NEW BOOKS FROM ISRAEL
Spring 2016

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Poetry

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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 at Tel Aviv University. A literary editor and curator of exhibitions, Burstein writes literary and art reviews for the Hebrew press and has also edited programs for Israel Radio’s music station. Since 2011 he is editor of the poetry journal Helikon. Burstein has been awarded the Jerusalem Prize for Literature (1997), the Ministry of Science and Culture Prize for Poetry (2002), the Bernstein Prize for his novel, Avner Brenner (2005), the Prime Minister’s Prize (2006) and the Goldberg Prize for Sun’s Sister (2014).

Burstein’s novels have been published in French (Actes Sud, Arles), English (Dalkey Archive, USA), German (Wallstein), Italian (Riuniti) and Turkish (Dedalus).

Mud

a novel

The hero of Burstein’s sixth novel is the prophet Jeremiah, a young poet who starts predicting a catastrophe. In the Jerusalem streets where he wanders, people travel on the light-rail train and talk on cell phones, but the Temple is standing, King Jehoiakim lives in an ugly palace, and Jeremiah’s words demoralize the people. He warns that Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian army is going to surround the corruption-riddled city until it destroys it and sends its population into exile. But no one in Jerusalem wants to listen, even when Babylonian helicopters and tanks are on the city outskirts. At this point, Jehoiakim commits suicide and his crown passes to his son Jehoiachin, a talented pianist who is trapped into giving up his flourishing musical career in Vienna and boarding a plane back home. But his reign is short and his uncle, Zedekiah, takes power. Zedekiah is a successful poet with tattoos, whose poems grace the pages of prestigious journals, as well as Jeremiah’s boyhood friend. But now that he is king, Zedekiah sees Jeremiah as a traitor and orders him to be thrown into a pit of mud. Fortunately, a pack of dogs, headed by a talking dog, rescues the tormented prophet from drowning.

Mud is a complex, brilliant and daring novel. Partly an attempt to rewrite the story of Jeremiah in modern dress and humor, it may also be a bloodcurdling prophesy for contemporary Jerusalem. It calls on the reader to examine the relevance of the biblical text today and the cyclical nature of history.

Burstein has succeeded!.. The last chapters of Mud are truly hair-raising.

Haaretz

The most effective among the books of anxiety and political criticism over the last decade. Mud is surprising and attractive...It makes a concrete story from the link between religious thought and opposition to power.

Yediot Ahronoth

Raises original, thought-provoking questions.

Ynet
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). Rights to Semel's books have been sold abroad in 11 languages.

Erinda can’t sleep: the next day, her childhood will be over and she’ll be a fully fledged Flyer. She’ll leave the nest where she's been raised with her age group, winglets that have sprouted on her ankles will enable her to fly, and she’ll know what her mission is.

Erinda lives on the planet Mercurium, to which her human fore–fathers 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 Erinda’s mission.

Erinda 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 Erinda.

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.

Flying Girl  
(Mercurium Trilogy, 1)

a fantasy novel  
crossover  
Gail Hareven

I Am Leona

a novel
Tel Aviv, Achuzat Bayit, 2014. 539 pp.

Leona was born in Africa, where her father was working. She was loved and happy in her sunlit world. Because there was nobody around to keep her occupied, she immersed herself in books from an early age. Books raised her, and their heroes were her friends and role models for coping with life. But then, things went wrong. One day, Leona had to leave Africa, travel with her grandmother to Israel, and begin an unanticipated life. Her experiences cut stormily across social groups, beginning in a kibbutz, continuing in an ultra-Orthodox community and later in the bohemian student circles of Jerusalem. She gradually grows into an attractive teenager and then into a woman who encounters love. On the way, she meets a variety of characters, both loved and hostile, and in order to cope with them she recalls the voices of the heroes in her books, striving to do the right and moral thing.

I Am Leona is a tumultuous novel, inspired by the picaresque novels of the 19th century. Since Leona’s unique language draws on the books she has been reading since childhood, she often sounds as though she herself had just emerged from their pages. A courageous and inspiring young person, she faces many problems without giving up on the search for the good in human beings.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

Gail Hareven was born in Jerusalem in 1959. She studied behavioral sciences at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Talmud and Jewish philosophy at the Shalom Hartman Institute. Hareven has written widely on politics and feminist issues; she has been a columnist for Maariv, Hadashot, the Jerusalem Report and Lady Globes, and writes book reviews. At present, Hareven teaches feminist theory, leads writing workshops, and lectures on socio-cultural topics.

In 2006, she was visiting professor at the University of Illinois. Hareven has published fiction, non-fiction, children’s books and four plays, all of which have been staged. For her novel, The Confessions of Noa Weber (My True Love), Hareven received the prestigious Sapir Prize (2002) and the Best Translated Novel Award (USA, 2010). In 2013 she was awarded the Prime Minister’s Prize.

Hareven’s novels have been published abroad in English (Melville, USA; Open Letter, NY) and Italian (Giuntina).

Full of charm...Leona captures the reader’s heart.  
Haaretz

Hareven gives the reader long hours of enjoyment.  
Yedioth Ahronoth

Builds up a gripping chain of events.  
Walla

A captivating, enthralling book.  
Makor Rishon

Hareven’s new book has an unforgettable heroine.  
Israel Hayom

Click here for a complete listing on the ITHL website.
Noga Albalach

Sealand

a novel
Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2015. 166 pp.

Galia, a young teacher, and Natan, a retired bank clerk, live in the same apartment building. But their little world is turned upside down when a Bulgarian migrant worker, fleeing from his employer, enters their building. Confronting the harsh rules of the global village and its absurd immorality, the two neighbors come up with a plan to smuggle the Bulgarian worker out of the country.

In the background, Galia starts a romantic relationship with Michael, who has unusual views on education. He introduces Galia to Sealand, a micro-nation situated on a military offshore platform, 12 kilometers off the eastern coast of England—a metaphor for a quiet rebellion, a way of establishing one’s own rules within a lawful framework. Michael also tells Galia about his wish to set up a personal video channel where he can broadcast 24/7 as an artistic statement. Galia encourages this idea, which stimulates the young couple and plays an interesting role in their relationship.

Sealand is an intimate story about seemingly ordinary people who lead subversive lives. The encounter between the four characters leads each one to examine the limits of his or her personal space and those of law and sovereignty.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS
Sara Aharoni was born in Israel in 1953. She was a teacher, educator and school principal for 20 years. She also spent four years in Lima, Peru, as an educational emissary of the Jewish Agency. Together with her husband, Meir Aharoni, she has written, edited and published a series of books about Israel, including four in English. She has also published six children's books.

In 2008, Aharoni published her debut novel, Saltana’s Love, based on her mother’s life story, and it became a bestseller. Her third and most recent novel, Mrs. Rothschild’s Love, went instantly to the top of the Israeli bestseller list. Aharoni received the Book Publishers Association’s Platinum Prize in 2010.

Mrs. Rothschild’s Love

Everyman knows about the Rothschilds, possibly the most famous Jewish family ever. Among Jews, the name itself has become synonymous with ‘wealthy philanthropist’. In her historical novel, based on extensive research, Sara Aharoni writes about the founding father of the dynasty, Mayer Amschel Rothschild, who was active in Germany in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. But it is his wife, Gutle, who is the narrator and heroine of the book. Gutle keeps a secret diary in which she bares her emotions, thoughts and secret desires. She and her beloved Mayer Amschel were both born in the Jewish ghetto of Frankfurt-am-Main and they married when she was 17 years old. Mayer was a bold, creative man who fought against the restrictions imposed on Jews and strove to achieve equal rights for them. At the same time, he was enormously successful in his banking business, which came to play a central role in Europe's commercial life. Mayer and Gutle passed on their work ethic and devotion to their children, who settled in the great capitals of Europe and established a network of financial institutions.

Despite their wealth, their closeness to rulers and the emancipation granted to the Jews, Mayer and Gutle never left the ghetto. Gutle’s great love for her husband, the ten children she bore and raised, her choice to live modestly, the tragedies and joys of her life—are all masterfully woven into a sweeping and emotion-filled novel. Aharoni’s book brings to life an engrossing period in the history of European Jewry at the time of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Like many readers in Israel, I think many readers in other languages may find interest and enjoyment in Sarah Aharoni’s new novel.

Author Amos Oz

This lovely story transforms the myth into something alive and human.

Author Abraham B. Yehoshua

A bestseller that has burst ahead... on all the lists...Its magic secret is...its peek behind the scenes.

Haaretz
Eli Shmueli

MarginsMan

a novel

Joshua works at a postal distribution center and lives in the basement of a housing project on the edge of West Jerusalem. A young man without means, he has never been with a woman, and his world is confined to crowded city buses, grimy sidewalks and foul pubs where he seeks intimacy. What drives him is his craving for love and human affection, but it only leads to one defeat after the other.

MarginsMan is about the loneliness of the outcast, the little individual, and his attempts to find companionship, particularly with women. It is also about the tyranny of desire, and man’s vulnerability when he needs tenderness. A unique blend of the individual and the city he lives in, the book is also about Jerusalem, where Joshua follows his own Via Dolorosa. Not a Jerusalem shrouded in the aura of history and holiness, but the mundane reality of the people living in it. Shmueli’s Jerusalem is dusty, wretched, full of uninspired lives and a bland humanity whose only purpose is to get through life.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

A searing and powerful book.
This is literature, alive and outspoken and painful.
Yedioth Ahronoth

An Orwellian novel, something of a Down and Out in Jerusalem.
Shmueli has a keen eye for depicting human foibles, and for shaping Bukowskian characters 
....A unique poetic voice.
Makor Rishon

A moving novel...Our bestseller...Shmueli’s poetics cast a spell on the reader.
Ynet

A breathtaking book.
La’Isha

Eli Shmueli was born in Jerusalem in 1977 and still lives there today. He has a BA in psychobiology and an MA in neurobiology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He also studied metaphysics and psychology, all while working at construction sites, psychiatric institutions and as a porter. Over the years, he has worked at numerous low-paying jobs, usually via employment agencies. They exposed him to the human frailty and weakness which have become the focus of his writing.

MarginsMan, Shmueli’s first novel, is based on his experiences as a typist of zip codes at a postal distribution center. It received the Ministry of Culture Prize for Debut Novel (2015). Shmueli also writes poetry and publishes political commentary in the daily Haaretz and in Palestinian-Israeli magazines.
Avinoam came home from the war wounded in both body and mind. He witnessed the horrific death of a friend in combat, and the traumatic event does not leave him. He wants to erase it from his mind, but keeps going back to it. A shining light bursts into his mind and fills him with dread, then he wakes up sweating in the dark next to his peacefully sleeping wife Naomi. The shining light, accompanied by the sarcastic laugh of his dead friend, haunt him in the daytime too, but he doesn’t tell anyone. As a result, daily life seems meaningless; everything is pointless, absurd. The trauma disrupts his family life, his love-making and his work, including a business trip to Frankfurt. But Avinoam learns to live with it, and the feeling of senselessness helps him deal with the petty struggles, emotional outbursts and human sorrow that surround him. For he observes everything from the sidelines, uninvolved.

This sensitive novel follows Avinoam’s attempts to overcome the panic attacks that plague him and to understand the mental mechanism that causes them. Yet although he hides his secret, his loving and wise Naomi understands. This is an optimistic novel, and the reader will empathize with Avinoam who finally manages to get a grip on life and appreciate its value. The light is not only dazzling and painful, a prelude to nightmares: it can also be soft and consoling, the dawn of a new day.

Avram Kantor was born in 1950 in Haifa and grew up on Kibbutz Mizra, of which he is still a member. He studied Hebrew and general literature at Haifa University, then German at the University of Konstanz in Germany, where he also completed advanced studies in publishing. After a number of years as editor of the fiction department of Sifriat Poalim Publishers, he became its editor-in-chief and CEO. Since its merger with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishers, he has been deputy-CEO. He is also a translator from English and German to Hebrew.

Kantor has published novels, collections of stories and two books for children, one of which has been adapted and staged. Kantor was awarded the Ze’ev Prize in 1995.

Two of Kantor’s novels have been published in German (Carl Hanser).

Kantor succeeds in depicting a traumatic condition without slipping into pathos or self-pity… An impressive writing talent. Haaretz

Gave me unique pleasure… A moving book. Kol Israel 2
Itamar Levy

Hugo’s Earthquake

a novel

In this wild and funny novel, a playwright named Itamar Levy has written a play with the same title as the novel. Hugo, the protagonist of the play, is a 70something Holocaust survivor who lives in an apartment in Tel Aviv. One day, he sneaks into the living room of his neighbor Rivka while she is in the shower, and finds a closet with an amazing machine that can simulate earthquakes. He turns on the machine—and the whole building collapses. When Hugo regains consciousness, he is alone with a hand—not his—sticking out of the ruins. It is Rivka’s, he thinks, and by the time rescue arrives, he has befriended the hand and regaled it with his heroism, including taking revenge on his caretaker’s boyfriend, and rescuing a young girl from a fire. Outside the play, Itamar the playwright’s experiences are no less amazing. He discovers that a dead friend’s body has been switched with an unknown woman who is buried instead of him. Only Itamar knows about this. On the other hand, the whole country knows—wrongly—from the press that he tried to murder the lead actor in his play. (In fact, the man tried to commit suicide and Itamar saved him.) In the meantime, as Itamar’s involvement in the play grows, Hugo starts to control him. But who does all this happen to? And how is Itamar Levy the playwright connected to Itamar Levy the author of the novel?

A bold book that presents life as a drama of the absurd—and ourselves as actors wearing masks.
Nizan Weisman

*Israeli Breakfast*

stories
Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2015. 192 pp.

Idan, a new army recruit, can’t take his commander’s abuse any longer, and breaks down. He goes AWOL and seeks refuge in the home of his non-conformist grandfather, because he is sure that he will understand and protect him. In the second story, Miki, a successful physicist, is attracted to Zen Buddhism and decides to leave his family and city in order to find peace in the countryside. But as he searches for his dream home, he realizes the phoniness of the ‘idyllic’ pastoral life and meets a vacuous spirituality that disgusts him. In the title story, Ofer is a would-be high-tech entrepreneur whose startup has collapsed, forcing him to sell his home. This seriously damages his relationship with his wife and he starts to doubt his masculinity. In another, a lawyer meets a bully who beat him up as a child, and is overwhelmed by the traumatic memory. In the final story, Motti takes his son on a trip to Amsterdam. This is Motti’s first trip abroad, but whether it will restore his male ego and enable his son to see him as a reliable father, is not clear.

All the stories in this impressive collection deal with the Israeli male ego. In matters of livelihood, professional ambition, self-fulfillment and the desperate need for recognition, Weisman’s heroes find themselves at a crossroads. They must face up to issues of responsibility, love and loyalty, as well as the gap between their dreams and reality. With a critical eye on social norms and a deep love for human beings, Weisman serves up slices of Israeli life full of humor and compassion.

PARTIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

An outstanding collection that demonstrates full mastery of the art of the short story.  
*Haaretz*

This is Hebrew prose that is arousing but measured, multi-layered but economical.  
*Yedioth Ahronoth*

A wonderful writer... His writing is human, pure, captivating.  
*Author Yossi Waxman*
Yitzhak Gormezano Goren

Blanche

a novel

Blanche is Gormezano Goren’s second novel about Alexandria. The sweeping plot is set in the late 1940s and centers on a beautiful young Jewish girl. Blanche came to Alexandria with her grandmother from the island of Corfu, after her mother ran away with her Italian lover and her father vanished running after her. As her sexuality blossoms, Blanche has a love affair with Gaston, a wealthy playboy and her employer’s son. Gaston changes girlfriends like socks, discarding them as soon as they yield to him, until he meets Blanche. She enjoys his gifts, his money and his love, but preserves her chastity. However, Gaston’s father orders him to give her up and marry a rich woman. Blanche, lovelorn at first, will also not remain alone: her grandmother and a neighbor plot in secret and arrange a match with Raphael, a poor but handsome young man who is part of a Zionist underground cell.

The city of Alexandria is also the heroine of the novel, just like Blanche, and both are in full bloom. Alexandria is a lovely, vibrant, extravagant and liberated cosmopolitan city where nothing is sacred apart from money. Gormezano Goren depicts it skillfully with a feather-light touch and subtle humor, highlighting its tolerance and the neighborly relations between Arab Moslems, Christians and Jews, who have come there from east and west. But all this changes. When Blanche and Raphael leave the city in the early 1950s and emigrate to Israel, Blanche’s beauty withers, as does the beloved city that she is leaving, never to return.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PROGRESS

One of the loveliest and most moving novels.

Keshet

There’s a lot of fun in this book, in the style, in the twists of the plot and in its hedonistic approach…Blanche is a landmark in today’s Israeli culture.

Jerusalem Post
Yitzhak Gormezano Goren was born in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1941 and immigrated to Israel as a child. A playwright and novelist, Goren studied English and French literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University, and received a MFA in theater direction in the United States. In 1982, he co-founded the Bimat Kedem Theater, to promote Israeli productions with an emphasis on non-European Jewish culture. In 1998, the company established the Bimat Kedem Publishing House. Gormezano Goren has worked as a broadcast editor and is active in the Israeli theater and film world. He has been awarded the National Council for Culture and the Arts Prize (1966), the Ramat Gan Prize (1979), the Govinska-Baratz Prize (1979), the Prime Minister’s Prize (2001) and the Arik Einstein Prize (2015).

Alexandrian Summer is the story of two Jewish families in Alexandria, Egypt, before the overthrow of King Farouk in 1952. The Egyptian upper-middle class is laid bare in this atmospheric novel, which pokes fun at the rather startling sexual hypocrisies of the bourgeoisie.

Hamdi-Ali senior is an old-time patriarch with more than a dash of Turkish blood, who knows that tying one’s wife to the old iron bedstead and giving her an occasional beating is the way to keep the home-fires burning. His elder son, a promising horse jockey, can’t afford sexual frustration as it leads him to overeating and endangers his career, but the woman he lusts after won’t let him get beyond undoing a few buttons. Victor, the younger son, has no such problems: little girls being the coy creatures they are, he opts for little boys and at a tender age orchestrates gay orgies among the playschool set.

Most of the action is viewed from the perspective of Robby, the young son of the hosting Jewish family. But however vivid his perceptions, the true heroine of the story—smooth as marble and quietly observing the raucous traffic, swarming crowds and braying donkeys—is the city of Alexandria itself.

Published in English (New Vessel Press, NY)
When Tammuz’s first stories were published in 1950, they were seen as unusual compared to the realistic prose then in vogue. Still now, they are considered a milestone in the history of the Hebrew short story. The present collection combines four books published by Tammuz, plus three additional stories.

*Sands of Gold* (Machbarot Lesifru, 1950), Tammuz’s first collection, is set in old Tel Aviv—then still a small town—and in a rural settlement during the British Mandate. Tammuz harkens back nostalgically to childhood experiences, to innocence and growing pains. The stories focus on a sensitive, introverted boy through the lens of an adult narrator grieving for a world that has been destroyed.

In his second collection, *A Garden Enclosed* (Schocken, 1957), Tammuz included satirical, grotesque and topical stories, sketching a portrait of Israeli society after the 1948-49 War of Independence. Here, he becomes a critic of Israeli society, condemning the vulgarity and ugliness of modern urban life.

*The Story of Anton the Armenian and Other Stories* (Machbarot Lesifrut, 1964), shows Tammuz’s need to respond to historical events. Relationships between characters reflect the conflicts between nations, and these stories of ideas depict Israel being built on the ruins of the authentic, rural Jewish-Arab country of the past.

In his fourth collection, *The Bitter Scent of Geranium* (Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1980), Tammuz returns to the Land of Israel of the 1920s and 30s. Embedding them in the historic events of the time, he portrays various types of Jewish immigrant in old Tel Aviv. Their static quality, their eccentric traits and the distanced objectivity with which the narrator portrays them, produce the humorous tone of the book.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE**

Benjamin Tammuz (1919-1989) was born in Russia and immigrated to pre-state Israel at age 5. He studied law and economics at Tel Aviv University and later attended the Sorbonne, where he studied art history. A novelist, journalist, critic, painter and sculptor, Tammuz served for many years as literary editor of the daily *Haaretz*. He also spent four years in London as Israel’s cultural attaché, and was writer-in-residence at Oxford University for five years. Tammuz published novels and novellas, short stories, plays, and books for children. He received several literary prizes, including the Talpir Prize (1970), the Ze’ev Prize (1971) and the Prime Minister’s Prize (1978). His novel, *Minotaur*, was selected Book of the Year in England in 1981 by Grahame Greene. His work has been published abroad in 15 languages.
Benjamin Tammuz

BESTSELLER IN ITALY!

Minotaur

a novel
104 pp.

“T

Thea, this letter...is not signed and I
daresay we shall never meet. Yet I
have seen you and I made sure that you saw
me...You didn’t recognize me. But even so, you belong to me. You
will never have an opportunity to ask me questions, but my voice will
reach you through my letters, and I know that you will read them.”

Thus begins a bizarre correspondence. The writer first sees Thea
on a bus. With her dark hair, honey-colored eyes and regal bearing,
she is the mysterious beauty he claims to have been searching for
all his life. She is bright, intellectual, sheltered and romantic. He
is a secret agent and becomes Thea’s phantom lover. He is unseen
and unknown, except through the hypnotic letters with which he
bewitches her heart and soul. The reader awaits every letter as
tensely as Thea, and feels equally frustrated by the cruel anonymity
that he demands. Tamuz’s great skill gives credibility both to
Thea’s growing love for her invisible lover and to the obsessive
desire for innocence and beauty that she inspires.

Selected Best Book of the Year by Graham Greene in the
Observer, 1981, and by David Pryce-Jones in the Financial Times,
1983.

Published in English (NAL; Signet; Enigma; Europa
NY); French (Buchet-Chastel; Serpent à Plumes); Italian
(e/o; Tascabili); German (Fischer); Spanish (Destino); Chinese
(China Social Sciences); Greek (Gavrielides); Turkish (Doganc); Russian
(Gesharim/Mosti Kulturi); Estonian (Elmatar); Polish
(Claroscura); Slovenian (Mohorjeva Druzba); Portuguese (Rádio
Londres).

Bottle Parables

a novella

I

n this novella, Tammuz deals with the
issue of Jewish identity after the Holocaust
and what he sees as the place of Judaism in
Western culture. Bottle Parables is the story of
an assimilated Jew who lives in London and
works as an art dealer and a muralist, painting
on restaurant walls. At the lowest point in
his life, when his art has become completely
commercial, he meets an old Holocaust
survivor who brings him salvation. The man,
a former art collector who published Yiddish
magazines, expounds his views on the essence
of Judaism and the role of the Jew in the world.
He claims that the natural place of the Jews is in
the Diaspora and not in a country of their own,
because their spirituality and intellectuality
preserve Western culture from decline and
degeneration.

Published in Italian (e/o)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

You feel like holding the book in your hands for a while...before
putting it back on the shelf of timeless novels.

Il Corriere della Sera

An uncommon book, very suggestive and original, whose charm
enraptures the reader. Not to be missed.

L’Unita

I was engulfed by the story...The design is beautiful and complex, with
not a word wasted.

Author Alan Sillitoe

Very much in the manner of William Faulkner and Laurence Durrell.

New York Times Book Review

Bottle Parables is without doubt Tammuz’s most
daring book, written in the service of cultural
and intellectual existence.

The Short Story in Israel

A wonderful novella...Fascinating.

Psychom.com

An interesting and fluent story.

Davar
Yishai Sarid

The Investigation of Captain Erez

a novel

Yishai Sarid has written an unusual thriller—without bodies, good guys or bad guys. The narrator is an unsuccessful Tel Aviv lawyer. He has only one client, a loser like himself, who tries to commit suicide: he shares a seedy apartment with a lazy, penniless alcoholic who dreams of being an actress; and to top it all he has a strong, opinionated “Jewish mother.”

Compared to this, the case that our lawyer is given on reserve duty in the army seems a challenge: A young woman named Almog has accused an elite officer of rape. The girl comes from an underprivileged family in the south, while the officer, Captain Erez, is considered of “the best,” a young man with values, the drive to excel and to contribute to society. But the narrator and Kobi, his gay assistant, whose personal life is also complicated, find that the relationship between the accused and the victim is not what they’d expected. And the further the investigation proceeds, the harder the picture is to pin down. Was it rape or a misunderstanding? And if it was rape, how to explain Erez’s reaction when the narrator tells him that Almog is pregnant? Indeed, Erez, who so far has denied the charge, is ecstatic. He is even willing to marry Almog. Thus the accused confesses and the narrator closes the case, but without any sense of satisfaction.

Published in French (Actes Sud, Arles).

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, and writes articles for the Hebrew press.

Sarid’s second novel, Limassol, won the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière for Best Foreign Crime Novel (France, 2011), the SNCF Award (France, 2011), the Maria Giorgetti International Award (Italy, 2013); it was also shortlisted for the prestigious IMPAC Award (Dublin, 2012).

Rights to his novels have been sold in 11 languages.

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING ON THE ITHL WEBSITE.
Nissim Aloni

The Owl


These four stories, first published between 1956 and 1962, are about children growing up in disadvantaged South Tel Aviv during World War II. In the title story, a boy’s everyday trials—parents fussing over his homework and the state of his fingernails—are increasingly interrupted by radio news bulletins charting the Germans’ ravages across Europe. The boy merges the chaos of the world into a blurred personal mythology staked to gothic reality by one glaring eye: “In the attic of Salomon’s house lived an owl which was a thousand years old and put the curse of death on anyone who dared approach it.”

Here, as in the rest of this fine collection, the child’s perspective is beautifully captured. His innocent, unblinking gaze grasps the world and claims from its everyday stories his own unassailable knowledge. And all the while, the Jewish folklore and spirituality of the Mizrahi-Eastern neighborhood gives an enchanted aura to the whole.

Forthcoming in French (Viviane Hamy, Paris)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Nissim Aloni (1926-1998), one of Israel’s leading dramatists, was born in Tel Aviv. He studied history and French culture at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, then spent a year in Paris, where he became acquainted with new European theater. His first play, Most Cruel the King, was produced by Habima Theater in 1953.

After his return from Paris, he wrote and directed The King’s New Clothes, which marked a total revolution in Israeli theater. Aloni’s work was critically acclaimed. He wrote and staged 12 plays, and published one collection of short stories.

Among his many literary prizes: Playwright of the Year (1964; 1971; 1976), Director of the Year (1971), the President’s Prize (1971), the Tel Aviv Prize for Stage Arts (1971), the Bialik Prize (1983), the Rosenblum Prize for stage arts (1993), the Israeli Theater Prize for Lifetime Achievement (1995), the Israel Prize (1996) and the Israeli Theater Prize for Translator of the Year (1997; 1998).

Superbly polished – and, why not say it, perfect.

Haaretz

A superb story-teller, highly imaginative and powerful.

Moznaim

An enchanting coming of age novella...A great author. This book is pure pleasure.

Maariv NRG

Aloni [is] the Israeli Garcia Marques...These marvelous stories are the pinnacle of Israeli literature.

Iton Tel Aviv
Aryeh Sivan (1929-2015) was born in Tel Aviv. He fought in Israel's 1948 War of Independence as a member of the elite Palmach unit. Sivan studied Hebrew language and literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and worked as a high school teacher. He published some fiction and many collections of poetry. Sivan received several awards, including the Prime Minister's Prize (1973), the Brenner Prize (1989), the Shin Shalom Prize (1992), the Bialik Prize (1998) and the prestigious Israel Prize for Poetry (2010). His poetry has been translated into 17 languages.

Adonis

Aryeh Sivan

Adonis

a novel

Ostensibly a detective mystery, this light-hearted first novel is built like a box within a box. Wandering about Tel Aviv during the 1991 Gulf War, the narrator comes across the diary of Avner Ben-Horin, a former policeman turned private detective, and retells his story. The diary dates back to British Mandate Tel Aviv of the 1930s an energetic, defiant fledgling town with a frontier quality. An introspective man with a literary bent, Avner Ben-Horin is hired to unravel the disappearance of Zecharia Yulin, but his account of the investigation is in fact a shell, opening up to reveal an intensely nostalgic, confessional narrative.

Under detective cover, Sivan (whose poetic voice is heard throughout) paints a colorful, exotic portrait of Tel Aviv's past, including the violent political schisms between leftists and Communists, the literati and oddball characters from all corners of the earth. His target is also the nature of literary creation. The nameless contemporary narrator returns at the end to consider Ben-Horin's motive for writing the tale of his failed stab at detective work. He raises an array of possibilities, thus doing the work of critics and saving them the use of their scalpel. The true subject of the novel, however, is the author's loving, sinuous recreation of place and time.

Published in German (S. Fischer), Estonian (Eesti Raamat) and Chinese (Baihuazhou).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

A unique book...A landmark.  
Die Welt
Can be read...as a detective story, a political thriller, an intelligent puzzle.  
FAZ
A wonderful, poetic novel, in which the detective story only seems to reign.

Volksstimme
A complex thriller with myste–rious characters and a colorful picture of Tel Aviv in the 1930s.

Neue Züricher Zeitung
A gift for riddle solvers...thoroughly entertaining, full of eye-winking and tongue-in-cheek wit.  
Yedioth Ahronoth
Nava Semel

Hymn to the Bible

poetry

Abraham and Sarah, David and Michal, Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, Ecclesiastes and Mishael, and other biblical characters peek out with a wink and a smile from the pages of the Bible. They are vibrant folk, driven by impulses and desires, subject to the twists and turns of fate; they sin and they go astray. Is the human condition in the 21st century any different to that of antiquity? Not necessarily.

Lilith demands equal rights for women; Esau goes to couples therapy; Michal is jealous of her brother Jonathan, who is in love with her husband; Sarah is a xenophobe; Vashti is a battered wife; Mishael goes on a coming-of-age trip to the East, and the young Ecclesiastes leads a protest movement in the city square. Everything is still happening today, or in Ecclesiastes’ words: “There is nothing new under the sun.”

In writing this book, I wanted to go back to the tradition of dramatic rhyming verse, to popular Jewish balladry, and to the biting cabaret of Berthold Brecht. The words wave hello to earlier times, and particularly to the poet-playwright Itzik Manger, a father of Yiddish theater, whose plays have been with me since my childhood with all their dizzying theatrical and literary spectacles. Perhaps the time has come to acknowledge these underground sources that feed our Israeli identity, and to create a renewed partnership with them.

From Nava Semel’s Preface

A really intriguing book…This book takes the Bible stories to places that are daring even to the secular reader.

Maariv NRG

A refreshing breeze…It’s fun to tuck into the Bible’s legends… when served up in such an intriguing dish.

Israel TV, Channel 1

Well worth reading…A different way of looking at the Bible.

Ynet

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).

Rights to Semel’s books have been sold abroad in 11 languages.