NEW BOOKS FROM ISRAEL
Spring 2017

CONTENTS

Ayelet Gundar-Goshen, *The Liar and the City* ........................................... 2
Alona Kimhi, *To Be Amadea* ......................................................................... 3
Michal Ben-Naftali, *The Teacher* ............................................................... 4
Yossi Avni-Levy, *The Love Peddlers* .......................................................... 5
Shula Modan, *Teatime for Good Girls* ....................................................... 6
Michal Peer, *You, Who Live So Beautifully* ............................................... 7
Hila Amit, *Moving On from Bliss* ................................................................. 8
Yoav Shutan-Goshen, *One Time, One Woman* ........................................... 9

CROSSOVER
Nava Semel, *Taking Wing* ........................................................................... 10

For a complete list of publications for each author, see our website: www.ithl.org.il
Ayelet Gundar-Goshen was born in Israel in 1982. After completing an MA in psychology at Tel Aviv University, she studied film and screenwriting at the Sam Spiegel Film School in Jerusalem. Gundar-Goshen has written a number of screenplays, and has produced short films which were screened at film festivals in Israel and abroad. She has also written and co-written a number of TV series.

Gundar-Goshen has been awarded 2nd prize at the IEMed European Short Story Competition (Barcelona, 2010), the Gottlieb Screenplay Prize (2010), the Berlin Today Award for the screenplay of the short film Batman at the Checkpoint (Berlin, 2012), the Sapir Prize for Debut Fiction (2012) and the Adei-Wizo Prize (Italy, 2016) for One Night, Markovitch. Her second novel, Waking Lions, is being adapted for a TV series in the US. Her books have been published in 12 languages.

The narrative follows Noy, an ordinary girl who works in an ice-cream parlor during the summer. Dozens of customers come in every day, but no one gives Noy a second look - she is not one of those girls that the eye lingers on.

But everything changes when Avishai Milner comes into the ice-cream parlor. An embittered reality-show runaway, he insults and humiliates her. Deeply offended, Noy rushes out to the backyard, and Avishai—who is still waiting for his change—chases after her. “Leave me alone!” she cries with all her 17 mediocre years’ worth of hurt and frustration. Her screams alert the townsfolk, and to her surprise everyone is convinced that Avishai tried to sexually assault her.

Now, for the first time in her life, Noy finds herself the center of attention. The support that she receives from the community turns her into a kind of Cinderella and the ice-cream salesgirl becomes a Media Princess. But the magic of this Cinderella story comes from her lies about an attack that did not actually happen.

English rights sold to Pushkin Press, London; German rights sold to Kein & Aber, Zurich.

No reviews available yet
For One Night, Markovitch
Utterly delightful.
The Times

A dazzling storyteller is born.
Elle France

For Waking Lions
Brave and startling.
Financial Times

Gripping, provocative, original.
Foyles

Uncommonly complex and socially aware.
New York magazine
Alona Kimhi

To Be Amadea

a novel
Tel Aviv, Achuzat Bayit, forthcoming

For 12 years, Esther has toiled away at her novel with great passion and faith. When it is finished she is sure that she has produced a masterpiece. After all, could anyone evaluate great literature better than her, a sought-after editor with impeccable taste? She only respects the opinion of her friend Bertie, a professor she has admired ever since her student days. She shows him the manuscript without revealing the author's identity, but to her great surprise, he pans the novel as the work of a pretentious scribbler without talent.

Around the same time, Hili, an unknown young actress, comes into Esther's life. Hili, who suffers from low self-esteem, is involved with a married man. Trapped in a self-destructive relationship, she worships the wise and self-confident Esther. Esther, in turn, becomes addicted to Hili's admiration and fails to see how manipulative the young actress can be. Inevitably, their relationship deteriorates and Hili's adulation turns into hatred. After she loses the role of a lifetime to another actress, she commits suicide, but leaves behind the manuscript of a splendid novel. Esther is thrilled by this literary gem, and cannot resist the temptation…

The novel is published, it becomes a huge success, and Esther takes all the glory for herself. However, an old friend of Hili's threatens to expose the fraud. Esther will not let him ruin her. She has to take extreme, insane action to save herself, and she does not hesitate.

French rights sold to Gallimard, Paris.
Michal Ben-Naftali was born in Tel Aviv in 1963. A writer, translator and editor, she studied history and philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and received her PhD in contemporary French philosophy from Oxford University. Ben-Naftali lived in Paris for several years; she was the editor of a French series for Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishers, followed by a series on Hebrew aesthetics for Resling. She now teaches French literature and creative writing at Tel Aviv University. Ben-Naftali has published collections of essays, a novella, a memoir and a novel, as well as many academic articles. Her translations from French to Hebrew include Jacques Derrida, Marina Tsvetaeva, Julia Kristeva. In 2008, she received a translation scholarship from the French Ministry of Culture, and in 2013 she was writer-in-residence at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. Ben-Naftali has received the Prime Minister’s Prize (2007) and the Haaretz prize for Best Literary Essay of the Year (2008). Her novel, The Teacher, won the 2016 Sapir Prize.

The Teacher

a novel

No one knew the story of Elsa Weiss’s life. She was a respected English teacher at a Tel Aviv high school, but she remained aloof and never tried to be friendly with her students. She was a riddle, and yet the students sensed that they were all she had. When Elsa killed herself by jumping off the roof of her apartment building, she remained as unknown as she had been during her life.

Thirty years later, the narrator of the novel, one of her students, decides to solve the riddle of Elsa Weiss. In retrospect, she realizes that she had learned a fateful lesson from her, a lesson for life. But what was that lesson? What had her teacher taught her? This is where the dizzying journey at the heart of Ben-Naftali’s novel begins. Expertly dovetailing explosive historical material with flights of imagination, the novel traces the footprints of a Holocaust survivor who did her utmost to leave no footprints. The lesson she taught is revealed to be an intricate code, and by gradually deciphering it the narrator comes to some of the most tumultuous junctions in the history of the twentieth century.

The narrator invents a fictional biography for Elsa. She describes her childhood in Hungary, her journey to Paris, her marriage, her experiences after the German invasion of Hungary, how she was taken on the highly controversial “rescue train,” first to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and then to Switzerland; how she decided to remain silent and to leave no trace of who she had been. But the narrator hears her teacher’s wordless scream and creates a life for her. Writing it down is a way to save her from oblivion.

COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Like the discovery of a new continent.

Ben-Naftali achieves the impossible… An unusual novel.
Haaretz

A lovely, moving novel
Yedioth Ahronoth

An important and interesting novel.
Arutz 7 Radio

Much to think about.
Makor Rishon
Yossi Avni-Levy

The Love Peddlers

a novel
Tel Aviv, Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2016. 381 pp.

A couple returns to their apartment in Tel Aviv with a tiny baby wrapped in a blanket. Far away, in time and space, a frightened, handsome Jewish lad sets out on the journey of his life, through the legendary city of Herat in Afghanistan. What is the thread that connects the boy slipping away from school so that he can watch the dancers in their colorful garb cavorting in the marketplaces, to Assaf, an Israeli professor of linguistics, a gay man, a new father, who wants to be reconciled with his own father?

Yossi Avni-Levy’s novel is an emotional confession of a father to his newly born first son who embodies a mixture of different cultures, an intimate confession through which he tries to trace his own identity. Assaf unfolds the saga of his family, beginning in Afghanistan in the 1940s and reveals the story of his father and in particular the story of his father’s younger brother, Assaf’s uncle, who was a dancer in the Herat marketplaces and a lover of a Pashtun man.

It is a book that is both sad and amusing, a powerful and humane love story which will resonate all around the globe—a constricted, unspoken love between a son and his father, an unrestrained love of a child for his mother, and a tortuous love between two fathers. It is also a story of love for a world that is no more, for its colors and fragrances, studded with characters who are both delightful and heart-breaking. In his inimitable and sensual language, Avni-Levy leads the reader through the poverty-stricken and yet magnificent streets of a dusty Israeli town of the 1960s to the picturesque streets of a remote city in Afghanistan, where humans and demons live side by side.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

A book in which a wealth of imagination, talent and love has been invested. I laughed, I shed tears, I was astonished, I was captivated. Enjoy it yourselves, and share it with people you love.

Author Judith Katzir

Contemporary Israeli literature is not accustomed to a style such as this, and reading this novel feels different and rewarding.

Haaretz

Enchanting, enchanting, enchanting – recommended!

Kol Israel 2
Shula Modan

Teatime for Good Girls

a novel
Ben Shemen, Modan, 2016. 373 pp.

When Rachel comes from Lodz to the Land of Israel with her husband, she brings elegant suits and hats, a stash of Polish recipes and endless nostalgia. Bound by tradition, Rachel tries to run her modest Tel Aviv home in the 1930s and 1940s in accordance with “what is appropriate” and “what will the neighbors say?” She fulfills her duty as a housewife and respectable woman and refuses even the simplest pleasures of life. She is constantly distressed by the gulf that separates the heated young city from the cultivated restraint of Lodz.

Rachel’s three children struggle, each in their own way, with their mother’s strict upbringing. Motl, who has always been the spirit of mischief and humor, abandons his studies and plunges into the exciting new world. The girls dazzle him, especially one, who is both beautiful and educated, haughty and self-disciplined, very similar to his mother. His sister, Rivka, a good and obedient girl, gives in without a fight to the match that her parents arrange for her with a coarse, dull-witted man. Chayaleh, the youngest, is creative and rebellious; she longs to break away and live the life that her mother didn’t dare to try. She finds a boyfriend from a kibbutz, only to discover that the conservatism she so criticized in her mother is hers as well.

Shula Modan conveys the spirit of the period with brilliance and great psychological insight.

COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Captivating magic.
Haaretz
Modan brings an entire period back to life.
Yedioth Ahronoth
Shula Modan’s superb language reminds me of Shalom Aleichem… A story of the 1930s that is entirely relevant today.
Saloon
Michal Peer

You, Who Live So Beautifully

Michal Peer was born in Tel Aviv in 1966. She holds a BA in screenwriting and an MA in organizational behavior from Tel Aviv University. She is currently a doctoral student in German studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, researching German and Israeli cinema among the third generation of Holocaust survivors. She has worked as a scriptwriter for the Israeli children’s TV channel, and was for many years head of the film program at a prestigious high school for the arts in Tel Aviv. At present, she lectures in the film department of Beit Berl College, and teaches screenwriting and creative writing at the same high school.

Peer’s short stories have been published in Mita’am as well as other journals. You, Who Live So Beautifully is her first novel. She received the Ministry of Culture Prize for Debut Authors in 2016.

You, Who Live So Beautifully is a sweeping, wild novel that tells the tale of a young family in a poor suburb of Tel Aviv. It begins in the late 1980s when the father, Kika Weinstein, a charming conman trapped in his own lies but who still harbors dreams of getting rich quick, flees the country. Leaving his wife Miriam and children Ilسا and Assi with promises to “fix them up with a new life,” he heads to England and then vanishes, leaving behind only debts and a family that is falling apart. And this is not a one-off: Kika is a pro at building castles in the air and then leaving people penniless.

The novel moves back and forth in time and space to reveal a web of false identities and wanderings, as well as a distressed branch of the family descended from Kika’s mother, who lost her family in the Holocaust. Years later, when Kika disappears, his daughter Ilsa—the main narrator—must grow up prematurely and deal with her fractured world, including her dysfunctional mother who gets together with random men only to be disappointed.

A few years on, Ilsa and her brother meet their father again in New York and realize that he hasn’t changed. But the contact with his charismatic personality forces Ilsa to face up to the same qualities within herself. At 18, she becomes a fashion model. Pretty, malicious and lost, she wants the good life and is not deterred by any risks or dubious escapades.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Written with great skill and brilliance.

Haaretz

An impressive literary achievement.

Yedioth Ahronoth

A very impressive first novel… Peer writes with wild humor, great sensitivity and poetic precision.

La’Isha

Superb!

Mako
Hila Amit

Moving on from Bliss

stories
Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2016. 191 pp.

Dana, a single mother, and Mounir, a young Palestinian from Nablus, meet in a restaurant in a shabby Tel Aviv neighborhood where they both work. A warm father-daughter relationship grows between Mounir, who is gay, and Dana’s little girl Natalie. When Mounir travels to Canada for medical treatment and decides to live there, Dana follows him, leaves Natalie with him and returns to Israel. Mounir and his partner bring Natalie up, and an unusual family is formed.

Joumana, an Arab doctor living in Tel Aviv with her Jewish partner, leaves the city when her father dies, and goes back to her parents’ home in Umm al-Fahm. Once again she confronts what made her leave her conservative family—not only her desire to study, but also her sexual identity. Her father’s death frees her from his tyranny and heals her relationship with her mother, her sisters and elder brother.

A girl who is estranged from her strict, taciturn mother falls in love with Oshri, a neighbor, and decides to move in with her. In Oshri’s home she finds an alternative family, and in Oshri’s mother a loving substitute for her own. The story, which takes place after Oshri’s death in a car accident, is a lyrical lament on the death of a partner as she tries to cope with grief and longing.

Jewish Adele is attracted to Tahrir, an Arab girl and the daughter of a well-known crime family, who lives near her in Jaffa. The forbidden, the alien and the dangerous all become more familiar in this and other stories in this collection.

Amit depicts gays, lesbians, Arabs and other marginalized characters. There is much courage and talent in this book – the courage to take on big subjects, and the talent to write about them in an original way.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Amit writes differently about “different”…unique and beautiful.

Haaretz

Amit finds different ways, some of them simple and very effective, to rein in tragedy and the cheap handling of heartache.

Yedioth Ahronoth
Yoav Shutan-Goshen

One Time, One Woman

a novel

Ido has all that a middle class urban male could desire: a cute little daughter, a wife he loves, a manageable mortgage, and a career as an attorney. But when his wife, Nurit, comes home from a dentists’ conference in Spain and tearfully confesses to a one-night stand with a dental specialist, everything changes. Ido does not want a divorce. Their love is too great. But neither can he just let the matter go. He proposes a solution that only a lawyer could think up: retribution that would leave their marriage intact. Ido too would have a one-night stand and after that, his and Nurit’s life would get back on track. At least, this is what they think.

However, Ido sets out on a journey that will change his life. It’s not every man that gets permission from his wife to go off with another woman, and Ido really doesn’t want to waste the opportunity on just anyone. But he soon discovers that women are not actually lining up to go to bed with him. When Nurit discovers that he is having a hard time with his end of the bargain, she decides—behind his back—to help him, anything to save their marriage.

One Time, One Woman is a humorous and biting novel about Israeli masculinity and a sort of open-heart surgery on the institution of marriage. Shutan-Goshen dares to write about love and sexuality in a blunt yet endearing manner, and offers his readers romance sans kitsch, stemming from honest observation of his characters.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Yoav Shutan-Goshen was born in Israel in 1980. He received a BA in law and humanities from Tel Aviv University and completed a screenwriting program at the Sam Spiegel Film and Television School. Shutan-Goshen has worked as a journalist for Yedioth Ahronoth, as well as writing a comic column for The Marker. He is now a playwright for the Gesher, Beit Lessin and Beersheba Theaters, and also wrote a drama series for Channel 2 TV. His feature film will be released in 2017. Shutan-Goshen lives in Tel Aviv with his wife, author Ayelet Gundar-Goshen, and teaches law at Sapir College. One Time, One Woman is his first novel.
Nava Semel / Huan B. Landi

Taking Wing
(Mercurium Trilogy, 1)

a fantasy novel
Tel Aviv, Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2016. 318 pp.

Erlinda can’t sleep: tomorrow her childhood will be over and she’ll be a Flyer. She’ll leave the nest where she’s been raised with her age group; new winglets on her ankles will enable her to fly, and she’ll know what her mission is.

Erlinda lives on the planet Mercurium, to which her human forefathers migrated from Earth. They set up a colony, protected by a special dome, and have developed the ability to fly. But not all the migrants joined the colony: outside the dome live the Grounders, those humans who refused to develop winglets and are ground-bound. The Flyers see them as enemies and stay away from them, but they need a spy to go into enemy territory. This is Erlinda’s mission.

Erlinda has always known that she’s different—there’s a rumor that her parents were traitors, and she doesn’t know what happened to them. Now she discovers that only she can be a spy, because she can make her winglets invisible. So, after training, she sets out for the unknown, leaving behind her beloved Omine. Yet Omine, a graduate of a military academy, will lead the attack against the Grounders. Nobody knows about his doubts, or his love and fear for Erlinda.

Although Flying Girl takes place in a distant, imaginary galaxy, this clever and gripping novel deals with issues that concern us in the here and now.

Huan B. Landi is the pseudonym that Nava Semel has chosen for her new trilogy.

COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Nava Semel was born in Tel Aviv in 1954 and has an MA in art history. She has worked as a journalist, art critic, and TV, radio and recording producer. Semel has published novels, short stories, poetry, plays, children’s books and TV scripts.

Many of her stories have been adapted for radio, film, TV and the stage in Israel, Europe and the USA. Her novel, And the Rat Laughed, has been made into an opera. It will also be a feature film, directed by David Fisher. Semel is on the board of governors of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum.

Among Semel’s many literary prizes: the Women Writers of the Mediterranean Award (1994), the Austrian Best Radio Drama Award (1996), the Rosenblum Prize for Stage Arts (2005), and Tel Aviv’s Literary Woman of the Year (2007). Her y/a book, Love for Beginners, received the One of the Best Seven Prize awarded by Radio Germany (2010) as well as the Educators and Scientists Association Award (Germany, 2010). Rights to Semel’s books have been published in 11 languages.

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

This book certainly has abundant potential, both colorful and tempting, and its subtle humor saves it from falling into the clichés that it itself presents... Will definitely be enjoyed by youngsters.

Haaretz

A highly imaginative Israeli author... [Nava Semel] creates a wondrous world, including a made-up mythology that supplies a fantastical escape in every sense from the difficulties of adolescence.

Laisha