



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

APRIL 2023 NEWSLETTER

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April 5-12

Independence Day



April 25-26



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Poets,

March started with Purim; April is mainly about Passover, and between those two holy and joyful festivals we've all been witnessing and perhaps experiencing the unholy and joyless turmoil that our country has been going through. Hopefully there will be quieter times ahead. Our monthly Voices Israel meetings are, I feel, a brief refuge from all the political storms, where we concentrate for a few short hours on the needs of the spirit.

But even a poetry society has bureaucratic duties, and ours are centered on the Annual General Meeting, which we held on March 20th. Jeannie Harrison with great regret was in the end unable to host us, and we're all very grateful to our long-term member Donna Bechar who picked up the gauntlet and opened her home to us. Thank you, Donna! A few of our members also were unable at the last minute to come, and we ended up with 12 attendees, approximately the same number as last year. The meeting finished, as usual, with an Open Mic. We all very much enjoyed being able to meet face to face, and hope to see more people next year.

At the AGM Wendy Blumfield "retired" as Publicity Officer after a long tenure. We were very sorry to say goodbye to her. We awarded her, as a way of saying Thank You, a small honorarium in the form of a Steimatsky gift card. We hope she'll now have the time to read all the books she can buy with it!

We have no volunteer to replace her, and so **as of now, we have no Publicity Officer**. Wendy has a contacts list of organizations to send notices to: of submission dates for the Bar Sagi and Reuben Rose competitions and of the Anthology, the publication of the Anthology, and so on. It isn't a lot of work: just sending out a few emails. Please if you can help, contact Wendy at Blumfieldwendy@gmail.com.

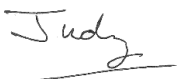
During March our judges of the Bar Sagi Young Poets Prize have been busy judging, and we recently announced the winners. This year there were many more entrants than last, thanks to the great efforts of Michele Bustin, the Prize's administrator, to "spread the word" among teachers. Thanks you Michele!

As already announced, the date for the joint Bar Sagi and Reuben Rose awards event, held by Zoom, has been fixed for **Sunday, April 30th, at 7 pm Israel time** (5 pm UK time, 12 noon US East Coast, 9 am US Pacific) and we hope to "see" there as many of our members, from Israel and abroad, as possible. The formal announcement of the event has been sent to all members and is in this Newsletter.

Finally, the Anthology judges are also busy judging the poems for this year's Anthology, whose submission period closed in mid-March.

Looking forward, our Workshop Coordinator, Elana Dorfman, is planning a workshop on editing, to be held in May. Stay tuned! And she's always happy to hear of ideas for new workshops. If you have any suggestions, just get in touch with Elana at elanado@gmail.com.

With best wishes for a happy Passover,



Judy Koren,
President, Voices Israel

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APRIL 2023

MEETING DATES, TIMES AND PLACES

SOUTHERN NO MEETING IN APRIL Next Meeting: Meeting via Zoom Thursday, May 11 at 17:00 – 19:00 Coordinator: Miriam Green Tel: 05-738-8640 miriamsgreen@gmail.com	TEL AVIV Meeting via Zoom Thursday, April 20 at 7:00 PM Coordinator: Mark Levinson Mobile: 054-444-8438 nosnivel@netvision.net.il	JERUSALEM Meeting via Zoom Thursday, April 27 at 7:30 PM Coordinator: Avril Meallem Tel: 02-567-0998 aemeallem@gmail.com	WESTERN GALILEE No meetings scheduled. Contact Phyllsie for details. Coordinator: Phyllsie Gross Mobile: 052-874-6880 phyllsie@hotmail.com
HAIFA Wednesday, April 19 at 19:00 at the home of Judy Koren Contact Debbie Golden for details Coordinator: Debbie Golden Mobile: 054-580-6209 deborahg@edu.haifa.ac.il	NETANYA/SHARON Monday, 1 May at 7:00 p.m. at Susan Olsburgh's home 2/6 Zalman Shazar, 3rd floor Ramat Poleg Coordinator: Susan Olsburgh Mobile: 054-919-3575 olsburgh.susan@gmail.com	UPPER GALILEE Wednesday, April 19 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at the home of Reuven and Yehudit. 128 Keren HaYesod Artists Quarter, Tzfat Coordinator: Reuven Goldfarb Tel: 04-697-4105 Mobile: 058-414-0262 poetsprogress@gmail.com	GLOBAL GROUP Meeting via Personal Zoom Thursday, April 20 at 19:00 Israel time Coordinator: Shoshana Kent Mobile: 052-808-9365 Y2nosh@netvision.net.il

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Voices Israel is pleased to extend a warm welcome to our new members:

- **Laura Aronson**, Haifa, Israel
- **Peter Halpern**, London, Ontario, Canada

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS

To – all the **winners and honorable mentions of the Bar Sagi Young Poets Prize**.
Their names are listed on page 6 of this newsletter.

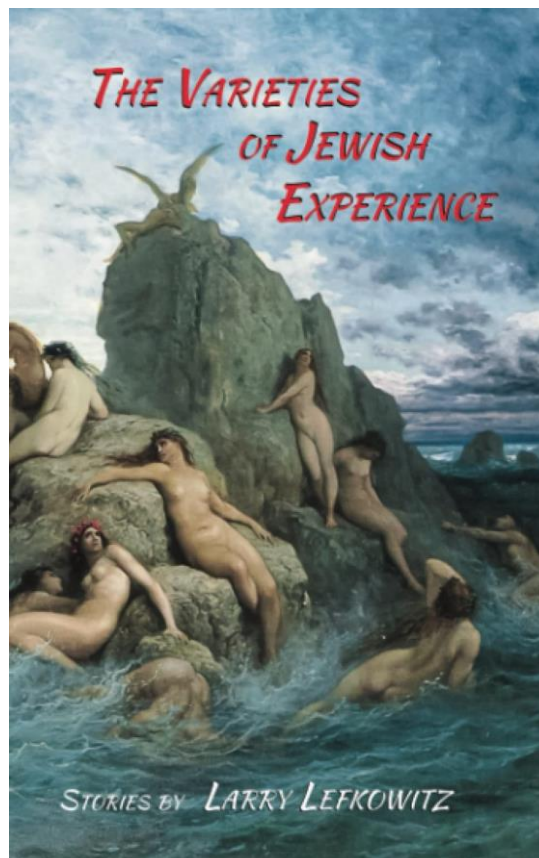
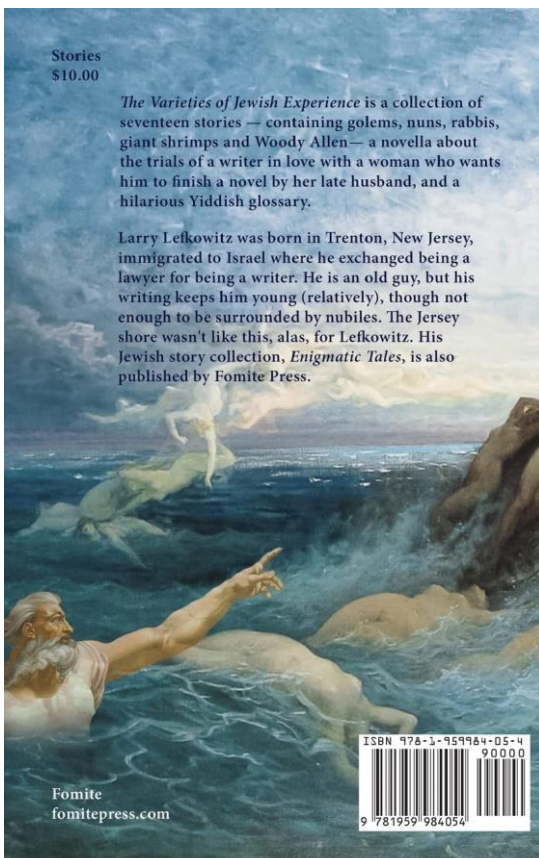
To – all the **winners and honorable mentions of the Reuben Rose Competition**.
Their names are listed on page 6 of this newsletter.

To – **Isaac Cohen**, whose poem “Mother Earth” was featured in the 2023 Woman Scream Festival.
Isaac recites the poem at <https://youtu.be/7Fc22XIFYP0>; the text is published at <https://enheduana.wixsite.com/enheduana/en/post/isaac-cohen-a-poem-mother-earth-for-the-woman-scream-festival>.

To – **Larry Lefkowitz**, on the publication by Fomite Press of his book *The Varieties of Jewish Experience* containing stories, a novella, and a humorous Yiddish glossary. www.amazon.com/Varieties-Jewish-Experience-Larry-Lefkowitz/dp/1959984055/

To – **Channah Moshe**, whose poem “Even Though” was accepted for publication in *arc-30*.

To – **Diane Ray**, whose poem “We were ovals of a dream, Judean seeds” was published in *Poetica Magazine* at www.poeticamagazine.com/diane-ray



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

THE VOICES ISRAEL 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2023 Voices Israel Annual General Meeting was held in person in Tel Aviv on March 20 with twelve members present. Graciously hosted by Donna Bechar and deftly chaired by Judy Koren, the program featured informative reports on all of Voices' activities and accomplishments during the year 2022, accompanied by scrumptious pot-luck refreshments and followed by an open-mic poetry reading.



Photos by Donna Bechar

JOHN DICKS MEMORIAL ON 18 APRIL

John Dicks was one of the founding members of Voices Israel. (See the tribute to John Dicks in the May 2022 Newsletter.) John's daughter Katherine would like you to know that a memorial for John Dicks ל"ת will be held on 18 April at 13:00 in the Motzkin section of the Tel Regev cemetery.

A SPECIAL OFFER FROM JOHNMICHAEL SIMON

Johnmichael Simon is offering his chapbook design services to Voices Israel members and friends. If you would like to possess a beautifully presented and published collection of your own favorite poems, please contact Johnmichael for details of this special offer at johnmichaelsimon@gmail.com.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

4th Bar Sagi Young Poets Prize and 33rd Reuben Rose Competition Awards Event, Sunday April 30th, 2023, 7:00 pm Israel time – via Zoom

International equivalents: 5:00 pm (UK time);
12:00 noon (US Eastern time); 9:00 am (US Pacific time)

To get the Zoom link, you must register with Judy Koren
at president.voices@gmail.com no later than Sunday April 23

Bar Sagi Young Poets Prize

Judges: Susan Bell, Itamar Blumfield, and Amiel Schotz, Israel.

Introduction and Welcome by Judy Koren, President, Voices Israel

Comments by Professor Anthony Joseph, Bar Sagi Young Poets Prize sponsor

Comments by Michele Bustin, administrator

Readings of the Winning Poems, by the poets and/or proxy readers

First prize – Reuth Katz, age 14: *The Little Things*

Second prize – Shilo Aloni, age 18: *City Lights*

Joint Third prize – Amit Shaham, age 15: *Feathers*; and Or Gordin, age 17: *Glass Skin*

Honorable Mentions – Marta Zorin, age 15; Yarden Or, age 18; Eyal Bechor, age 16; Reut Widawsky, age 13

Reuben Rose Competition

Judges: Yiskah Rosenfeld, USA; Reuven Goldfarb, Israel; and Yehoshua November, USA – this year's Overseas Judge.

Introduction and Welcome by Judy Koren, President, Voices Israel

Comments by Mark L. Levinson, Reuben Rose administrator

Comments by Yehoshua November and other attending judges of the competition

Readings of the Winning Poems, by the poets and/or proxy readers

First prize – Iris Dan, Israel: *The Fear of Slipping Through Letters*

Second prize – David Silverman, USA: *The Prophet Elijah – Possibly – on 9th Avenue, Orders a Ham & Cheese Sandwich (Easy Mayo)*

Third prize – Judy Koren, Israel: *How to Write a Middle Eastern Symphony.*

Honorable Mentions (in alphabetical order of poet's surname)

Roy "Robin" Bass, USA: *How To Break (A Container)*

Simon Constam, Canada: *Jacob Wrestles the Angel*

Alan Elyshevitz, USA: *Our Saturdays*

Gabriel Emanuel, Israel: *Einstein's Brain*

Solly Kaplinski, Israel: *Until 120*

Rochelle S. Kochin, Israel: *The Wedding Canopy*

Esther B. Lipton, UK: *Kol Nidrei Night Encounter*

Celia Merlin, Israel: *Pears*

Jo-Ann Mort, USA: *In Lviv*

Pamela Wax, USA: *1HLY 48*

Open Mic – if time allows.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

SITUATION VACANT – VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

PUBLICITY OFFICER REQUIRED FOR LEADING ENGLISH POETRY PROMOTION ORGANISATION IN ISRAEL.

Job description:

Sending short press releases of upcoming events or ongoing achievements to the English language media and English language immigrant associations

(full contact list will be provided)

Weekly posting of upcoming events on Facebook.

Sending review copies of annual anthology to English-language publications.

NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED - contact lists and advice will be provided and any new ideas or outlets welcomed.

NO SALARY OFFERED - we are looking for a Voices member who appreciates the support they have received from the organisation and is prepared to put back a few hours.

Contact Judy Koren: 054-7417860 or Wendy Blumfield: 054-5240412

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Consequence Forum <https://consequence.submittable.com/submit> .

Print journal + website. All submissions need to address in some manner the human consequences and realities of war or geopolitical violence. Deadline: April 15. (Next submission period: July 15 through Oct 15). Pays \$20 per poem for print journal, \$40/poem for online. Submit 3 poems, any form.

Cerasus Magazine

<https://cerasusmagazine.com/submissions/> for full guidelines. Submit via attached Word doc to cerasusmag@gmail.com.

Deadlines: 15th March, June, Sept and Dec for publication in April, July, Oct and Jan respectively. Any length poem, any number of poems or “a short themed collection”. Acknowledge submissions quickly, make final decisions quarterly after deadline.

Frontier Poetry

<https://www.frontierpoetry.com/submit/> ; see also <https://www.frontierpoetry.com/faq/>

Continuous submission; pays \$50 per poem. Accepts from poets with no more than one full-length work commercially published or forthcoming at the time of submission. Self-published works, works published only on social media and sites like Amazon, and published works with a print circulation of LESS than 500 copies, **are accepted**. Also runs several contests. Accepts simultaneous submissions. Replies within 8 to 12 weeks. Send up to 5 poems **via Submittable only** and **follow their guidelines**.

Innisfree Poetry Journal

<https://www.innisfreepoetry.org/submissions/>

Submit by email year-round. Want “well-crafted poems, in free verse or in traditional forms”. They like “musicality”, and telling images.

Deadlines: July 31 for fall issue. One submission per issue. Submit a 3rd person bio and up to 5 poems in one Word document, attached to an email addressed to editor@innisfreepoetry.org. Accept simultaneous submissions.

MsLexia

<https://mslexia.co.uk/submit-your-work/poetry/>

UK, very well respected. Themed. Submit online via the above link, up to 4 poems of max 40 lines each on any one theme. Theme (for issue 99): “Poison: toxic substances and the damage they can cause”. Deadline June 5. Theme for issue 98: Air; Deadline April 10.

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Nimrod

<https://artsandsciences.utulsa.edu/nimrod/> ; <https://nimrodjournal.submittable.com/submit>

Biannual (spring and fall). Published by the Univ of Tulsa. Several contests. Spring issue tends to be dedicated to writers from one geographical region or country. Focuses on new writers.

Poetry Magazine

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/submit>

To submit: <https://poetry.submittable.com/submit> - up to 4 poems (max 10 pp) in a single doc.

A very old and respected US literary journal; pay at least \$300 per poem (\$10/line with \$300 minimum). Get 150,000 poems/year; respond within 8 months; allows simultaneous submissions; no previous publication including online or social media.

The Aurora Journal

<https://www.theaurorajournal.org/submit>

Founded 2020. Publishes "surreal, ethereal and dreamy" poetry and prose. Pays \$12 per piece.

Deadline for Spring 2023 volume: April 21. Send up to 5 poems (no length limit) by email to theaurorajournal@gmail.com.

Accepts simultaneous submissions;.

The Deadlands

<https://thedeadlands.com/guidelines/>

Mainly looking for works that explore death, dying, grief, loss, Death personified, the afterlife/the underworld, etc. "The sublime is as much a part of The Deadlands as the uncanny. We welcome both formal and experimental poetry."

The Heartland Review

<https://www.theheartlandreview.com/the-heartland-review>

Deadline for Fall 2023 issue: May 1. *Only read the first 100 poems submitted per month so submit early in month!* Any length or style including esp. traditional forms. Submit (via Submittable only, in one Word file with NO identifying information) only one entry per reading period. See detailed guidelines esp. re. cover letter and required filename format. Payment is a copy of the print journal.

The Threepenny Review

<https://www.threepennyreview.com/submissions/> **read before submitting!**

Submission form at: https://www.threepennyreview.com/online_submissions/

Established quarterly US literary journal; pays very well (\$200 per poem) but very low acceptance rates. Submit up to 5 poems of 100 lines or less, in one document, *via their own submission form*. Include name and address in that document AND in the submission form.

Deadline: April 30th. Response time: up to 2 months. They respond to all, so if no response received after 2 months, query. NO simultaneous submissions or previously published material.

THEMA

<http://theliterarysociety.com/submissions.html> ; submit by email to thema@cox.net .

guidelines at <http://theliterarysociety.com/PDF/GUIDELINES.pdf>

A US themed journal. Currently accepting short stories and poems on the following themes:

The Magic of Light and Shadow (by July 1st); The Missing Piece of the Puzzle (by November 1)

Previously published accepted. Pays \$10 per poem.

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GROUP POETRY SELECTIONS

Not a Chestnut Tree

Outside my bathroom window
I can see the lemon tree
slowly coming alive
after a long winter's
wet, branches
bursting with
maroon-tipped
growth and
pink buds.
Shut in
kept apart
and feeling
sorry for myself
I think of Anne Frank
with but a grand chestnut tree
and skylight to mark the passage
of seasons. Only then do I shake
off my anger and frustration, knowing
the virus will surely pass and I can carry on with my life.
-- Israel Holocaust Remembrance Day, 2020

Bob Findysz, Jerusalem Selection

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While playing the daily word game
I thought of a word unheard
for 40 or 50 years.
It wasn't in the Chinese balloon
Felled over the Atlantic
Nor in a plaque on the Temple Mount.
(And surely not in my high school texts).

But I liked it a lot
Wanted to stroke it
Like the soft spaniel's head
Or repeat it many times.

If you want to know it also
And not tell everyone about it
I'll spell it out in numbers we all know
In our alphabet:
#1 #5 #7 #9 #19

Yes--it has nobility from the past
And could prolong your life
Use it as a talisman
When you play

The daily word game.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Lami Halperin, Southern Group

Healing Love

the sea looks bruised today
reminding me of my husband's
eyes when they were filled with fear

from my hospital bed I watched white clouds drift by my window
I wondered if I was dying, or if I was already dead
I knew I was alive when my husband arrived

every morning he came to my room
his mouth smiling, his eyes cautious
ready to make my tea, feed me my breakfast

he wheeled me through the hospital
for countless medical tests
to identify the ruthless infection invading my body

we finally went home armed with instructions
my husband took charge of my medical care
feeding me, bathing me, tending to my surgical wound

as I look back on our ordeal in appreciation and admiration
I recognise that he used the strength of his love
to lead us away from the fear

his bruise-colored eyes are once again
the soft blue of his loyalty, sincerity, wisdom
and his healing love

Linda Suchy, Netanya/Sharon Group

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A Vision - A Symbolic Japanese Poem

dreaming a white winter surrounded
by black butterflies flying around me
rising sense of loss then
a blue butterfly arrives

Yochanan Zaqantov, Southern Group

* * * * *

go gently

go gently sweet Timmy
with me since you were six
what a friend you have been
your presence an extraordinary gift
these nine years as we
have grown old together

so hard to say goodbye
but even harder
to watch you struggle
the children have come to
say farewell – one last cookie
one last hug

your understanding eyes
knowing the joys and sorrows
your time has come
in great sadness
I shall let you go
go gently sweet Timmy

Edit Gavriely, Haifa Group

Your Presence Makes the World

Your presence makes the world a better place
And when you leave, all those
Who met you, even once, will grieve.
The world will suddenly get darker,
The desolation starker,
Like an eclipse that drains away the light.
But as they find the dark withdrawing
And sunlight is restored,
The world you left behind
Will now look brighter than before.

Dan Tadmor, Tel Aviv selection

* * * * *

The Violent Muse

Astride a robotic Pegasus
I flew to the quantic Parnassus
to meet the digital poetry muse
to whom I had an appointment.
But oh, what a disappointment!
My password was out of use!
I confess I had no excuse
for forgetting to renew my subscription
to the muse's monthly sessions of inspiration
that became for me an addiction.
Without much procrastination
and without much ado,
the angry muse sent out of the blue
a gust of wind towards me and Pegasus,
pushing us at the foot of Mount Parnassus.
Since that fall, I have violet bruises
and a grudge against violent muses.

Luiza Carol, Netanya/Sharon Group

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An Elegy for Judy

Have you ever been to the zoo as sun leaves the day?
You know how it's suddenly all lit up, so magical, smelling
like caramel corn, peanuts and poop? The cacophony of color and noise.
Even the trash from the day's children glitters.

It's alive.
So alive.

Falling in love with a zoo was a little like loving my big sister.
Painted brows wearing pink bows in her hair
with a whole lot of hootin' and hollerin'.
The frenzied madness of cotton candy on a stick
leaving you wanting more. Elephants looping up their trunks,
tootin' like a trumpeter. Gorillas swing from the ropes before they pump
on their bellies roaring hilariously. Flamingos strutting
in front of one another, showing off their big plumage

& while you couldn't exactly say from day to day
if my sister would show up as flamingo or laughing hyena,
she was in their league. She amused everyone and no one.
She played every part, the caged bird, the side show and ringleader of us all.
She loved the baby giraffes. How they poke their long necks out of the bars,
look up with those big eyes wanting to be touched,
to feel your fingers stroke them. Like my sister,
they long for you to choose them as your favorite.

In the heat of the summer when we were small,
and supposed to be asleep
we lay in our beds tickling one another
from each elbow down to the tip of our fingers.

Long after the sun went down at the zoo, we sisters
sat with her in her last hours. We sang the song Judy taught us
of the crocodile who got away. She waved her arms. Like a conductor.
Until came the stillness, and her unbearable hush.

Devorah B. Harris, Global Group

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The American Flag

I found the American flag
hidden under the record player.
A player I haven't used for years.
Just as I hadn't remembered
I even had a flag nor
that I had a brother.

My brother enlisted in the Army
during the Vietnam War.
Why he enlisted I don't know.
Just as I don't know why
America was engaged in that war.

When he arrived for duty
the Marines needed a few
good men. Marty was chosen
and like other chosen people
he was harassed as a Jew.

He did make it through
his time in the service.
Therefore
when he was buried
they handed Mom the flag.

Mom handed the flag to me
just as many years ago
Mom handed me my brother.

Now I want to donate the flag
where it will be useful
and appreciated.
Unlike my brother
who only had
Me.

Linda Goldberg, Global Group

The Picture of Dorian B. B. Gray

noting the bone structure and flawless skin,
the artist reflects: this fresh face will serve
the sitter well as he enters the political arena
luminous flesh tones conquer the white canvas
portrait revealed, the sitter muses
would that I always remain so handsome
he strives to become the indispensable leader, racking
up achievements, making his historian-editor-author-
teacher- ostracized hardline academic thinker-father
proud! (and third wife tickled pink - see how she clutches
three long strands of perfectly matched salt water pearls)
he plunges into the political fray
he tweaks the economy and it flourishes
he acquires the moniker Mr. Security; he appears
on international magazines dubbing him King B. B.
a spidery lattice of cracks has covered the finely
rendered features, its luminosity extinguished
but mirror mirror surely does not lie
he shrugs, closets the portrait and
plunges on
sycophants fertilize his appetite for niceties
—indeed, necessities — also, the need
for positive press goes without saying; talented
up-and-comers, imagined as threats, are drummed out
of his inner circle, his hand ever firm at the helm
a bruised, blemished face glares from the canvas
the once thick, wavy hair thinned, rinsed blue-grey
he shivers, closes the closet door, and
plunges on — where none dared go before
accusations are catapulted like boulders
weaponized words are slung in all directions
he checks behind, confirms that his gaggle of loyal
lemmings still follow, squawking for their pound of flesh
a gruesome visage exudes mold and vermin
closet door slammed shut. locked. sealed.
but the stench... of festering self-serving machinations
has escaped, inciting in the people anger, fear
for the future, old hatreds, scores to settle
heaven forbid, physical conflict?
a whole nation in dread... for its soul

Judith Fineberg, Netanya/Sharon Group

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Like a Dressage Horse, the Mind

This is how they brought him into the restaurant:
supported from both sides, legs dragging behind,
torso collapsed over the abdomen: a tortured prisoner
about to be thrown back into his cell, or a broken table.

I wondered why, on this cold, rainy January day,
they chose to bring him here, make a spectacle of him,
expose him to all eyes. He could even be seen
from outside. His humiliation pierced me through.

It was my birthday; I plunged into my beef Stroganoff,
trying not look, not to imagine what this presaged for me.
But when I raised my eyes, I saw the trio at a window table,
the two young men facing the bust of a Roman emperor,

not only cleaned and polished after excavation, the lower half
of his laurel crown conserved, but even brought to life:
speaking peremptorily, outlining trajectories of future campaigns
with his knife, fixing the place of a triumphal arch with his fork.

Now and then, he used his tools to take a piece of food,
relished it, washed it down with a sip of wine, and continued
to cross rivers, take fortresses by assault, capture prisoners
as mute and obedient as the two young people with him,

who never dared to interrupt, to offer opinions. Was he
a former lecturer, a CEO explaining a takeover, was he
the family bore, was he deaf perhaps and kept talking
because he could not hear what was said to him?

Like a retired dressage horse, the mind so relishes
the sight and smell of places where it once shone
that it breaks out of its prison cell and performs the show
that took years to master, the show that drew crowds.

When my halva parfait was brought, its festive fireworks
were less sparkling than the lights in that old man's eye.
I fervently hoped he had imagined a new trick, a new tactic.
Furtively, I raised my glass of wine in his direction.

Iris Dan, Haifa Group

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Jerusalem Group Pre-Zoom Exercise: A Sedoka Poem

Stray by Channah Moshe

Sweetie come here so
I can pat your back and stroke
your angora fur

Although I'm purring
I'd like my meal and my treats
how much longer must I wait

Cold Heart by Bob Findysz

"Your hands are so warm,"
she whispered questioningly.
"I prefer them cold."

"Ah, cold hands, warm heart,"
I wistfully responded
as she slipped away from us

A Waterfall by Yochanan Zaquantov

standing here with you
the waterfall embraces
can you feel my heart racing

your arms enfolding
our quickening heartbeats merge
desiring oneness with you

by Hayim Abramson

mother and her child
in deepest relationship
swim in one ocean

at last the chick leaves
we sever the long long tie
each swimming its way

My Choice by Malka Kelter

Every day, the news
tells us the problems we face
the horrors in daily life.

I would rather just
avoid listening too much
find joy in the life we live.

Why by Avril Meallem

my thoughts in turmoil
my heart sighs in its tragedy
why did you leave me so soon

I am here my dear
waiting to enter your dreams
me, you, Hashem together

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

POET'S CORNER

POEMS FROM OUR OVERSEAS MEMBERS

Good Intentions

The very least I should seek
Is to write just two per week
Yearly that's one hundred and ten
Rhymes onto paper from my pen
Find the time to compose
Before they die as winter roses
Stop the words spinning, spiraling
Out of control, tumbling
Into nonsense, into nothingness
Erased, forever lost, alas.

E.B. Lipton, UK

My Son the Atheist Goes to an Orthodox Schul

Preferring not to sing or clap,
Comforted by chanting in a language
He does not understand
To a God he does not believe exists,
My son is moved by the unadorned
Ritual of the Sephardim more
Than the joyous noise of the Reformed.
I must admit that when
The all-male chorus sings
"Adon Olam" and a woman in the balcony
With me says, "I feel I am in the Temple,"
I reply, "I feel I am in Paradise."

Freud thought religion a neurosis
Our parents projected on a screen
Like the ones they used to have
At drive-in movies,
And Marx believed it was a drug.
Both men got it wrong.
For me it is the kiss of eternity,
And for my son who is no chauvinist
But, fatherless, likes to sit among the men,
August, weighty, letting
The chazin's reedy chant
Roll over him--
Not having to do anything--
He is at one with the flow of being.

Nikki Stiller, U.S.A.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH
POET'S CORNER
OTHER POEMS BY MEMBERS

Happy Birthday Bach

It's the equinox today
and also Bach's birthday,
just a bit before Pessach

Ah, would that he could visit this Land
where Pessach began,
I tell you, he'd be passionate about it,
perhaps even inspired to compose
some Golda variations,
or a King Solomon sonata
maybe a Ben-Gurion concerto
or a matza cantata

He'd learn a bit of Hebrew,
sit around the seder table
munching parsley and bitter herbs
happily imbibing four cups of wine

After which he'd hitch a return trip to Europe
on the wings of a stork,
guided by a full moon,
singing loudly about a poor baby goat
laughing drunkenly like a buffoon

Safe travels Johann Sebastian
see you next year in Jerusalem

Helen Bar-Lev

This poem is Helen's Pessach greeting to Voices members. Members may pass it on but with Helen's name, please.

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

The tickets

Fourth form memory from school, 1948

He was two years above me, a god in Olympus
my heart-throb, good-looking and slim,
whenever I saw him my legs turned to jelly
but I knew I meant nothing to him.

A rumor went round – he was offering tickets
to a Prom* at the Royal Albert Hall,
I felt sure he was looking for company so
my friend and I answered the call.

It was she who approached him – I stood to one side
as he said we should wait at the station
on Saturday morning and he'll come along,
that was all – there was no explanation.

My best friend and I reached the station on time
and stood waiting, prepared for the ride,
I would soon be attending a Promenade concert,
the god of my dreams at my side.

I have no recollection regarding the program
the music, the players, the hall...
only one thing remains in my mind from that day,
even now I can clearly recall ...

He came striding towards us, firm confident steps,
I was swamped by emotions unplanned...
he was with us for only a few precious moments,
two tickets in outstretched hand.

"Enjoy the concert," was all that he said,
and turned on his heavenly heel,
he could never imagine the deep disappointment
and pain that my young heart would reel.

I watched as he left us, a god-like figure,
devouring him with my eyes,
I watched him until he was quite out of sight,
Adonis himself in disguise.

Rumi Morkin

**"Prom": the British tradition of "Promenade" concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, London.
Cheap tickets could be bought for standing places, hence the name.*

VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

Humor

Humor is good,
took a gun and killed himself.
His fun was a one-way ticket
“See the scar, not so clear down on the grave.”

They said he was crazy to think like that
but in truth he died with a smile on his lips
They called him son of a gun
And he gave it to them blow by blow.

He was blue, thought it was depression
the doctor wrote: lack of oxygen.
His brain felt as oodles of noodles
pushed them through with the bullet hole

He wanted to be a holy man
I wanted to humor a writer known for his humor, so I sent him this poem

Catching a Lion's Tail

For several years I wanted to go to the zoo
and finally they brought me in
wiggling my whiskers with delight at my new quarters
I tore and enjoyed every bit of two-and-a-half kilos of raw meat

just as in my African savanna, we were next to the zebras
I looked at them with a landsman's delight
but they went away to the far end of their cage
they misunderstood my desire for a friendly tete-a-tete

On the other side were the monkeys
they imitated our going about and roared too
the more I rolled my call the more they did it back
monkey see and monkey do they say

What a delight to see boys and girls on the other side
my fellow lions and me made a big show of love
we jumped wagged our tails and made beautiful roars
oh! our love misunderstood and forlorn they run away

Inspired by Pesach Rotem's poem "At the Zoo" Arc 29 (IAWE), 2022, pp.68-69

Hayim Abramson

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