he is now full professor. He served as chairman of the Institute from 1999 to 2001. Shalev has lectured at universities around the world, including Princeton, Yale, Oxford, Paris, Chicago, London, Cambridge and Berkeley. He was a guest speaker at the International Congress of Mathematics in Berlin in 1998, and has also lectured at a number of literary conferences.

Mother is Shalev’s second novel.

Dark Matter, his first novel, has been published in German (Berlin Verlag), Italian (e/o) and Czech (Albatros).
Yochi Brandes was born in 1959 in Haifa to a family of Hassidic rabbis. She holds a BA in Biblical Studies and MA in Judaic Studies.

For many years, Brandes taught bible and Judaism, as well as writing courses on Jewish thought for various schools. She regularly participated in TV programs on Jewish studies, had her own column in the daily Maariv, and was the general editor of a book series on Judaism. Today she lectures widely on bible and literature.

Her writing is inspired by all Jewish sources: the Bible, the teachings of the ancient sages of Israel, Jewish law and prayers, the Kabala, and Hassidic lore. Brandes has published seven novels and a book of essays on biblical women—all of them best-sellers in Israel. She has been awarded the Book Publishers Association’s Platinum Book Prizes for seven of her books, including her novel Kings III (2008).

Kings III has been translated into Czech (Garamond) and Italian (Newton Compton, forthcoming).

Yochi Brandes

Over 100,000 copies sold!

Kings III

a novel

Kings III, a biblical novel, created a sensation when it was first published in Israel. It brings to life a brilliant period in the history of the Jewish people: the first era of kings, starting with Saul and David. However, it radically changes the perspective. While the biblical narrative, which created both Jewish and, later, Christian cultures, reflects the outlook of these kings of Judah, as recorded by scribes and followers, here, Brandes includes stories from completely different sources that were long thought lost, or marginalized, and which are now brought to light.

Kings III offers an additional point of view: the feminine. Indeed, beneath the biblical stories of manly action lies a lively world of women’s culture, which shows the key role that women actually played in the early history of the Jewish people. The novel brings to life Ritspa Bat Aya, Saul’s wife; Michal, his daughter and David’s first wife; and the famed Bathsheba who became Solomon’s mother, to name but a few.

Both critics and audiences agree that Kings III revolutionizes the way in which the bible is read. On the one hand, it is an exciting and emotional suspense novel, a real page turner; on the other, it presents an alternative narrative which has serious religious and cultural implications. To some the plot may seem entirely imaginary, but it is strongly supported by Jewish and Christian canonical texts—not only the Old and New Testaments, but other equally ancient and orthodox writings, such as biblical translations, the Apocrypha and the writings of Flavius Josephus.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE.

An enthralling novel full of surprises, about love, betrayal and loyalty... A revolutionary book.
Haaretz

The best book written in Israel recently. A superb novel... Brandes fascinates us with the strength of her imagination and descriptive power. Any praise I could heap on Kings III would not be overstated.
Hazofch

Restores readers’ enjoyment of the fascinating biblical tale... Intriguing and thought-provoking.
Maariv NRG
Rina Ouziel-Blumenthal was born in Tel Aviv. She received a BA in theater and Hebrew literature at Tel Aviv University and also completed studies in creative education. Blumenthal was an actress for many years; she performed with the Cameri Theater and with a number of experimental theater groups. She also participated in a project using acting therapy for children with special needs. Over the years, Blumenthal has published short stories in literary journals such as Proza, Iton 77 and Mosnayim. She has been awarded the ACUM Gold Quill Prize (2001). I Called Him Grandpa Pegasus is her second novel.

Ouziel Blumenthal’s first novel: Invention, Memory, has been published in Greek (Exandas).

Two women, who remain nameless throughout the novel, carry on an intensive dialogue for several decades. They tell the story of their friendship, their adolescence and respective lives against the backdrop of changes taking place in Israeli society. Their words conceal a search for identity and a strenuous attempt to carve their personal voice out of the collective one. Both are the only daughters of Holocaust survivors, but their backgrounds are very different, representing different types of Israeliness. One of them, dark-haired and from a Sephardic family, has musical talent and dreams of a career as a singer and actress on Broadway. The other, with fair hair and Ashkenazi parents, is an outstanding student aspiring to succeed in mathematics. They meet at a prestigious Tel Aviv high school in the late 1950s, and keep up their friendship even after the brunette drops out and their paths diverge—mentally as well as physically—in ways that only deepen with time. Significantly, the two women still need one another, have reservations about each other, and at times only seem to truly exist through the other’s eyes.

This is a novel about youthful ambitions and their downfall, about the sweet dream of taking to the sky like Pegasus, the winged horse, and the sad awakening when they fall to the earth of reality.

One of the best books I have read recently... [It has] sweeping power... The writer spreads a colorful carpet of changing relationships—a keystone of fine novels—and arouses many thoughts in the reader’s mind.

Haaretz

A delicate tale, very beautiful. As a novel of adolescence and identity, it is truly moving.

IDF Radio
Judith Rotem was born in Budapest, Hungary. As a baby, she was taken on the “Kastner train,” 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, wrote many books and articles, and ghost-wrote a number of autobiographies for Holocaust survivors. Rotem has published six novels, a collection of stories, a non-fiction book and a book for children. She has been awarded the Prime Minister’s Prize (2002), the Book Publishers Association’s Gold Prize (2004) and the Ramat Gan Prize (2010).

Selected books have been published in Italian, German, English and Hungarian.

Shulamit arrives in Berlin with her husband Emmanuel to work in a Jewish old-age home on the shore of Lake Wannsee. The couple is from Jerusalem, where they belong to a closed ultra-Orthodox Jewish community. They have run up debts marrying off their four daughters, and see the stay in Germany as an opportunity to improve their financial situation. But Emmanuel is shocked by the very different way of life and returns to Israel, leaving Shulamit behind to cope on her own. Freed from her husband’s stifling presence, Shulamit builds herself a full and satisfying new life. In the world that now opens up before her, she also finds love with a Czech-born German physician, Dr. Ulrich Eckhardt, and learns of the suffering of the Volksdeutsche, the ethnic Germans living outside Germany after World War II.

Shulamit’s story is interwoven with that of her elderly mother, Lily, whom Emmanuel sends from Jerusalem to keep an eye on his wife, but who becomes her confidante. Hungarian-born Lily, a cool and coquettish mother, has never before revealed her past. But now she tells Shulamit and Ulrich the traumatic story of her life as an orphan who was sexually abused by her uncle. He and his wife abandoned her in Budapest and fled to America, leaving her to the cruel fate that awaited Hungary’s Jews.

With wisdom, courage and sensitivity, Judith Rotem spins the webs of relationships between mother and daughter, man and woman, Jew and German.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Captivating, jolting, consoling.
Author Haim Be’er, Haaretz
I read it without stopping… Life circles within life circles, and the impossible becomes possible.
Author Shulamit Lapid, Haaretz
A multi-layered book that… widens out into national, international and transcendent spheres. Realism at its best.
Ziva Shamir, Haaretz
Yizhak Laor

Ecce Homo
[Behold the Man]

a novel

In this acclaimed novel, Adam Lotem, a 52-year-old general in the Israel Defense Forces, is in a sanatorium after having a stroke. In powerful prose, Laor takes us back through the events that brought him there.

At the time of the first Gulf War in 1991, Adam slowly realizes that the power he wields is an illusion, and that he, like any ordinary soldier, is only a pawn. This is painfully evident during the war itself when the Israeli army, ordered not to retaliate, is forced to sit idle. But it also extends to his personal life, for he has sacrificed family, children, love. And now he has no faith in his military mission.

His attitude starts to change when he meets the beautiful, smart Shulamit, with a sharp sense of humor. It is the first time that Adam falls in love with a woman rather than a girl (or a young female soldier). She increases his feeling that his career is meaningless; she also arouses his greatest fear: sexual failure. What is more, Adam's main project in the military has been to set up special undercover counter-terror units in case of a Palestinian uprising. The project has succeeded beyond expectation and brought him great fame. But his success becomes a source of shame when he meets the bereaved father of one of his soldiers, accidentally shot by his comrades because he was dressed as a Palestinian. Adam then creates a secret project—“The Divine Comedy”—that will annihilate his entire past. His plan is to gather all the undercover units he has set up and trained, and lead them to the greatest fiasco in modern military history.

Laor's novel is a challenging and politically courageous satirical novel.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

One of the most daring parodies of the sabra-soldier ever written in Hebrew.

Haaretz

A masterpiece … The most relentlessly honest, brutally insightful and politically brave Hebrew novel since Shabtai.

Author Anton Shammas

A magnificent novel.

Yedioth Ahronoth

Yizhak Laor, poet, novelist, essayist and playwright, was born in Pardes Hanna, Israel, in 1948. He received his PhD in theater and literature from Tel Aviv University, and writes editorials and literary reviews for the Hebrew daily Haaretz. In 1972, Laor was jailed for refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories, and his leftist opinions, expressed in his work, have continually nettled Israel's mainstream establishment.

In 2005, Laor founded and became editor of Mita'am – a Review of Literature and Radical Thought, which has since become a major arena for intellectual debate in Israel.

Laor has published many collections of poetry, as well as novels, short stories, essays and a play. Among his literary awards: the Prime Minister’s Prize twice (1991; 2001), the Bernstein Prize for Poetry (1992), the Hebrew Literature Award (1994), the Moses Award (1998) and the Amichai Prize for Poetry (2007).

Ecce Homo has been published in German (Unionsverlag).
Edith Zack

Travels with Vera

a novel

Tel Aviv, Matar, 2011. 213 pp.

Vera’s parents came to Israel after World War II, bringing with them their small daughter who, they hoped, would console them for the loss of their earlier families in the Holocaust. This is a heavy burden for young Vera to carry, but it also toughens her. With them is also her mother’s elder daughter, Annika, the only surviving child of her previous life. Vera’s parents and Annika are still haunted by those terrible years, with her mother continuing to search for her lost children and relatives, planting fears and nightmares in her little daughter. Small wonder that Vera wants to be someone else: not the child of an aging, sickly woman who looks like her grandmother, but of a young, carefree, normal mother; not living in an immigrant neighborhood full of tormented people, but in a vibrant, forward-looking Israeli surrounding.

Vera’s childhood and adolescence is the story of the Holocaust’s second generation, who inhabit two worlds. On the one hand, she tries to live like all other youngsters of her age, on the other she internalizes her parents’ past, conveyed to her each evening in small doses as “bedtime stories,” first by her half-sister, then by her mother. A powerful, moving novel, with touches of subtle humor, based on the author’s own life.

PARTIAL ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE

Leaves something of a smile and a deeper understanding of the second generation… A unique book.

Maariv NRG

Spine-tingling and very moving.

Haaretz

An overwhelming book.

Makor Rishon
Tzipora Rozensher Dolan was born in Poland in 1948 and came to Israel two years later. She grew up in an immigrant neighborhood whose residents were mainly Holocaust survivors—like her parents—and refugees. She holds a BA in philosophy and sociology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is a graduate of the Avni Institute of Art and Design in Tel Aviv. Dolan worked for many years as a copywriter in advertising. At present she is a literary editor and ghost writer. She also holds workshops in writing for advertising. Rozensher Dolan has published fiction, a book for children, a play and a screenplay. She has received the Writers’ Association Award (1987) and the ACUM Prize (1990). *We Shall Rest* is her second novel.

*We Shall Rest*, which spans a century and three continents, is the story of Lisa and Chavaleh. Although the two women are a generation apart, their lives run along parallel tracks and meet at times because they are made of the same material: great dreams and ideologies that have let them down, and unsettled accounts with the past.

The stories of Lisa and Chavaleh are skillfully linked with those of other characters—most of them immigrants and refugees from the Holocaust, who long to find new roots, respite and security. But life is by nature the enemy of rest, and the two heroines find themselves buffeted from continent to continent in a constant emotional whirlwind, bitter at having missed—so they think—the most important part of their lives.

But despite the “hard work of living,” *We Shall Rest* expresses a deep affirmation of life, which comes from the author’s love for her characters. This is the novel’s secret charm: although Rozensher Dolan criticizes her characters, she views all their faults—the lies, betrayals, and desertions—as human failings, and therefore forgivable.

*Brilliantly describes our longings for the paradise lost of childhood.*

*Haaretz*

*Illuminates Israeli reality, with its precariousness and pain, in a complex and delicate way.*

*Judges – Acum Prize*

*A fascinating novel about little people...A masterpiece of writing – read it!*

*Hebpsy.com*
Shulamit Lapid was born in Tel Aviv in 1934. She majored in Middle Eastern studies and English literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A former chairperson of the Hebrew Writers’ Association, Lapid is the author of novels, suspense novels, collections of short stories, plays, a book of poetry and books for children and youth. She has received the Prime Minister’s Prize for Literature (1987), the International Theater Institute Award (1988), the German Krimipreis (1996), the Newman Prize and the Book Publishers Association’s Platinum Prize for Nunia (2007).

Her novels and thrillers have been published in 10 languages.

Human Error

Ruth Perlmutter has been in the Mossad her whole working life, has taken part in many hush-hush operations and become a legend in her time. Now retired, she’s running a flourishing travel agency and providing occasional small services to the spy agency. But after her friend Arthur, also a former Mossad agent, is found dead on the Tel Aviv beach, she is asked to re-enlist and investigate. It soon becomes clear that Arthur was murdered and Ruth’s probe leads her to espionage operations that went wrong, to a meeting with a Scottish lover she hasn’t seen for years, and to historic letters written by Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement. Arthur had claimed that the letters were handed to him many years before by an Austrian agent of Jewish descent, but are they authentic or counterfeit? Was Arthur killed because of them? Is there a connection between the letters and a mysterious road accident in which a Jerusalem historian who was examining them lost his life?

Shulamit Lapid, author of the successful Lizzy Badihi series, has once again created an unforgettable female investigator. Ruth Perlmutter may wear unfashionable dresses and prefer plastic bags to luxurious leather ones, but she catches on quickly and has a photographic memory. Her mind is razor-sharp, and no one can fool her, even her comrades in the Mossad who are seen here in a new light.

But Human Error is much more than a suspense story. It is also a novel about people who have risked their lives in the service of their country but have strayed from the straight and narrow path; a novel about a last chance to rectify a mistake and perhaps make a new start.

No reviews available yet.

For previous books: As a Broken Vessel brims with humor and wit... Lapid succeeds in maintaining the suspense and tension right up to the surprising end.

Die Welt

Bait is a rarity that tells us much about contemporary Israeli society.

Libération

There is nothing stereotyped in Local Paper... No inspectors in raincoats, no policemen skulking in cars, only a 30-year-old journalist with huge flat feet, big breasts—and a virgin to boot!

Cosmopolitan
Mishka Ben-David

Final Stop, Algiers

suspense

A thrilling spy novel, a moving personal drama and the story of a great love that takes place against the backdrop of daring operations carried out by the Mossad all over the world.

Artist Miki Simhoni loses his girlfriend in a terrorist attack on the eve of his first solo exhibition in Tel Aviv. A short time later, he receives an offer to join the Mossad. A passport belonging to a young Canadian who looks like him has been found by Bedouin in the sands of the Sinai desert and Simhoni is asked to take on his identity. He is then co-opted to a Mossad squad operating in Europe and the Middle East to prevent terror attacks and put a stop to Iran’s nuclear project. The role presents him with challenges that he could hardly have imagined before, but he is torn between loyalty to his job and identification with its goals on the one hand, and the desire to fulfill himself as an artist on the other. His predicament worsens in Canada, where he is building his cover story, because he falls in love with Niki, a beautiful girl with a Japanese father. The two try to build a life together despite the difficulties; eventually Niki also joins the Mossad, and the two work as a couple to prepare for a major operation in Algiers.

But all of this time, Simhoni is worried about the mysterious fate of his Canadian double. Who is he? And how is he linked to a book of poems found in his home, that describe the end of the State of Israel? The dramatic relationship between Simhoni, the Canadian and Niki gradually intensifies before coming to a surprising end.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

His familiarity with Israel’s Mossad is effective… in a novel that contains many surprising twists and a taut suspenseful plot.

Israel Hayom

A gifted author. Ben David has a sensitive eye for human situations… More than a thriller, highly recommended and enjoyable.

Global-Report

A well-made weave of a professional, suspenseful spy tale and fine literature at its best.

Gibor Tarbut

Mishka Ben-David was born in 1952 in Israel. He holds an MA in comparative literature from the University of Wisconsin and a PhD in Hebrew literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Ben-David served for 12 years in the Mossad; he has also been the principal of a Jerusalem high school and director of a community center, as well as lecturing at the Open University.

Ben-David has published four bestselling spy thrillers. He has also published novels, short stories, and research studies. An Israeli-German-Canadian co-production led by Bavaria Pictures is now adapting his spy novels for an international TV series. Ben-David has been awarded the Harry Harshon Prize twice (1976; 1977), the Rabinovich Foundation Award (1984), the Book Publishers Association’s Gold Prize for each of his thrillers and the Prime Minister’s Prize (2002).

Ben-David’s previous novel, Forbidden Love in St. Petersburg, has been published in Turkish (Koton).
Hadara Lazar

Six Singular Figures
Understanding the Conflict: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate

non-fiction

This is the story of six people who lived and worked in Palestine in the 1930s; remarkable nonconformists who tried to find a solution to the deteriorating relations between Jews and Arabs, the two peoples living under British Mandate rule. Some took an active part in dialogues between the two peoples and believed that it was possible to live together, although they knew that the chances were slim. When World War II broke out, the contacts ended.

Two Jews—Manya Shochat and Judah Leib Magnes; two Arabs—Mussa Alami and George Antonius; and two Britons—Arthur Wauchope and Orde Wingate, left their distinctive mark on the events of that period, when the Arabs of Palestine realized that they might become a minority under the Jews, whose numbers were growing because of the persecution in Europe.

Hadara Lazar has spoken to the descendants of these six individuals and has explored archives and libraries, in Israel and abroad, to produce a book whose personal voice places it squarely in the middle ground between history and literature. Succinctly and with spellbinding narrative skill, she describes the uniqueness, the inner strife, the controversial actions, and the extraordinary, sometimes tragic, lives of her six subjects. And through their portraits, a turbulent and fateful period emerges from the past, during which it might have been possible to prevent what has happened and is still happening between Jews and Arabs today.

Hadara Lazar was born and grew up in Haifa. She holds a BA in history from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and also studied literature at the Sorbonne, Paris. During the First Intifada, she worked with B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization. Lazar has published several novels and two non-fiction books. She is also the translator of Sartre’s major novel, Nausea, into Hebrew.

Her book, Out of Palestine: The Making of Modern Israel, was recently published in English (US, Atlas).

Each figure is drawn with a wise and loving hand and each one represents a personal path which, if we had followed it, might have made our history less violent. An enthralling, captivating book.

Amos Oz, Haaretz

Lazar shows impressive literary ability and profound historical understanding in bringing these figures to life... Significant for our times.

Abraham B. Yehoshua, Haaretz

Lazar’s talent as an observer and writer comes through yet again... All six figures are intriguing... Taken together, the six chapters reflect the coat of many colors that was Mandatory Palestine.

Historian Itamar Rabinovich

PHOTO © SHARON BECK
Hamutal Bar-Yosef

Selected Poetry

Without cries of triumph or pain; with clarity, restraint and honesty, Hamutal Bar-Yosef has cleared her own path in Israeli poetry...

On the one hand, a sense of life stamped into calamity, deficiency and vulnerability; on the other, a great lust for life... grasping at each everyday detail that holds some support or sustenance. [Yet] Bar-Yosef’s poetry reaches crystalline, pure moments of authentic equilibrium... With a musicality that fluctuates between grace and reticence, these poems bring the reader large and small bundles of life that are harsh and stormy, but also illuminated by the light of a sensitive, mature intelligence.

(Dan Miron, from the Afterword to Selected and New Poems by Hamutal Bar-Yosef, 2011)

Sonnet of the Sun-Dried Tomato

Supine in a pan of poetry as golden as the olive oil spilling over me
I do not move. I just swell gently, supine within the goodness.

But soon I’ll want to be between the biting teeth, sprinkled over the tongue, over the taste buds, dripping with saliva from the lips.

Please tell me how to stay bathed in poetry, not batting an eyelash, moving no muscle, accomplishing nothing, languidly,

like this sun-dried tomato unconsumed now curled in the jar with garlic and dill so ignorant of the knife, the fork, the spoon.

from: Night Morning
Trans. by Rachel Tzvia Back

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Bar-Yosef writes passionately and wisely about the convergence of historical tragedy and personal suffering.

Poet Grace Shulman

I read – slowly, like sipping a strong liqueur – two or three poems each evening and marvel at the precision, the acuity, and the (rare) blend of warmth and irony.

Author Amos Oz

Sensuous and sensual. Without a single superfluous word.

Haaretz

Hamutal Bar-Yosef was born in Kibbutz Tel Yosef in 1940. After having four children, she received her Ph.D in Hebrew Literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1985. Since then, she has taught and been Professor of Hebrew literature at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She has also been Visiting Professor and Fellow at the Universities of Paris, Cambridge, and Moscow, at Columbia and at Penn University (USA). Bar-Yosef has published many collections of poetry as well as academic books and articles on Hebrew literature. She also translates poetry from English, French and Russian. Bar-Yosef has received the ACUM Prize (1978), the Tel Aviv Prize (1984), the Jerusalem Prize for Poetry (1997), the WIZO Prize for Creative Women (1999), the President’s Prize (2002), and the Brenner Prize for Poetry (2005).

Selections of her poetry have been published in English (Sheep Meadow Press) and Russian (St. Petersburg, Academic Project).
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