NEW BOOKS FROM ISRAEL
JIBF 2015

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For a complete list of publications for each author, see our website: www.ithl.org.il
Orly Castel-Bloom was born in Tel Aviv in 1960 to parents originally from Egypt. Since the publication of her first book in 1987, she has been a leading voice in Hebrew literature, constantly expanding the boundaries of narrative style. Castel-Bloom has lectured at Harvard University, UCLA, UC Berkeley, New York University, Oxford and Cambridge; at present she teaches creative writing. She has published six collections of stories, six novels and a children’s book. Her postmodern classic, Dolly City, is one of UNESCO’s Representative Works and was listed by Tablet Magazine as one of the 101 Great Jewish Books available in English translation.

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

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.

Orly Castel-Bloom

An Egyptian Novel

a novel

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

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

Superbly designed and polished…an intriguing combination of dramatic events, gossip, whimsy, parody and hyperbole…A multicolored, carnival-like arrangement…A unique reading experience.

Ynet

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

Mako

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

Yedioth Ahronoth

Splendid, fluent, sweeping.

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

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

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Eshkol Nevo

Think of it as a Story

a novel
Tel Aviv, Zmora-Bitan, forthcoming. ca. 200 pp.

“W”hat was I trying to do? Just protect my women,” Arnon Levanoni says heatedly to his friend, a writer. The two are in a restaurant, Arnon pouring out his heart in a lengthy monologue. He is Israeli macho, aggressive and possessive, and his jealousy for his little daughter Ofri has made him lose control. When he becomes suspicious that his elderly neighbor has sexually molested Ofri, he attacks him, and the man is hospitalized. But Arnon gets into more trouble—with the neighbor’s young granddaughter, who is now threatening to destroy Arnon’s marriage in revenge.

Arnon and his family live in a quiet middle-class neighborhood. Above them lives Hani Doron, known as “the widow”—her husband is often away on business, and she lives shut-off with her two children. After her brother-in-law, in trouble with loan sharks, comes to hide out with her, their happy interlude together seem no more than a figment of her imagination.

On the top floor lives a genuine widow: former judge Devorah Edelman, who dreams at night that her super ego is being amputated. Now retired, Devorah is trying to start a new life and joins a social protest movement. But can she reconnect with her estranged son? Will Hani Doron overcome her problems? Can Arnon save his marriage?

The three floors of the house in Nevo’s novel reflect the tripartite Freudian model of the id, the ego and the superego. With insight and humor, Nevo lays bare the failures and psychoses that underlie the placid surface of the Israeli bourgeoisie, and gives us a gripping novel.

For previous novels:

His gift is to make the characters jump out of the pages...A compelling novel which I never wanted to end.

The Independent

One of the most beautiful books to fall into my hands recently... I haven’t had such fun or felt such tenderness since The Bad Girl by Vargas Llosa. A fantastic Israeli writer.

Corriere della Sera

Eshkol Nevo writes beautifully, funnily and wisely... Friendship, envy, love, misery, endurance – he captures the lot.

Novelist Roddy Doyle
Zeruya Shalev was born at Kibbutz Kinneret. She has an MA in Biblical studies and works as a literary editor. Shalev has written six novels, poetry, and two children’s books. Love Life, Husband and Wife and Late Family (Thera) have been bestsellers in several countries. Love Life is also included in Der Spiegel’s prestigious list of 20 Best Novels in World Literature over the last 40 years. Husband and Wife is included in the French Fnac list of the 200 Best Books of the Decade. And The Remains of Love was included in The Independent’s list of Books of the Year in Translation, 2013. Shalev has received the Book Publishers Association’s Gold and Platinum Prizes, the Corine Prize (Germany, 2001), the Amphi Award (France, 2003), the ACUM Award (1997, 2003, 2005), the French Wizo Prize (2007), the Rome-Jerusalem Prize (2014), and the Prix Femina (2014). Her books have been published abroad in 23 languages. Pain (Wounds and Wonders) is forthcoming in German (Berlin, Verlag).

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Deakla Keydar

**Other People’s Homes**

a novel

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

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

I read the book in one night…it cast a spell on me…Many books are published; few of them enter your heart like this one.

**Author Eshkol Nevo, Ynet**

I read it almost without putting it down… Keydar [is] tempestuous and talented…Her dark imagination…feels like a huge ocean at nightfall…A powerful book.

**Haaretz**

A magnificent book…marvelously written.

**Israel Radio 2**
Sami Berdugo was born in 1970. He studied comparative literature and history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. At present, he teaches creative writing at Tel Aviv University and Bezalel Academy of Art and Design. He also holds writing workshops for youth. Berdugo has published novels, short stories and novellas. In 1998, he won the Haaretz Short Story Competition. He has also been awarded the Yaakov Shabtai Prize (2002), the Peter Schweifert Prize (2003), the Bernstein Prize (2003), the Prime Minister’s Prize (2005) and the Newman Prize (2007). He is the first Israeli to be awarded a Sanskriti Foundation Residency (New Delhi, 2007). Most recently, he received the Isaac Leib and Rachel Goldberg Prize (2010).

An Ongoing Tale on Land
a novel

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

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

Every encounter with Berdugo’s work creates great intellectual enjoyment...His poetic style is mesmerizing.
Ynet
He has a distinctive voice, a language of his own.
Haaretz
A remarkable book.
Time Out
Benny Barbash was born in Beersheba in 1951, and currently lives in Tel Aviv. He holds a BA in history from Tel Aviv University. During the 1980s and 90s, Barbash was a leading figure in the Peace Now movement, and was involved in many initiatives, both local and international, to further Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. He has written fiction, plays and screenplays, including the script for Beyond the Walls, a landmark in Israeli cinema which won several international prizes. Barbash has received the ADAI-WIZO Prize (Italy, 2006) and the “Public’s Favorite” Prize for My First Sony (Paris, 2008).

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

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

Life in Fifty Minutes is forthcoming in French (Zulma).

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Benny Barbash

Life in Fifty Minutes
(Love Hate Envy Friendship)

a novel
Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2015. 270 pp.

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

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

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

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

First reviews:

Read it! I’m sure it will become a movie very soon.

Channel 2 TV

An excellent and engaging book that flows...The process that the readers undergo is riveting.

Marmelada
Asaf Schurr

The Building

a novel

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

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

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

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 Matti (2008). Matti was also a finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize (USA, 2013).

His novel Matti was published in English (Dalkey Archive), German (Berlin Verlag), French (Actes Sud) and Italian (Volond).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Nurit Zarchi

In Her Shadow

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

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

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

Makor Rishon

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

Maariv

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

Haaretz

Nurit Zarchi

In Her Shadow

stories

Tel Aviv, Yedioth Ahronoth, 2013. 101 pp.
Amalia Rosenblum

The Sheep with a Black Spot

a novel (crossover)

Lily is a gifted child from a good home. Her mother is an artist, her father manages a bakery, and both are busy searching for themselves. Lily is gifted at solving math problems, she’s interested in astronomy, loves literature and art, and is in love with her teacher. But one day, her parents tell her that they are separating, and her life turns upside down. In a moment of distress, she adopts an old sheep with a black spot on its forehead and starts believing that it has supernatural powers. It is intelligent, understands what she says and gives her advice. With its help, Lily hopes to get her parents back together and also to impress her teacher. But looking after her mysterious guest gets complicated, and Lily seeks help from Zohar, a good-looking but shifty street kid, a tattoo artist with secrets of his own. The two become friends, but Lily’s life continues on its downward path. She gets caught up in secrets and lies, and her parents are too busy with themselves to see what is happening. How far will Lily go with her cover-ups and fantasies before those around her notice that something has gone wrong?

A brilliant book, moving and full of humor, that boldly tackles the difficulties of adolescence and the problem of feeling an outsider.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Amalia Rosenblum was born in New York in 1974 and grew up in Tel Aviv. She spent the 1990s in New York. A writer, journalist and screenwriter, she has an MA in philosophy and an MA in anthropology from New School University, New York. She is currently completing her PhD in psychology. At present, Rosenblum teaches at the Tel Aviv College of Management. She also writes regularly for the Israeli press, in particular literary reviews for Haaretz; she also writes for women’s and parenting magazines. Her screenplays for Holy for Me and Runhave won awards at the Chicago, Mannheim and Jerusalem festivals. Where the Village Road Ends won the Ze’ev Prize for Children’s Literature (2007).

Where the Village Road Ends has been published in German (Beltz & Gelberg), Italian (Salani; La Scuola) and Chinese (Jiangsu Phoenix Juvenile and Children).

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Alone in Shanghai

Age: 11-16

This historical novel begins in Berlin in November 1938 and continues in Shanghai during the dramatic times of World War II. After the Nazis carry out the Kristallnacht (Night of Crystal) attacks on German Jewry, 17-year-old Erica and her 15-year-older brother Theo flee their home and sail alone to Shanghai, the only place where Jewish refugees could find shelter. They leave behind their mother and grandmother, who hope to join them later. The two reach the Hongkew slum, populated by poor Chinese and penniless refugees, and share an apartment with Gustav and Charlotte, a Jewish couple from Holland who have left their two daughters behind with relatives.

Shanghai in those days was a lively, bustling city full of contrasts. The “international colony” is where European and American expats live, as well as better-off, well-connected refugees. One of these is Max, a handsome young German Jew, and a romance blooms between him and Erica.

Uziel catches the atmosphere of the time and the place superbly, weaving historical events into the plot. She takes her characters through love and disappointment, depicting moments of terror, hardship, the constant anxiety for relatives still in Europe, as well as displays of courage and true friendship. At the end of the war, after Erica and Theo learn that their mother and grandmother have not survived, they and Max decide to leave Shanghai and to build their future in what was then still Palestine.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE
Nava Semel

**The Girl in the Gong**


**AGE:** 8-11

Connie is flying to Beijing with her father, Israel’s next ambassador to China. But China seems so strange and far away, and she’s scared that her friends in Israel will forget her. To distract her, her father gives her a little Chinese gong, and it tells her a magical story inspired by an ancient Chinese folk-tale.

Kuan-Yu is the most famous gong maker in China. The secret of sound was handed down to him by an ancestor who had saved a nightingale from captivity, and his young daughter Qong-Gey assists him in the workshop. When Kuan-Yu’s fame reaches the Imperial palace, the Empress is terribly jealous and hatches a plot against him. She gets the Emperor to order Kuan-Yu to cast a gong with the most beautiful sound ever heard. If he fails, he will be executed. The gong maker blends copper, silver and gold, but his first two attempts are a failure. So Qong-Gey seeks advice from the Goddess of Fire, and the goddess tells her that the gong will only ring if human blood is added to the mix. As the gong maker prepares to cast the precious metals for his third attempt, Qong-Gey jumps into the blazing furnace and a perfect sound floats out. But Connie can’t accept this sad ending: she intervenes and changes it, bringing Qong-Gey back to life. And so, the little Israeli girl rescues the Chinese girl!

An enchanting and moving story that brings two cultures together.

Illustrations: Zagny Ormut-Durbin

**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 producer. A prolific writer in many genres, Semel has written eight children’s books. Her work has been adapted for radio, film, TV and the stage in Israel and abroad. Her novel, *And the Rat Laughs*, has been made into an opera. Semel is a member of the Massua Institute of Holocaust Studies and is on the board of governors of Yad Vashem – Israel Holocaust Museum. Semel has received several literary prizes, including the American National Jewish Book Award for Children’s Literature (1990), the Women Writers of the Mediterranean Award (1996), the Prime Minister’s Prize (1996), the Austrian Best Radio Drama Award (1996), the Rosenblum Prize for Stage Art (2005), Tel Aviv’s “Literary Woman of the Year” (2006), “One of the Best Seven” (German Radio, 2010) and the Educators and Scientists’ Association Award (Germany, 2010). *The Girl in the Gong* was performed on stage as a very successful musical in a co-production between Beit Lessin Theater and the Holon Mediatheque in 2012. Semel’s books have been published abroad in 10 languages.

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Ruthie Vital Gilad was born in Israel in 1963, and spent her childhood in the Philippines, England, Australia and Israel. She is a graduate of the Beit Zvi School for the Performing Arts. Gilad has worked as a reporter covering arts and culture for Israeli newspapers and as tourism correspondent for a British travel magazine. She has also translated plays. She writes books for children and youth and leads writing workshops.

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**Fear of Driving in the Fast Lane**

Michal and Alma, friends at high school, set themselves two goals for the summer vacation: to find boyfriends—a priority—and jobs. Michal finds a boyfriend without really trying, but Michal has neither boyfriend nor job—only arguments with her mom and the letters her father left her. After he died, Mom gave her his computer with all the letters he wrote her while he was ill. But it is only now, two years later, that Alma has dared to read them. And then, after Alma was sure this would be the saddest, least fun vacation ever, things change. She meets an unusual man, who looks like an aging movie star, and he introduces her to an extraordinary woman by the name of Metullah. Metullah owns a café, has shining eyes, sharp senses and she’s good at guessing what her customers want. Alma starts working in the café, and aside from learning how to make a finely chopped vegetable salad, she also learns how to get to know people—for example Miri, an energetic and optimistic woman who for some reason is scared of driving. “If I could, I’d introduce you to my son Yoav,” says Miri, and Alma thinks that perhaps she has found not only work but a boyfriend too.

With sensitivity and humor, Vital Gilad reveals the world of a young girl coping with the loss of her father and then discovering the ability to believe in herself and move ahead without fear.
Nurit Zarchi

Rosie in Love

Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2014. 30 pp.
AGE: 4 UP

Rosie Parsley, a little girl-rabbit, is in love with Mr. Lettuce, a boy-rabbit. But does he know about Rosie’s feelings? And is he in love with her? Rosie isn’t sure. After looking for hints—unsuccessfully—and wondering tearfully if she should write him a note, she decides to cook some tasty dishes to attract him. But although other rabbits come to eat, Mr. Lettuce doesn’t appear. So Rosie tries another way: she puts on lipstick, eye makeup and high-heeled shoes and goes out for a walk. But she trips and falls. Mr Lettuce comes and helps her up, yet when she asks him to be her boyfriend, he walks away. Defeated, Rosie goes home.

How dense boy-rabbits can be! she thinks. That’s it, she’s had enough! And then, as Rosie is getting over her crush, Mr. Lettuce shows up and says, “Shall we start over and take a stroll in the clover?”

A funny-romantic tale for little ones and big ones too.

Illustrations: Hilla Havkin
There is No Lion There

AGE: 3-6

This is a tale about coping with fear. Fears arise when kids leave their home and go to the park to play in the sandpit, swing on the swings and run around the paths. In the park, there are tall trees and low bushes and dark corners, and also strange folks, one of whom is walking a big dog. There are intriguing sounds, and at one end is a public bomb shelter that is scary dark inside, and stairs going down but you can’t see where they end. But there is no lion there! Even the birds that put their chicks to sleep at sundown know there’s no lion nearby to threaten them. And if there’s no lion in the park, what is there to fear?

In her amusing and clever way, Zarchi tells an enchanting story about what children are scared of, and shows how we can overcome fear.

Illustrations: Nessa Ryan

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE
Sarit Yishai-Levi

Little Mouse Macaroni and Baloney the Pony

Tel Aviv, Modan, 2014. 27 pp.
AGE: 3-6

Little Mouse Macaroni, an inquisitive and mischievous mouse, lives with his family on a horse ranch. He runs around the ranch all day, but his favorite place is the stables. That’s where Amadeus, the big aristocratic stallion lives and Macaroni is dying to make friends with him. But Amadeus ignores him. One day, he nearly treads on Macaroni and the little mouse cries.

A horse can’t be friends with a mouse, his brother tells him, because they can’t play together or run races. This makes Macaroni even sadder. But he refuses to play with Miki the cat who’s always sucking up to him, or with Terry the stuck up poodle.

No, Macaroni just wants to be friends with Amadeus. So early the next morning, he rushes to the stable. But while he’s waiting for Amadeus to wake up, he falls asleep. All of a sudden, something tickles his ear and when he opens his eyes, he sees the most beautiful horse, with the kindest eyes. It is Baloney, a friendly pony who has just come to the ranch. Baloney loves children and gives them rides on his back. So at last, Little Mouse Macaroni has found a true friend, and he isn’t sad anymore.

Illustrations: Galia Armeland

Sarit Yishai-Levi, a journalist and author, was born in Jerusalem in 1947 to a Sephardic family that has lived in the city for seven generations. She studied at the Nissan Nativ Acting Studio and later at Tel Aviv University. Before turning to journalism, Yishai-Levi acted in theater and film for several years. Later, she was a correspondent for various Israeli newspapers and magazines, including At, Monitit, HaOlam HaZeh and Hadashot; she also hosted Hebrew TV and radio programs in Los Angeles. At present, she is a senior correspondent for Olam Ha’Isha magazine and hosts TV shows on tourism and lifestyle. Yishai-Levi has published four non-fiction books. Her first novel, The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem, an exceptional bestseller in Israel, received the Publishers Association’s Gold and Platinum Prizes (2014) and the Steimatzky Prize for best-selling book of the year (2014).

The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem is forthcoming in English (St. Martin’s Press), German (Aufbau), Turkish (Koton) and Italian (Sonzogno).

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Naama Benziman was born in Jerusalem in 1968. She graduated from Bezalel Art and Design Academy in 1992 and is now completing graduate studies in Visual Literacy. She works as a freelance artist, editor, curator, illustrator and author, and as a lecturer at Israel's top visual arts academies. In 1998-1999 she wrote and illustrated a feminist column for the mass circulation daily Yedioth Ahronoth. Benziman’s artwork has been featured throughout Europe, North and South America, and Asia. Her posters for the right to education and the universal right to housing won the international poster competition by Poster For Tomorrow (2011 & 2013). Five illustrations in Emilia won an Honorable Mention in the Picture Book Illustration competition awarded by 3x3, The Magazine of Contemporary Illustration (2014). Benziman lives in Tel Aviv with her partner, Dori Oryan, and their two children.

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Shlomit Cohen-Assif was born in 1949 in Iraq and came to Israel in 1951 with her family. She grew up in Holon, where she still lives today, and studied at Tel Aviv University. She began publishing poetry for adults and for children during her military service. Cohen-Assif is one of the most prominent Hebrew children’s poets. Her works have been adapted for the stage and radio; they have also been the subject of dance and set to music. Cohen-Assif has written many children’s stories, and her poems have been included in numerous schoolbooks and anthologies, both in Israel and abroad. Cohen-Assif has been awarded many prizes, including the ACUM Prize three times (1979; 1980; 1982), the Ze’ev Prize twice (1981; 1990), the Prime Minister’s Prize twice (1984; 2001), the ACUM Prize for Lifetime Achievement (1995), the Fania Bergstein Prize (2003) and the Bialik Prize (2010).

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King Solomon’s Tiger

Tel Aviv, Sifriat Poalim, 2014. 22 pp.
AGE: 4-6

King Solomon was thought to be the wisest man in the world and tradition has it that he could communicate with animals too. But what was Solomon like as a child? An intriguing and original answer can be found in this modern fable by Shlomit Cohen-Assif. Children will easily identify, for little Solomon loves animals, makes friends with them and invites them all—the worm, the ant, the grasshopper, the hedgehog, the lizard and the frog—to the palace. His mother, Queen Bathsheba, gets mad at him, but Solomon calms her, claiming that he learns many useful things from the animals.

One day, when a queen from a faraway country visits the palace, something unpleasant happens: a hedgehog pricks her bottom, and she gets a sting on her tongue. Following this diplomatic incident, Bathsheba decides to throw all the animals back into the forest. But apparently she doesn’t succeed, and one evening she bumps into a tiger roaming the palace. The tiger has jumped out of Solomon’s dream! And after it come other animals, large and small! They bring a lot of fun to the palace and teach the young prince that wisdom isn’t being the smartest, wisdom is being the most humane of all.

Illustrations: Gil-li Alon Kuriel

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE
Daniella Carmi was born in Tel Aviv. She studied philosophy and communications at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and writes drama, screenplays and books for adults, children and youth. Her y/a book, Samir and Yonatan, received an Honorable Mention from UNESCO for Children and Young People’s Literature in the Service of Tolerance (1997), the Berlin Prize for Best Children’s Book in Translation (1997), the Silver Quill Award (Germany, 1997), the Batchelder Award for Best Translated Book (2001), and the Italian WIZO Prize (2003). Carmi has also received first prize at the Acre Festival (1998), the Prime Minister’s Prize twice (1999; 2010) and the ACUM Prize (2002). In 2007, her story A Lady Hippopotamus on the Roof was performed at the Haifa Children’s Theater Festival. Carmi has also been nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Prize. Her books have been translated into 15 languages.

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Where do Grandpas Fly?

Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2014. 22 pp.
AGE 3-6

Liora and her Granddad go for a walk in a field of wild daisies. They blow on the silvery clusters and the seeds fly in all directions. Granddad says that when it rains the seeds will sprout and new daisies will grow. Liora asks, “Can we fly too?” and Granddad laughs. The next day, after he picks Liora up from preschool, they both jump gleefully into puddles and splash water everywhere.

Just before summer, Granddad gets sick and lies in bed for a long time. At night, Liora dreams that she’s flying and sees Granddad in bed in the middle of the desert, the sun blazing above him. In the morning, she wakes up crying. But in the autumn, Granddad gets better, and the two walk again in the wild daisy field. Granddad walks very slowly, leaning on his cane. Liora asks, “Granddad, where would you like to fly to?” Granddad thinks hard and answers, “To a flower bed in your preschool, to sprout there. And if you can, you will come and water me.”

Illustrations: Hilla Havkin
Jonathan Yavin

Pumpkin the Kitten

AGE: 3-6

The sun, the moon, the fish and stars
The flowers, trees, the birds and cars,
The sea, the rain, even the sand—
I like almost everything—
It’s cats I can’t stand!
Why?
Because one second they’re nice,
And the next they bite
(Well, Mom said they might)—
Mom said that hating is silly and bad.
“It will only make you bitter and sad
And though you do not have to love every kitten,
You should not hold a grudge because once you got bitten”—

A few days later, Dad came home with this box,
That was rattling and rambling and didn’t have locks.
And when I opened the lid—guess what I saw…
I was so excited, my heart quickly beating…
Of course:
It was a wee baby itsy-bitsy teeny-tiny kitten!—
“Let’s name it,” Dad said, “before Mommy gets back!”
And I shouted out: “Pumpkin, ’cause it’s orange and black!”

Illustrations: Gilad Soffer

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Jonathan Yavin was born in New York in 1972. He holds a BA in philosophy and literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Yavin started writing professionally at age 19 and later wrote personal columns and political essays for the Hebrew press – Haaretz and Yedioth Ahronoth in particular. He has also participated in many TV and radio shows. At present, he teaches creative writing and is op-ed columnist for the daily Yedioth Ahronoth. Yavin has written children’s books, y/a and adult novels. His first children’s book, When I Grow Up, has been reprinted ten times since its publication in 2002. Pumpkin the Kitten has become a set text for kindergarten and elementary schools. Yavin has received the Book Publishers Association’s Platinum Prize for Pumpkin the Kitten (2011) and the Prime Minister’s Prize (2011).

His book, Oh, Brother, won the Israel Museum Award for Illustration (2006).

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