NEW BOOKS FROM ISRAEL
FALL 2013

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Dror Burstein was born in 1970 in Netanya, Israel, and lives in Tel Aviv. He first became a fully qualified lawyer, then he left the legal field and started studying literature. He received a PhD in Hebrew literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2001 and now teaches there as well as at Tel Aviv University. He also edits programs for Israel Radio’s music station and writes literary and art reviews. Burstein has been awarded the Jerusalem Prize for Literature (1997), the Ministry of Science and Culture Prize for Poetry (2002), the Bernstein Prize (2005) and the Prime Minister’s Prize (2006).

His novel, *Kin*, has been published in French (*Actes Sud*), Italian (*Riuniti*), English (*Dalkey Archive*) and German (*Wallstein*). *Netanya* is forthcoming in English (*Dalkey Archive*).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

Sun’s Sister

a novel

One wintry day, attorney Uri Ullman comes to his father Amos’s home in Jerusalem to find out why his sister Dorit killed herself the year before. Dorit, ten years older than Uri, wrote poetry; she’d also suffered from depression for many years. What triggered her suicide was kept a secret from Uri—he was having a kidney transplant at the time, but now he is determined to get an answer. Yet can one answer such a question? Apparently, their father was responsible: an artist and amateur archaeologist, a selfish man with unusual verbal skills, he was to give his kidney for his son, but got out of it at the last minute. And Uri agonizes about betraying his sensitive sister by not protecting her.

While probing for the family secret, Uri calls up lost memories. He recalls images of his childhood, describes his special relationship with Dorit, and speaks about his unfulfilled desire to leave his lucrative work as a lawyer and become a literary scholar. Finally, at the end of the novel, the family secret is revealed in a shocking disclosure.

More than an attempt to comprehend death, this lovely, intelligent novel portrays life’s pain and its beauty, exploring the covert relations between us and the people who are supposed to be closest to us. With wisdom and delicacy, but also with wild humor, Burstein recreates the wonderful intimacy between a brother and sister, tells us about a remarkable encounter with an astronaut who has walked on the moon, and shares the innumerable moments of grace and magic of which life is composed.

*Sun’s Sister* is forthcoming in French (*Actes Sud*).

Burstein is a literary genius...His writing is complex and simple, eloquent and minimalist, with a structure that is both tremulous and stable.

*Haaretz*

Burstein is one of the most brilliant and exciting writers active today.

*Time Out*

An innovative and uniquely significant book.

*Makor Rishon*
Adam Coman was born in 1987 in the United States and came to Israel at the age of two. He has a BA in history and general studies from Tel Aviv University. At age 15, Coman became a musician, playing guitar, singing in a band and working as a sound technician. Later, he brought out two solo discs. In 2010, he left Israel with his dog and traveled on foot and by train throughout Europe, staying a year in Cracow, Poland, and another in Bucharest, Romania. *The Sound of Many Tiny Feet Angrily Stomping the Face of the Earth* is his first novel.

A young drifter from Tel Aviv goes traveling to Cracow, Berlin, Paris and other European cities—with his dog. But his wanderings don’t help him cope with how to live in a meaningless, disappointing world, and even less how to succeed with girls. Lonely, drunk and confused, he nonetheless tries to write a book about a friend who just got back from New York and is living off his parents. But this fails, just like his previous attempts to write about a promising, interesting young man.

The second part of the novel focuses on a disgruntled article in which the narrator—a fictional Adam Coman—attacks Berlin as imagined by young ‘Tel Avivis’ who dream of fame and success. Coman mocks this apparently utopian city, and arouses a series of gut reactions, including an angry piece called “Critique of Pure Hatred” by a local critic. And this is only one stop in a grotesque story filled with confrontations and scandals, including Coman’s pathetic attempts to have sex with the opinionated Dafna. To her, he is “a miserable worm” and she rejects him with contempt.

A young, trenchant work by a new and intriguing voice.

Exceedingly cool – like Woody Allen and David Foster Wallace. Coman writes with overwhelming charisma; he has a flair for comic timing, and a mischievous creative wildness.

*Haaretz*

One of the very few books that are the voice of their generation.

*Yedioth Ahronoth*

A wild, sweeping, tempestuous work.

*Israel Hayom*

Has a lot of charm, is amusing and clever [but also] mature and self-confident.

*Time Out*
Kobi Ovadia was born in 1982 in Dimona, Israel. He graduated in film studies and screenwriting from Minshar College of Art in Tel Aviv. At present, he is writing a soap series entitled Hear, O Israel for commercial Israeli TV, and is working on his second novel, 2007. He lives in Jaffa.

**Kobi Ovadia**

_The Kid Who Liked Dynasty and Wrote a Soap_

a novel


A heart-breaking novel of growing up—wild, funny and disturbing. Motti Biton, a 13-year-old boy, lives with his dysfunctional family in Yeruham, a town in the Negev desert. It is 1989. Motti’s mother has been in deep depression for two years after losing her job at a textile plant; their father has disappeared; Motti’s unbalanced older sister lies all day on the living room sofa contemplating suicide; and his younger sister, now doing her army service, has to take care of the whole family and its livelihood. To escape from his unhappy life, Motti writes a soap opera like “Dynasty,” the series that he watches on TV and his only pleasure of the week. But the characters in Motti’s soap—written in school notebooks hidden under his mattress—are Sima, the owner of the textile plant that fired his mother, her relatives, and the rich, powerful figures that surround her. The guest star of the series is the famous Israeli actress Gila Almagor, who plays Sima’s mother. And in Motti’s glittering fantasy, he himself is the writer, director, producer and presenter.

But parallel to these glamorous TV lives, his own family drama closes in on him, accompanied by adolescent anxieties over looming manhood. And so, to save himself, Motti adds his own family life into his soap opera. Truth and lies, imagination and reality mingle as Motti writes the last season of his soap, his life’s work.

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This novel introduces characters that have never been seen or heard before in Hebrew literature.

**Haaretz**

A clever, convincing novel that grabs the readers and does not let him go.

**Ynet**

Motti Biton is terribly talented.

**Bananot**

Madness seizes control of words, of the reader... A tough, disturbing, riveting book.

**Salonna**
Nir Ratzkovsky

Beloved, Daughter

a novel
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2013. 334 pp.

Nir Ratzkovsky’s unique novel was inspired by one of the most famous correspondences in French literature: the letters that the Marquise de Sévigné, a brilliant 17th century noblewoman, wrote to her beloved daughter. It also revives the colorful time of Louis XIV, the Sun King, with its literary salons, palaces and courtesans, wars and rebellions.

In April 1696, the Marquise de Sévigné dies at the age of 70 while on a visit to her daughter, Françoise de Grignan, in Provence. Two weeks later, her son Charles receives the sad news at his chateau in Brittany and immediately sets out. When he arrives, he finds something that he was never meant to see—the hundreds of letters that his mother wrote to his sister for 25 years, letters of obsessive and unrequited love. When Charles, Françoise and her husband read the letters, they revisit their past and confront each other—Charles, who always had to make do with second place; his sister, suffocated by her mother’s stifling love, and her husband, who finds himself trapped by emotions that he cannot grasp.

Ratzkovsky cleverly combines fiction and history to create vibrant psychological and emotional dramas that are as relevant today as they were 350 years ago.

Nir Ratzkovsky was born in Haifa, Israel, in 1973. He studied biology at Tel Aviv University, and received an MA in molecular biology. He then moved to Paris where he lived for three years. When he returned to Israel, he became a literary translator from French to Hebrew. To date he has translated over 20 books of classical and contemporary French literature, including Jonathan Littell’s The Kindly Ones, Irène Némirovsky’s Suite française, Simone de Beauvoir’s Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter, Daniel Pennac, and many more. He is also the editor of Paris-Dakar, a series of translations of French-language literature. Ratzkovsky is involved in several projects for the theater, and is artistic director of the yearly festival Livres en scène.

Beloved, Daughter is his first novel.

The most surprising and original, the most illuminating and confusing, the most intriguing and most amusing book... A brilliant novel.

Haaretz

A brilliant, refined contemporary writer has joined forces with a classical, polished authoress... A lovely literary feat, clever and entralling.

Makor Rishon

A magical literary miracle... A captivating story, full of vitality, about the power of love.

Ynet

An intriguing and witty tale.

Time Out
Klil Zisapel

The Zionist Comedy

a novel

A young Tel Aviv woman tells the story of her life so far: first as an infant and as a schoolgirl, lazy but obedient; then as a teenager, a little wayward and rebellious but still compliant; later as a sensuous young woman, taking her fill of life’s pleasures until her military service intervenes, a bit inconvenient. But the two-year stint passes quickly and she is again as free as a bird, lusting and lusted after, winging her way to foreign lands. But now, issues that she had only glimpsed from the protective environment of home loom large, and force her to think. She does not like what she sees; she is obliged to react.

This is a very contemporary Israeli story. Its protagonists are the children of salt-of-the-earth parents, they themselves the second generation of this Israeli nobility, a whole generation that demanded peace but must go to war. The narrator-heroine, Klil Zisapel’s alter ego, is part of this generation. But as these youngsters come of age, awareness strikes and they become critical of the political, social and moral deterioration of Israel between the Oslo Agreements of 1994 and the Second Lebanon War of 2006.

Zisapel has chosen to express her anger and frustration in a unique and audacious literary manner. She draws her inspiration from Dante’s Divine Comedy, but even more from the Bible, using its linguistic tools, its rhetoric and its patterns in order to weave her own secular work of art. The result is a subversive and insolent text that both wails and laughs, forgives and fulminates over our agonizing situation here and now.
Adva Bolle

Things that I Know about R

3 novellas
Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2012. 222 pp.

Rachel, married with a daughter, has not fulfilled her artistic ambitions and does not function well as a mother. She has a kind and understanding husband, but when she accidentally meets Shaul, a former lecturer and lover from her student days and the father of her child, she leaves family and security in order to rekindle their relationship. Determined to be again the desirable young woman and passionate artist that she once was, she follows Shaul to Toronto, only to realize he is a burnt-out old man.

Na’ama, the protagonist of the second novella, is a lonely 11-year-old girl who lives with her family in a decrepit, overcrowded housing project. She is captivated by Rivka, an elegant neighbor with old European manners who becomes a mother figure to her, giving her hope that one day she will escape from her drab surroundings. But Na’ama soon discovers that the woman she worships is just like everyone else, and her dream of refinement and beauty is shattered.

In the third story, Natalie comes to Tel Aviv from an outlying area with her boyfriend Yossi, a talented but unambitious hairdresser. An energetic young woman, she makes Yossi’s dream come true by setting up a successful hair salon which she manages with skill. Yossi becomes a celebrity, but Natalie does not reap the marriage proposal she’d expected.

The three women in Bolle’s mature and discerning book all struggle with frustration and a sense of the inadequacy of their lives; all three seek recognition through the eyes of another, but in each case this person lets them down.

Three marvelous novellas, among the loveliest I have read in recent years... with sharp and amusing human judgments.

Author Judith Katzir, Globes

A really good writer.

Haaretz

Nothing can prepare one for the delicacy and intimacy that is created in this book.

Calcalist
Uriya Shavit

The Dead Man

a novel


Barak Lavie, an unsuccessful businessman whose marriage is falling apart, is on a flight back from London when he sees his obituary in the newspaper. He immediately suspects a trick by a rival trying to settle a score, but soon discovers that nobody recognizes him—not even his family or his dog. It is a bizarre and hair-raising situation; he even attends his own funeral, watches the burial rites and listens to the lukewarm eulogies. Now, as a live dead man, without identity, money or home, he tries to survive on the streets of Tel Aviv. But the city is also full of surprises: it has been hit by an earthquake and the results can be seen everywhere.

Barak belongs nowhere—like a modern Robinson Crusoe living on the edge of society, he contemplates his old life from a new vantage point. Now he has the opportunity to live his life in the right way and to fall in love with his wife all over again. And he almost manages.

This is an adventure story: sometimes exciting, sometimes sad, sometimes hilariously funny, and we read it with bated breath. But it also a philosophical novel that gives new meaning to great myths of Western civilization, from the Odyssey to Seinfeld, from Kafka to Hitchcock; a witty tale about illusions in family life, about the bourgeois lifestyle, but mainly about the meaning of life, death and the secrets that lie between them.

Uriya Shavit was born in Tel Aviv in 1975. After completing his military service in an elite intelligence unit, he joined the daily Haaretz, where he worked as an international affairs analyst and editor, and a senior writer for the weekend magazine. In 2006 he received his PhD in Islamic history from Tel Aviv University, and is now a senior lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies there. Shavit specializes in the study of Islamic law and politics, and has published six books on these subjects with Israeli and English-language publishers. He is also the author of Israel’s best-selling Guide for University Students, and has written four children’s books. The Dead Man is his first novel.

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

Offers a surprising twist to a familiar scenario... As in Kafka and Gogol, there’s no wondering ‘how it happened’ but a hopeless acceptance of the inevitable... The modern incarnation of homo faber.

Time Out

Its power and uniqueness lie in its many levels... Beneath the hectic atmosphere lies a contemplative tone that inspires philosophical and metaphysical questions.

Achbar Ha’Ir
Born in Haifa in 1963, Judith Katzir studied literature and cinema at Tel Aviv University. At present, she is an editor at Hakibbutz Hameuchad/Siman Kriah Publishing House and teaches creative writing. Katzir is a bestselling author in Israel. In addition to literary prizes for individual stories, Katzir has received the Book Publishers Association’s Gold and Platinum Book Prizes, the Prime Minister’s Prize twice (1996, 2007) and the French WIZO Prize for Matisse Has the Sun in His Belly (2004). Her work has been published in 11 languages, among them: English (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), Italian (Mondadori), German (btb; Bertelsmann), French (Gallimard/Joelle Losfeld), Russian (Text), Dutch (Vassallucci), Chinese (Anhui).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

Judith Katzir

Tzilla

a novel


For 25 years, Tzilla lived both with Lazar, the husband with whom she had five children, and with her lover Hanan, ten years her junior. After World War I, they moved from place to place in Palestine, and the children lived with two fathers. In fact, it was “Uncle Hanan” who raised them, provided their education and brought in a large part of the family’s livelihood.

Lazar was the first to kiss Tzilla and she innocently thought that because of that she had to marry him even though she didn’t love him. They were married after the pogrom in Odessa in 1905, in which Tzilla lost an eye while Lazar stood by helplessly. But in Eretz Yisrael, to which the couple migrate, the naïve young girl becomes a free and dominant woman, mother to a dynasty of strong women whose men-folk are weak and spineless.

Based on the memoirs of Katzir’s great-grandmother and on Hanan’s diary, Tzilla weaves the saga of four generations as they interface with the history of Israel. Katzir—who also figures in this saga—has written the novel of her life, both because it is her longest, most complex work to date and because only her panoramic gaze could trace the remarkable Tzilla down through the generations and tackle the family myth.

A vibrant narrative... Any man born to a woman, or who has one for a partner, should read this book.

President Shimon Peres

An expansive and touching novel... [with] a masterly structure... Lovely and heart-warming.

Author Amos Oz

Tzilla needs no flattery. The best-seller lists gauge the lively, unequivocal love of its readers.

Yedioth Ahronoth

By far the best and most mature of Katzir’s works... A great achievement.

Makor Rishon
Yehoshua Kenaz, one of Israel’s leading novelists, was born in Petah Tikva, Israel, in 1937. He studied philosophy and Romance languages at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Kenaz is on the editorial staff of the daily Haaretz and is a translator of French classics into Hebrew. All his books are outstanding bestsellers in Israel. Kenaz has received the Alterman Prize (1991), the Newman Prize (1992), the Agnon Prize (1993), the ACUM Prize (1994) and the Bialik Prize (1997). In 2007, his novel Infiltration was nominated one of the ten most important books since the creation of the State of Israel. A film based on the book was released to critical acclaim at the Jerusalem Film Festival 2010. Kenaz’s books have been published in 10 languages, among them: English (Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch; Steerforth), French (Stock; Actes Sud), German (Suhrkamp; Luchterhand), Italian (Mondadori). The Way to the Cats is forthcoming in Spanish (Leviatan).

**Cold Choir**

short stories

Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2013. 159 pp.

“...at school, there are those who are successful and good looking and those who are a bit pathetic. I am neither,” said Yehoshua Kenaz in an interview before his book was published. “I am the one on the sidelines, who watches and tells the story,” looking at the highfliers, but mostly at the suffering of the little guys.

In the title story, he wasn’t allowed to join the school choir and more than fifty years later he still feels the hurt of being excluded. In other stories: a down-and-out waiter asks the narrator to lend him his apartment for an intimate tryst (just for an hour), because it is his only chance to experience love; a clerk hangs his death notice on the door of his office asking his colleagues not to make condolence visits; from his window, a young man sees a fellow student hang himself, but does nothing; a teacher whose students have humiliated him takes cruel and violent vengeance against the weakest child in the class.

Kenaz writes with his superb, well-known restraint about people’s indifference to the suffering of those not in the limelight.

*Cold Choir* and *Infiltration* are forthcoming in Italian (*Giuntina*).
Yishai Sarid

Naomi’s Kindergarten

a novel

Naomi has run her kindergarten for almost 25 years in an old Tel Aviv neighborhood near the sea—an island of tranquility among the shiny new high-rises. And there, she heaps love on the children and teaches them to be creative, to appreciate beauty and love nature. But this routine is disrupted when an architect buys the land on which the kindergarten stands and tells Naomi to vacate it immediately—he is going to tear it down and build a luxury complex for the rich and famous.

In the dramatic year that follows, Naomi wages a desperate struggle for her world and beliefs. In her personal life, too, there are rifts and tensions as she gets closer to her artist son, an introverted young man who had grown away from her. Now he surprisingly shows an interest in the kindergarten, winning the children’s affection and even discovering love.

Naomi’s Kindergarten is the story of an ordinary woman, neither sophisticated nor cunning, who is persecuted but refuses to break or give in. A touching novel about an unforgettable heroine with a sense of humor, whose fight for simplicity faces off with trendy commercialism and ostentation.

A finely-tuned little book that reaches into your heart and is in no rush to leave… Naomi will captivate you and make you fall in love with her.

Yedioth Ahronoth

Sarid is very gifted at documenting Israel’s social groups and subcultures. I was riveted by his book.

Makor Rishon

Sarid’s book combines a struggle against hardship and solitude with a flowing adventure story… Talented writing that maintains interest and excitement.

Calcalist

Yishai Sarid

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 as an attorney in the private sector. He also contributes articles to the Hebrew press. His previous 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 to critical acclaim in German (Kein und Aber; Piper), French (Actes Sud), English (Europa, USA; UK), Danish (Ferdinand), Chinese (Hunan People’s Pub.), Italian (edizione e/o), Catalan (ClubEditor), Turkish (Koton) and Spanish (Random House, Mexico).

Click here FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Eitan Russo, a strong and introverted man, returns to his childhood home in an old agricultural village after years of estrangement. Two brothers from a neighboring Arab village, Baseel and Majd, help him set up a horse farm together with his girlfriend Alona. It is summer 1991, and the day starts with Eitan trying to break in Barb, a beautiful wild stallion that Baseel and Majd have given him as a gift.

From the outset it is clear that something terrible will happen in the course of the day, and the plot is built as a high-tension, passion-filled drama, with present events dictated by what happened decades before. For despite his attempt to avoid his destiny, Eitan repeats errors made by his father, Bezalel Russo.

As the story of the past interweaves with the present, dark repressed secrets gradually emerge. Back then in the early 1940s, Bezalel Russo and his wife Ahuva, a loving couple, came and settled in the village, had two sons and made their living growing avocados. But one day, an Arab man disappeared in the avocado grove under mysterious circumstances, and the Russos’ life was wrecked. Bezalel left home and died of heart failure a year later. Ahuva was left a widow, and the younger son emigrated to Australia. Eitan, the firstborn, has never spoken of what happened in his childhood and it is only now, forty years after the trauma, that he confronts his past.

With a sweeping intensity, Ayelet Shamir binds together the two distant periods with their enthralling characters and carries the reader on to the dramatic denouement.
Yeshayahu Koren was born in Kfar Saba, Israel, in 1940, and currently lives in Zichron Yaakov. He studied philosophy and Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Koren has published a novel and four collections of stories and novellas. He has been awarded the Bialik Prize (2008) and the Brenner Prize (2013) for Two Palms and a Word.

Koren’s novel, Funeral at Noon, has been published in English (Steerforth), French (Actes Sud) and German (S. Fischer).

Koren’s stories mature slowly, like fine wine lying in cellars for long years before seeing the light... Superb narrative craftsmanship.

Haaretz

Koren’s book has been given a sweepingly warm welcome in the literary world. There is wall-to-wall agreement about the quality of his prose and the rarity of his unique, modest style.

Ynet

Refined prose, which has an intense, emotional, heart-searing effect... A wonderful book.

Kol Israel

Yeshayahu Koren

Two Palms and a Word

WINNER OF THE BRENNER PRIZE, 2013

Novella & stories

The main novella unfolds in a small farming town in the second half of the 1940s, a crucial time in Israel's history. Yulik, a nine-year-old boy, is imaginative, introverted and different from his peers. He is curious about the world, but mainly about his parents, immigrants from Eastern Europe who are trying to survive in a difficult world. Interestingly, the narrator shows little concern for the historic events of the time (although fragments steal in occasionally); on the other hand, he shapes the details of their daily lives with Flaubertian precision. Yulik's father, a laborer, owns a mule and wagon and makes his living by hauling goods and doing farm work; his more educated mother is drawn to music and books, but has to work plucking chickens to supplement the family income. Yet within their drab existence, they hold on to a vague, silent dream of change and release.

The novella and short stories are written as a series of pictures, in photographic technique. The characters don’t speak much, and Yulik doesn’t explain or interpret, but the reader senses the tensions and understands. We grasp, for example, that his mother travels to Tel Aviv to have an abortion. But the emotional climax of the book comes in the final, autobiographical story. Here, the narrator takes leave of his parents, unifying the stories into a single work whose unspoken title is: love.
Edna Shemesh

The Sand Dunes of Paris

a novel
Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2013. 213 pp.

Albert, a young Algerian Jew, lives with his family in a small village on the edge of the vast dunes of the Sahara. They are among the last remains of Algeria’s Jewish community, and Albert, aware that he has no future there, leaves his parents and the girl he loves and flies off to Paris, where he will work in his uncle’s greengrocery in the Marais quarter and start a new life. One night, sighs of love rise in the air, disturbing his sleep and arousing his lust for the unknown girl on the other side of the wall. Her name is Anais and Albert knows that he will find no rest until he meets her. Meanwhile, he lives the routine of his Uncle Mordoch’s business, which is a world unto itself, and although he misses his homeland—especially his young brother—he tries to learn the ways of Paris and integrate into its volatile life.

With great sensitivity and subtlety, the big city is described through the eyes of the young immigrant, and the novel dwells on the complex, vulnerable lives of migrants in Paris—Arabs and Jews, North Africans and black sub-Saharans. Edna Shemesh paints a fine portrait of Albert’s uprooted existence, fluctuating between quiet despair and cautious hope. But when he finally starts loving his new life and feeling more settled, a murder occurs in the greengrocery and upsets his world again.

Edna Shemesh was born in Romania in 1953 and came to Israel with her family when she was five. She holds a BA in English literature and theater studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Shemesh has worked as a lecturer, and as a Hebrew-English-Hebrew translator; she is also a freelance journalist for the Hebrew and English-language press in Israel. Her short stories have been published in a number of literary periodicals. Shemesh has received the Women Writers of the Mediterranean Award sponsored by UNESCO (France, 2002), and won first prize in a short story competition held by the literary journal Iton 77 (2004). Her short story collection Amstel was shortlisted for the prestigious Sapir Literary Prize (2008).

An interesting and overwhelming read… A rich and intriguing story.

Ynet

Shemesh’s lovely book is a love poem to Paris… A work of art.

Haaretz

A stimulating and intriguing book…You’ll be in suspense and anticipation for what comes next.

Aleh Rehovot
Daniel Cohen-Sagi

German Love

a novel

In the summer of 1970, Nella abandons her husband and son and travels to Munich in search of a lost dream. Although she was saved by leaving Europe on the eve of World War II, she can no longer stand her drab life in Tel Aviv, and over the years, she has often escaped by imagining herself talking to the young man she loved as a girl in Prague, by reciting German poetry in the grocery store, taking daily baths, or corresponding with her aunt Ethel, who raises geese in a Czech village. After her flight from that life to Munich, Nella starts again as a successful businesswoman and becomes the partner of a professor of German literature. But she is not happy.

A few years later, Dudo, Nella’s son, who grew up in the shadow of his mother’s moods, arrives in Munich too, and falls passionately in love with Beate, a young German woman. His infatuation creates a chain of tragic events which Shaul, their Israeli son, will try to rectify years later.

Through the story of three characters from the same family who move between Germany and Israel, love and hate, sanity and hallucination, Cohen-Sagi’s novel bares the relationship between Germans and Jews after the war, continuing into the present. The conflicted relationships between the three protagonists—from three different generations—reflect the tension between the two peoples, with the effort to heal expressed through flight into fantasy and imagination. Thus the novel raises the penetrating question: Is normal life possible after the trauma of war?

Daniel Cohen-Sagi was born in Afula, in the Jezreel Valley, in 1943. He holds a BA in journalism and communications from the University of Munich. After his studies, he worked as a program producer, editor and presenter on Israeli radio. During the 1980s and 90s he spent periods of time in the U.S., where he studied strategic thinking and organizational leadership. After his return to Israel, he worked in this field. Cohen-Sagi has published two collections of poetry (one of them in German), and four novels. He lives in Tel-Aviv.

Uncovers very complex and exciting psychological material. A riveting novel... Very sophisticated and thought-provoking.

Goethe Institute

There is a valuable reward in store for readers.

Israel Hayom
Ora Ahimeir

In Search of My Mother’s Secrets

autobiographical novel

Ora Ahimeir knew nothing of her mother Haya’s first marriage—she died of heart disease at age thirty-four—until a chance meeting with a woman in the U.S. exposed the secret: her mother’s first husband was murdered. Another thirty years would go by before a clue led the author, almost like a detective, to unravel her mother’s secret past. Then she sat down and wrote a gripping novel about her, her family, and the Old Yishuv—the Jews of Palestine—in the first half of the 20th century.

The clue, discovered in the Safed museum in Upper Galilee, was an invitation to her mother’s wedding on which someone had written: “Four days after the wedding he was murdered.” David was a Jewish constable in the British Mandate police force, who had come as a pioneer from Hungary; Haya, the 18-year-old bride, came from a respected Hasidic family in Safed. The two young people fell in love, and in spite of her family’s disapproval, they married. This was 1938, the year of the Arab Revolt, and a few days after the wedding David was shot in the back on his way to work, apparently by an Arab. Haya, who had rebelled against her family, was suddenly a widow as well as an outcast in her own hometown, where her tragic fate was seen as punishment for her sins. She moved to Jerusalem and turned over a new leaf, but never really recovered from the love of her youth.

This novel touched my heart… all is drawn with a fine, meticulous and loving hand… The movement between periods and places is beautiful.

Author Amos Oz

A really wonderful story.

Haaretz

A winning novel…A powerful story that would have been sufficient for a totally fictional novel.

Ynet

A gripping documentary narrative

Israel Hayom

Ora Ahimeir was born in Jerusalem in 1941. She studied Hebrew literature and history and has a diploma in business administration from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After working at the Israeli embassy in London and later as attaché for women’s affairs at the Israeli embassy in Washington DC, she was the coordinator of the Prime Minister’s Commission on the status of women in Israel. Ahimeir was one of the founders of the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, and served as its director for 31 years, until 2010. She also initiated and was the editor of many research books and publications on Jerusalem and other subjects, both in Hebrew and in English. Ahimeir is active in public committees for social, cultural and educational causes. In 2011, she received an Honor Citation from the city of Jerusalem for her contribution to the city. In Search of My Mother’s Secrets is her first novel.
Benny Barbash was born in Beersheva in 1951, and currently lives in Tel Aviv. Barbash holds a BA in history from Tel Aviv University. During the 1980s and 90s, he was a leading figure in the Peace Now movement, and was involved in many initiatives, both local and international, to further Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. Barbash 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 7 languages, among them: German (Berlin Verlag; Ullstein; List), French (Zulma; Points), Italian (Giuntina).

His bestselling novel, My First Sony, is forthcoming in Spanish (Blackie Books) and Chinese (Baihuazhou).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

Benny Barbash

Love Hate Envy Friendship
(working title)

a novel
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, forthcoming

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 became religiously observant and gave up everything. Now, he 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 and feed her obsession: on top of a pistol that she didn’t know about, she finds a mysterious box 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 difficult.

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 captivating and amusing read.

No reviews available yet

For Little Big Bang:
Both a profound analysis of contemporary Israeli society, and a fantastical family fresco.
Le Monde

An irresistible political fable.
Le Figaro

Awfully good… A metaphor of modern Israel with all its contradictions.
Der Spiegel
Avirama Golan was born in Israel, in 1950. She studied literature at Tel Aviv University and French literature in Paris. She worked as both correspondent and editor for the daily Davar. In 1991, she moved to Haaretz, where she became senior correspondent on social and cultural affairs and a member of the editorial board. She also hosts a weekly literary magazine on Channel 2 TV. In 2012 she became director of the Center for Urbanism and Mediterranean Culture in Bat Yam. Golan has published novels, non-fiction and children’s books. Golan’s books have been translated to French (Galaade), German (Suhrkamp) and Italian (Giuntina).

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Avirama Golan

A Strange Woman

a novel
Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad / Siman Kriah, forthcoming.

What links Mali, a prominent Tel Aviv attorney, to Slava, an illegal worker from the Ukraine who cleans her house? On the surface, nothing. But Avirama Golan’s novel reveals surprising similarities between the two women, together with the subtle empathy and mutual admiration that grows between them. The drama that connects their two worlds plays out during a murder trial at the Tel Aviv District Court. Mali, divorced with two grown children, is having a futureless affair with Yoav, a married judge. Yoav is the judge in the murder trial which Mali is prosecuting, and the two are careful to keep their relationship secret. Slava too has her secrets: she is pretending to be a legal Jewish immigrant; she has a small daughter in the Ukraine, whom she hasn’t seen for six years, and she supports her whole family there. But Mali doesn’t know all this. Slava is torn between her love for her daughter and her dream of going to university, which could come true in Israel. Mali, on the other hand, can’t heal the breaks in her own life: Her son has left Israel to live in Holland, and her estranged daughter is leaving to study in Berlin. Her loneliness, and the hopelessness of her relationship with Yoav, lead her to reflect on the choices she has made in her life, her career, and her relations with her mother, a strong, optimistic woman originally from Tunis, who has always been there for her.

Slava, Mali, Mali’s mother, and even Rivka, accused of murdering her husband, all turn out to be fascinating women whose stories shed light on one other.

No reviews available yet.

For The Ravens:
A moving story...Avirama Golan has extraordinarily sensitive linguistic power, and knows how to enhance the tension of the story.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Golan has a great talent for reading people's souls and knowing how to touch your heart... An extraordinary novel.

Informazione Corretta

For Vital Signs:
A courageous novel written by a mature writer who dares to touch our inner soul.

Haaretz
Israel Hameiri

Hillside on Fire

a novel

Yoav, a young insurance claims adjuster, comes to a remote village in the Galilee to investigate a fire that occurred there half a year before. It is not his first visit to the village, but last time he came for different reasons, and since then he has grown a beard and is unrecognizable. The investigation begins with trivialities but soon uncovers a passionate drama involving more and more of the villagers and the tangled relationships between them. The Arab laborers from the neighboring village also play a part, as do the soldiers at an army base on a nearby hill, and the town of Safed with its kabbalists and zealots. As the investigation progresses, surprising secrets expose the violence and sexuality seething under the pastoral surface.

On the day the fire broke out, several things were going on. Sima, who rents out discrete B&B rooms for couples only, was cheating on her husband—as usual—with Hassan the Arab foreman whose laborers work in the village. Aref, engaged to Hassan’s daughter, was having sex with Riki, a village girl, and Shira, Riki’s older sister, was with Yoav in one of Sima’s rooms. But right then, her soldier boyfriend Yoni comes home on leave after a traumatic military operation in the West Bank city of Jenin. He sees Shira leaving the room, comes face to face with Yoav, and his rifle fires a shot. What exactly happened here? Where has Shira disappeared to? And who started the fire?

A thriller of a novel, *Hillside on Fire* is built like a detective story and has a very Israeli flavor; untamed nature plays a decisive role, and serves as a metaphor for the impulses and passions of the human heart.

Israel Hameiri was born in Kibbutz Givat Haim, Israel, in 1948 and lives in Moshav Amirim, in the Galilee. He began publishing short stories during his military service. Later, he studied literature and theater at Tel Aviv University and Haifa University, where he received his PhD in theater. A novelist, playwright and critic, Hameiri teaches drama, literature and creative writing at Haifa University and Oranit College. He has published short stories and a number of novels. Hameiri received the Prime Minister’s Prize in 1985.

His novel *Symbiosis* has been published in French (*Gallimard*) and German (*dtv*).

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Hameiri creates an Israeli mythology that blends destruction and passion.

Yedioth Ahronoth

The best of all Hameiri’s work… Via a small place, he reflects on the whole of Israel.

Radio 103

A passionate, complex drama.

Kol Israel
Mira Magen

The Bluest Eyes

a novel

Hannah Yonah, an eccentric widow of 77 with flashing blue eyes, lives in an old two-storey house in Jerusalem that a wealthy real-estate shark is plotting to buy from her. Hannah's three daughters, all unmarried career women, live in separate apartments in the same building. Yardena, a single mother, is in the hotel business; Simona is a doctor and Orna is in high-tech. There is also Johanna, Hannah's caregiver, a migrant worker from Romania. She is afraid that Hannah's secret double life will be discovered, for in the daytime she pretends to be a cripple in a wheelchair, but at night she dons high heels, goes out to bars with men and comes home drunk. Her desire for life and love, and her attempt to outwit the tyranny of time is shared by her daughters, and each one copes differently.

Into this world comes a young man called Rafi. He rents an apartment on the ground floor, pretending to be a poet, and succeeds in charming Hannah. But the truth is that he is a conman, part of the plot to get Hannah to sell her house for which he has been promised a large sum of money. But as in Magen’s previous novels, good fortune shines upon the characters, even the flawed ones. Rafi needs money to support his sister and her disabled child. Hanna finds true love and a real friend in Bruno, a gentle old man without family who comes to live with her, and Orna, who missed out on happiness when she was married, decides to have a child.

This book should be read the way you drink fine wine: Pour it slowly, take small sips and roll it gently round your tongue.

Makor Rishon

I read the book with great excitement...The story rolls into deep, almost philosophical questions at the end.

Kol Israel

This novel is a best-seller because it is about the little dreams of little people... Magen offers them a feasible happiness, taken from real life. With their abundant humanity, her heroes forgive one another...and it seeps into the reader's heart.

Haaretz

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 four times (2001; 2004; 2005; 2011).

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

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Eleonora Lev

Conversations with My Lover and with His Wife

a novel

Rosie, a well-liked, opinionated book editor, is panicked by the slow death of book culture and obsessed with the traffic in women taking place on the periphery of her complacent, seemingly charmed existence. She is blissfully happy with the lovable man she ended up spending her life with, but is unable to shake free of her enduring, painful attachment to S., a respected author and public figure. She fell for him as a young girl—he was an older man, experienced and charismatic. She became his lover and dreamt of healing all his sorrows, artistic frustrations and emotional wounds, even though he was married and repeatedly betrayed her (as well as his wife) with other women.

Even after she lost her naïve ambitions and left him, they continued to have a deep intellectual bond. Over the years, the two have conversations about love and fear, sex and poetry, about the persistence of memories and the stuff that people are made of. Then, while traveling abroad, they meet again by accident and among enchanted landscapes and the last vestiges of an untold past, the unexpected happens, secrets emerge and a final conversation takes place.

Eleonora Lev’s book, interspersed with images—old and new photographs, quaint illustrations from crumbling books, vintage postcards—is a journey in which one woman takes stock: of herself, of those close to her and of the time and country in which she lives. It merges Rosie’s personal story with that of Israel in the olden days and as it is now, its innocence lost. The tale she tells is moving, jarring, poetic and very contemporary, but also nostalgic—about the entanglements of love and life, about longing and losing one’s illusions.

This is a clever book, astonishing and remarkable for its daring and structure... An impressive literary achievement.

Haaretz

A forceful and passionate novel...Its contemplations are impressive, and the cultural issues are expressed in a sharp and original way.

Yedioth Ahronoth

A rich and intricate novel.

Haaretz

Eleonora Lev is a novelist, editor and critic. Her father was the sole survivor of a large Polish-Jewish family that perished in the Holocaust and her Russian maternal grandfather was executed as a kulak by firing squad during the Stalinist purges.

Lev serves as literary editor of Words and Images: the Jerusalem Literary Project, a series of in-depth videotaped interviews with great Jewish writers of our time, conducted in conjunction with the National Library in Jerusalem.

Eleonora Lev was the first woman writer to win the prestigious Bernstein Prize for her novel, First Morning in Paradise (1996). She is also the recipient of several other important awards for her books, literary criticism, translations and journalism.

First Morning in Paradise has been published in Dutch (Arena), German (Berlin Verlag, Bertelsmann), French (Seuil).

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Ronit Matalon

The One Facing Us

a novel

Esther, seventeen years old, wild and rebellious, is sent from Israel to Cameroon to stay with her hardheaded uncle Sicourelle, who is charged with straightening her out. But Esther resists her uncle’s plans for her future—which include marriage to a cousin—and in the privileged indolence of postcolonial Africa, she looks to the past instead. Using sepia portraits and scraps of letters, Esther pieces together the history of her family, a once grand Egyptian-Jewish clan, and its displacement from Cairo in the 1950s to Israel, West Africa, and New York.

As the worn photographs yield their secrets, Esther uncovers a rich tale of wives and ex-wives; revolving mistresses and crushing marriages; intrigues and disappointments; poignant contrasts between the living past and the dead present. In sensuous, inventive prose, Matalon penetrates the mysteries of cultural exile and family life to produce a first novel that is mature, authentic, and deeply moving.

Published in English (Metropolitan/ Henry Holt), German (Rowohlt) and Dutch (Ambo).
Ronit Matalon

Sarah, Sarah [Bliss]

a novel

Set in Tel Aviv and Paris, a powerful story of love, friendship, regret and war, as current as today’s headlines. Ronit Matalon’s fiction has been praised as “haunting,” “inventive,” “refreshingly daring.” In a graceful, illuminating second novel, she tells a provocative story of two loves, two partings, two worlds, two women: Ofra and Sarah.

When Ofra is called from Tel Aviv to France to attend the funeral of her beloved cousin Michel, she escapes a life lived vicariously through Sarah, her oldest friend, a photographer and political activist. In Paris, Ofra enters the embrace of her French family and the intimate world of domestic life, while Sarah, in Tel Aviv, drifts ever further from her husband, Udi. Drawn to a Palestinian nationalist, she takes on the fight for a girl from Gaza who has been injured by an Israeli bullet and needs medical treatment that can only be had inside Israel. As Sarah adopts the cause with near-destructive zeal and pledges herself to the suffering of others, her own child goes untended, with dreadful consequences for all.

Against a backdrop of national conflict, the novel confronts the terrible dilemma of choosing between one’s desires and one’s beliefs, between grand ideological commitment and the more mundane claims of family. With vivid, penetrating prose, Matalon has delivered a large and resonant work that is as artful as it is affecting.

Published in English (Metropolitan) and German (Luchterhand)

Matalon’s finely calibrated prose, cosmopolitan outlook and nuanced perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict give the novel a sophisticated grace.

Publishers Weekly

A tautly written and highly charged Israeli novel... One of Matalon’s many achievements is to twist a steely link between Israel’s two pains: those it inflicts and those it suffers.

New York Times

An exquisitely compelling novel. Matalon captures the immediacy of contemporary Israeli reality.

The Forward

Ronit Matalon was born in 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. Two of her novels have been bestsellers in Israel. Matalon has been awarded the Prime Minister’s Prize (1994), the Bernstein Prize (2009), the Newman Prize (2010) and the Prix Alberto-Benveniste (France, 2013). In 2010, she received an Honorary Doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Matalon’s novel, The Sound of Our Steps, has been published to critical acclaim in Italian (Atmosphere Libri) and French (Stock). Forthcoming in English (Metropolitan) and Turkish (Yapi Kredi).

Click here for a complete listing on the ITHL website.

PHOTO © Dan Porges
Yizhak Laor

The People, Food for Kings

Yitzhak Laor, poet, novelist, essayist and playwright, was born in Pardes Hannah, Israel, in 1948. He received his Ph.D. in theater and literature from Tel Aviv University. 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 was a major arena for intellectual debate. He also writes editorials and literary reviews for the Hebrew daily Haaretz. Laor has published ten books of poetry, as well as three novels, short stories, books of 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).

His work has been published in German (Unionsverlag), Dutch (Cypres), French (La Fabrique), English (Verso) and Italian (Bellaterra).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

In this monumental novel Yitzhak Laor made a significant departure from the heroic depiction of the Israeli army. A dusty, neglected supply base in the Negev desert, several months before the 1967 Six Day War, reveals the army as a refuge for the wretched, humiliated dregs of Israeli society, brought even lower by military life. However, the soldiers of this base manage to disrupt and cancel the war, creating an “alternative history,” a State of Israel without the West Bank.

In the autumn of 1966, the commander of the army camp dies and the phlegmatic-absurd camp routine is shattered. “The new era began slowly,” explains the narrator as he launches into a vivid portrayal of the humiliations that begin when the new commander, Major Uri takes over. A born recluse, Major Uri imposes his power by targeting individual soldiers as his victims and issuing capricious commands that are later withdrawn. But the war never breaks out because a secret document with war plans reaches the supply base and the soldiers run away, altering the course of events.

And yet, despite the novel’s black humor and cruelty, Laor creates beauty and poignancy, underscoring man’s greatness and humanity.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

This is a great book from every point of view: it is one of the most humanistic statements of our generation… Sweeping, sensitive, engaging. Haaretz

One reading of this rare masterpiece is just not enough. Maariv

Laor leads his characters into intolerably intense situations… This novel is destined to become a cornerstone of our literature. Al Hamishmar
Yoram Kaniuk

Pierre

a novella
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2013. 76 pp.

Our Pierre wasn’t born. He begat himself in a garbage can in Ramat Gan. My daughter found him. He was about a month old. A grey-black puppy shivering in the garbage can, sitting in the stench and looking out, from the despair that he was born into, through eyes that opened in her honor.

My daughter was the first person who not only looked at him but also saw him. She picked him up, stroked him and cried; and her tears—large and hot—washed him for the first time in his life. She took pity on him and immediately fell in love with him. He was wretched but funny, with the face of a clown.

Kaniuk wrote this moving novella about his beloved dog Pierre, who enjoyed twenty good years of life. It is a love story—the tale of his love for his best friend who was like a family member, and who knew how to return love as only a dog can. Pierre was no thoroughbred, not the kind of dog you buy in a pet store, yet children loved him and even people who hated dogs loved him. He was wise and amusing, without a single drop of nastiness. But he was also adventurous and didn’t like playing up to people. Kaniuk draws a portrait of his dead dog with humor and sadness, with endless compassion and sensitivity.

Pierre is a literary gem, suitable for adults and youngsters.

Illustrations: Keren Lee Vendriger

No reviews available yet.

For 1948:

An overwhelming experience.
La Repubblica

A magnificent novel in one voice.
La Stampa

One of the most important works of contemporary Hebrew literature.
Die Welt

A moving book that questions many accepted truths.
Le Monde

Yoram Kaniuk (1930-2013), one of Israel’s leading writers, was born in Tel Aviv. Wounded in Israel’s 1948 War of Independence, he moved to New York for 10 years. A novelist, painter and journalist, Kaniuk published over 20 novels and novellas as well as stories, non-fiction and books for children and youth. Among his many prizes: the Prix des Droits de l’Homme (France, 1997), the Bialik Prize (1999), the prestigious Prix Méditerranée Étranger (2000), the Newman Prize (2006), the France-Israel Foundation Award (2010), the Sapir Prize (2011) and the Italian WIZO Prize (2013). In 2012, Kaniuk received the prestigious French decoration of Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Kaniuk’s books have been published abroad in 20 languages, among which English (Harper & Row; Grove/Atlantic; NYRB Lit), French (Stock; Fayard), German (Paul List; Hanser; Aufbau), Italian (Einaudi; Giuntina), Dutch (Meulenhoff), Norwegian (Cappelens), Danish (Gyldendal), Arabic (Canaan, Damascus).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Uri Orlev

Thoughts of Thirst

Picture book

“You know,” he said, “I am in love with this girl.”

I was taken aback. After all, we’d almost never talked before.

He went on: “You know, she drinks lemonade with her eyes closed and thinks thoughts of thirst.”

I closed my eyes and thought to myself that I’d like to meet a girl like that. I’d ask her: ‘Are you thinking thoughts of thirst?’ Then we would both travel from opposite ends of the world to meet up in a certain place, and consumed by our longing, we would drink with our eyes shut.

The boy in this tale is like his friends but also different. Clear, flowing water stirs his imagination and he enjoys drinking it. Unlike his friends, he is able to think thoughts of thirst, and now he discovers that he is not the only one to think such thoughts. But what are thoughts of thirst, what does water symbolize? And how is all this connected to love?

This subtle and poetic story was written in 1952 when Uri Orlev was 21 and living in a kibbutz. It was included in an anthology of his stories that came out in 1968. Now for the first time, it has been published as a book, and although 60 years have passed since it was written, it has retained all its freshness and charm.

Illustrations: Inbal Leitner.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

I wonder where this gem has been hiding. […] Read it and then read it again, not only to yourself with your eyes but also aloud, so that your ears can enjoy it too. Pure poetry. A book for all ages that will slake the thirst for good literature.

Haaretz

Orlev stands out for his honest and convincing writing… An excellent depiction of a child’s sense of loneliness and alienation in a group.

Ha-Pinkas
Mishka Ben-David

Duet in Beirut

Ronen is part of a Mossad team sent to Beirut to assassinate a top Hizballah man who is behind a series of terror attacks. Gadi, his squad commander, orders him to fire, but the man’s little daughter appears and Ronen doesn’t pull the trigger. The operation is a failure and he is thrown out of the Mossad.

A year later, after a major terrorist attack in northern Israel, Ronen decides to go to Beirut and do the job alone. Informed by Ronen’s wife Na’ama that her husband has disappeared, Gadi flies to Beirut—against all rules and odds—to stop him, for his action may get Israel into trouble. What are his motives? Loyalty to his country? Ronen’s safety? His relationship with Na’ama, who used to be his girlfriend?

From this point on, the reader is sucked into a vortex of action filled with suspense, raw emotion and violence in and around Beirut. And as Gadi continues his action-packed hunt for Ronen, the Mossad is planning a daring operation to get them both out of Beirut and prevent Ronen from carrying out the hit.

Duet in Beirut is a riveting spy thriller as well as an incisive psychological novel that voices harsh truths about Israeli society, its media and the establishment.

Mishka Ben-David, who held a senior post in the Mossad, provides both an enjoyable read and rare insight into the world of its operatives, their relationships, the men and women in their lives, the decision-making process and covert operations that fire the imagination.

Ben-David writes eloquently, creates an engrossing plot and suspenseful situations, maintains a dizzying pace and convincingly weaves in actual events. Duet in Beirut gives off a refreshing, contemporary aroma of Israel.

Haaretz
A fascinating story... creates the feeling that the details were lifted directly from the logbook of Mossad operations.

Maariv
Suspenseful and inspiring.

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

His novel Sunburnt Faces has been published in Italian (Atmosphere Libri); forthcoming in English (PS Publishing).


When Shimon Adaf’s first collection of poems was published, it attracted attention. Sensitive readers as well as arbiters of taste in Israel’s literary world immediately recognized his talent and earmarked him as a promising poet with a new poetic message. He was already something of a local cultural figure—his image was that of a refined, multi-disciplinary artist who wrote profound existential verse, but also of someone rooted in popular culture. Adaf’s Sephardic-North African origin and the fact that he came from an outlying town were stressed, but his first collection (1997) only partly satisfied those who hoped to find reflections on his background and on the tension between metropolis and outlying immigrant township. Instead, they found a poet saturated in Western culture and the heroes of Greek mythology.

This image changed with Adaf’s second book of poetry (2002), where the center of gravity shifts to the local. The poet’s own life is more explicit, but also undergoes a mythologizing process. It has a complex, carefully planned structure through which Adaf engages in soul-searching and clarifies his complex attitude toward his childhood and adolescence and his hometown Sderot.

His third collection of poems (2009) is a powerful lament for his beloved sister. Although it was published after three successful novels, poetry clearly remains his most personal language, the most distilled and the most appropriate for his conflicted soul.

Forthcoming in Spanish (Mexico, Trilce) and English (Canada, Mosaic)

One of the most interesting and original voices in contemporary Israeli literature.

Amos Oz

Almost transparent. Natural, direct speech, yet beautiful and moving. Poetry whose great complexity never prevents it from sounding like spoken music.

Haaretz

Shimon Adaf is an inspiring poet. There are lines that I know by heart and that return to my lips at moments of pain and longing.

Maariv NRG
Mordechai Geldman

Years I Walked at Your Side: Selected Poems


Mordechai Geldman is one of the finest Hebrew poets living today. His poetry is profound and creative; his unique voice emerges as both contemplative and sensual, existential and erotic, religious and psychological. Equally fascinating is his attempt to bridge the gap between a Western outlook and Eastern philosophy.

Geldman is an intellectual poet who tends to the meditative-reflective, and is preoccupied with philosophical questions, but his poems are also characterized by a figurative vividness, enchanted scenery and humor. The various aspects of modern urban culture—the idolization of youth, culture heroes, the contemporary art world, the sights of Tel Aviv and the global cultural milieu—permeate many of his poems. He deals with great existential questions: the link between the physical and the spiritual, the sublime versus lowly routine, the metaphysical and the pornographic. But his poems are not at all abstract. The conclusion arising from Geldman’s poetry is that excessive awareness and scientific knowledge are powerless to solve the anguish of existence. Against this, the poet sets unknowing, feeling, sexuality, mystery and artistic creativity.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Mordechai Geldman was born in Germany in 1946 and has lived in Tel Aviv since the age of three. He began publishing poetry in 1966. Geldman has a BA in general literature and an MA in clinical psychology. He works as a psychologist and is also an artist, a photographer and a curator of Israeli art. Geldman has published several collections of poetry and a number of books on psychoanalytic literary theory; he also writes articles and art criticism for the Israeli press. He has received the Prime Minister’s Prize (1996), the Brenner Prize (1997), the Amichai Prize for Poetry (2005) and the Bialik Prize (2010).

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