



VOICES ISRAEL GROUP OF POETS IN ENGLISH

MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER

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Picture Quiz - Who is this?
Hint: Old King at a high point



Answer – next month.

Quiz Question

What's the connection between:

Robert Browning
John Lennon and
Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra?

Answer – next month.



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Poets,

As we celebrated Pesach, the festival of freedom, this past month, our hearts remained with our hostages in Gaza. Let's hope that the current negotiations do at long last result in an agreement to free them.

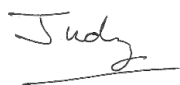
Since Pesach took up most of the second half of April, and national festivals mark the first two weeks of May, our usual April-May events were compressed this year into the first two weeks of April. So we held our AGM (Annual General Meeting) on April 7th and the awards ceremonies for the Bar Sagi and Reuben Rose prizes on April 14th, both via Zoom. This was the first time we held the AGM by Zoom, and it resulted as expected in a larger attendance (20 people versus the usual dozen or so when held in person). It was an important meeting: our long-term member Bob Findysz of Jerusalem was voted in to replace Pesach Rotem who's stepped down as Secretary; our newer and very welcome member Julian Alper of Tiberias was appointed President Elect, to replace me as President when I finish my 4-year term at the end of June; and members overwhelmingly voted to accept a short set of Guidelines for the monthly group meetings, to be used as local coordinators see fit. The Guidelines as adopted by the AGM are in this newsletter. Congratulations to both Bob and Julian! Bob has now quietly and efficiently taken over from Pesach, and can be reached at the regular email address for our Secretary (secretary.voices@gmail.com). Julian, apart from being President-Elect, has taken over the role of Newsletter editor, and everything connected with the Newsletter (notices to be included in it, poems chosen at group meetings, etc. etc.) should be sent to him at the new email address newsletter.voices@gmail.com. Many thanks, Julian, for taking on this new role as well as your future one!

For the Bar Sagi Young Poets Prize and Reuben Rose Competition awards event the following week, we had over 50 participants, about the same as last year. We were sorry that our Bar Sagi Prize sponsor, Prof. Anthony Joseph, was at the last moment unable to be with us, but happy to see that news of our competition has reached a wider variety of schools and we had two Druze students among the prize and Honourable Mention winners. Since the event was held by Zoom, we had many participants from abroad. Only three Honourable Mention winners couldn't make it: many thanks to our members who proxy-read their poems for them.

Looking ahead: registration for the Netanya Residential Workshop on May 20-21st has been picking up and we have 23 members registered to attend, plus three accompanying spouses. So we're confirming to the hotel that we're going ahead and asking them to reserve rooms for those who've registered. It's an exciting program: many thanks to Elana our Workshop Coordinator for organizing it! If you haven't registered but would like to come: last chance! Please register **now** via the form at <https://forms.gle/NNPukd7J3DCvUBGa9> and send us the deposit – details of payment are on the form.

And finally: Anthology judging is nearly finished; and we've also nearly finished preparing the memorial chapbook for Judih Weinstein Haggai z"l. Thanks to all of you who sent in poems for both of them.

Hoping to see you at the Netanya Residential workshop on May 20th,



Judy Koren,
President, Voices Israel.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

It is with much pleasure that I'm taking on the role of Editor of our Newsletter. I'm stepping into the shoes of the previous editor Pesach, who did such a splendid job, that his will be a hard act to follow. I thank Pesach for all the help that he has given me, and I hope that he'll find new challenges to use his wonderful talents fully.

And thank you to all of you, the members of Voices Israel, for having the confidence to elect me to succeed Judy, when she stands down as President at the end of June. Judy's work on behalf of all of us has been magnificent and her leadership will be sorely missed. It is with trepidation that I will be taking on the role of President and I'm sure I'm going to need much help from all of you.

I'm very new to Voices Israel and indeed to poetry too, but after writing my first attempts and looking at the Internet for further vision and assistance, I found the Voices site and your inspiring creations. Since joining the Group I've looked forward to the beginning of each month when the monthly newsletter is distributed. I find it energizing and it inspires me no end.

Miriam and I have also recently been participating in the Upper Galilee Group monthly gatherings – it's a real pleasure for us to meet and work with the poets in that group, and hopefully before too long we'll be able to join in periodically with all the groups around the country and beyond.

To borrow a phrase of my landsman, Sir Isaac Newton, I will be standing on the shoulders of giants. The magnificent work of the giants who set up the group and the giants who have kept it going for all these years, cannot be underestimated. The group stayed alive and well and active, even through all the vicissitudes of Covid and conflict, as a result of their amazing efforts, and it's now our responsibility to ensure the work carries on and the Group continues to be the "natural home for Israeli poets writing in English, and for those abroad who support our goals and share our enthusiasm for poetry".

Please e-mail your answers to the quiz questions to me – and please do suggest quiz questions for the next Newsletter.

I look forward to working with everyone.

Julian Alper
Newsletter Editor, Voices Israel
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MEETING DATES TIMES AND PLACES - MAY 2024

<p>SOUTHERN</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Sunday, May 19 at 5:00 PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Miriam Green</p> <p>miriamsgreen@gmail.com</p>	<p>TEL AVIV</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Thursday, May 30 at 7:00 PM</p> <p>Coordinator: Mark L. Levinson Mobile: 054-444-8438</p> <p>nosnivel@netvision.net.il</p>	<p>JERUSALEM</p> <p>No meeting this month</p> <p>Coordinator: Avril Meallem Tel: 02-567-0998</p> <p>aemeallem@gmail.com</p>	<p>UPPER GALILEE</p> <p>Wednesday, May 15 at 10:30 AM at the home of Reuven and Yehudit.</p> <p>128 Keren HaYesod Artists Quarter, Tzfat</p> <p>Coordinator: Reuven Goldfarb Tel: 04-697-4105 Mobile: 058-414-0262</p> <p>poetsprogress@gmail.com</p>
<p>HAIFA</p> <p>Wednesday, 8 May at 7:00PM at Iris Dan's home</p> <p>Contact Naomi Yalin for details</p> <p>Coordinator: Naomi Yalin Mobile: 054-794-3738</p> <p>naomiyalin@gmail.com</p>	<p>NETANYA/SHARON</p> <p>Monday, 27 May at 7:00 PM at Susan Olsburgh's home</p> <p>2/6 Zalman Shazar, 3rd floor Ramat Poleg</p> <p>Coordinator: Susan Olsburgh Mobile: 054-919-3575</p> <p>olsburgh.susan@gmail.com</p>	<p>GLOBAL GROUP 1</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Thursday, May 2 At 19:30 Israel time</p> <p>Note the change of e-mail address below.</p> <p>Coordinator: Shoshana Kent Mobile: +972-52-808-9365</p> <p>y2nosh@gmail.com</p>	<p>GLOBAL GROUP 2</p> <p>Meeting via Zoom Sunday, May 26 At 19:00 Israel time</p> <p>Coordinator: Judy Koren Mobile: +972-54-741-7860</p> <p>koren.judy@gmail.com</p>

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SAD NEWS - EZRA MEALLEM ע"ה

It is with much sadness that we have received news of the passing of Ezra Meallem, Ezra Ben Meir Salim ע"ה, the husband of Avril Meallem, our Jerusalem group coordinator. May his memory be for a blessing.

The funeral has already taken place.

The family will be sitting shiv'ah, as follows:

After the Chag, Monday 29th April until Friday 3rd May at Binyamin Metudela Street 27, Apartment 4, Jerusalem

From after Shabbat 4th May until Monday morning 7th May at Sorek Street 34/12, Tzur Hadassah

Visiting times 09:00 until 12:00, and 16:00 until 21:00.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

– **Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman**, Reggio Calabria, Italy

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS

- To - **Helen Bar-Lev** whose flash fiction story was long-listed for the Fish Flash Fiction Prize.
- To - **Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman**, on the recent publication of her book - **L'Urlo dell'Anima – Scream of the Soul**, in Italian and English – see <https://www.carthago.it/product/urlo-della-nima-scream-of-the-soul/>. There's also a film in Italian with English subtitles about Miriam and her work <https://youtu.be/3bkUKnmJqa4?si=OwAloA3tHCrtMrul> - to activate English subtitles, click the CC icon on the bottom-right.
- To - **Lilian Cohen** and **Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman**, whose poems were published in the special "Poems for Israel, October 2023" section of The Deronda Review online at www.derondareview.org/backingisrael.htm.
- To - **Pesach Rotem** whose short story "Cheering Reuven Goldfarb" has been published in the Spring 2024 issue of The Main Street Rag. <https://mainstreetragbookstore.com/product/the-main-street-rag-spring-2024/>
- To - **Wendy Blumfield** whose review of Judy (Lev) Labensohn's memoir: "Our Names Do Not Appear" was published in the Jerusalem Report – see <https://www.jpost.com/j-spot/article-798694>.
- To - **Elana Wolff** whose "A Kafka Itinerary" – a 5-minute video accompaniment to her cross-genre Kafka-quest work, Faithfully Seeking Franz, is now available on YouTube: https://youtu.be/frudVa4uxRQ?si=L6saO3v6aun_cyw2 There is a review of Faithfully Seeking Franz in the current issue of FreeFall Magazine, by Canada's two-time poet laureate, George Elliott Clarke. <https://freefallmagazine.ca/review-of-elana-wolffs-faithfully-seeking-franz/>
- To - **Miriam Botzer** who has published a bilingual (English and Hebrew) chapbook "Echoes from within - מרהדה בתוכי" in memory of her mother. All poems were reviewed by her colleagues in the monthly meetings of the Voices Israel, Upper Galilee Group.

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GUIDELINES FOR VOICES ISRAEL MEETINGS

adopted at the 2024 AGM

- Voices welcomes poets at every stage, including those who are only just starting to write poetry. We don't have any sort of exam to determine if someone is "good enough" to join. We believe that all of us, whether award-winning poets or just starting out, can learn from each other.
- The purpose of the group is to offer each member gentle, helpful critique in order to help them improve their poem. We do not phrase it as negative criticism, and we try to avoid remarks which may be hurtful or reflect negatively on the poet, always keeping in mind that the aim is to help the poet improve their writing in a pleasant and comfortable environment. We aren't here to say "that poem is no good" but rather "here's how I think you could make it better."
- People are encouraged to bring works in progress, or poems they're having a hard time with -- the least polished poems are the ones that can most benefit from gentle, positive critique. We all want to bring finished poems and hope to hear praise of them, but bringing *only* poems we consider "finished" rather defeats the purpose of the exercise.
- Our critique is preferably addressed to specific aspects of the poem. If we think it's wonderful, we say what in our opinion makes it so. If we think it's not so good, we point out the specific things that we think could be improved, and say why or *optimally* suggest a possible improvement. If we can't do either of those, we don't comment on it.
- We remember that everyone has a different style and writes different types of poetry (rhyming, metrical, free verse, prose poem, formal such as haiku or villanelle, plain-speaking versus allusive, etc.), and our own personal preferences for one type over another are not the poem's problem. So we don't comment on the fact that a poem's style or type is not to our taste.
- That said: Voices does not allow poems to espouse racism or sexism or to incite hate against a specific person or group, and the group coordinator is free to decide whether to reject any such poem or whether to bring it to the group.
- Our critiques are just suggestions. Poets are free to accept or decline any suggestion. It may take them time to decide, so "thanks, I'll think about that" is often the best response. The commenter should then accept this and not try to press their point: we try our best *not* to get into arguments between a poet and a commenter regarding why a comment should or should not be accepted.
- Each of our groups has its own way of doing things. But do remember that large groups and/or Zoom groups have to keep things focused on critique of the poems, and not stray into philosophical or political or ethical discussions arising from the content of a poem, because meeting time is limited and such discussions use up the time needed for commenting on the poems. The coordinator, or someone they ask to do so, may need to divide up the available time between the poems to be read, and then keep time and say "time up" or "let's not stray off the poem itself." Group members should take this in good spirit and comply with the request.

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DERONDA REVIEW SEEKS YOUR WAR POEMS

THE DERONDA REVIEW (www.derondareview.org), continues to accept poems for its page "Poems for Israel, October 2023," which now contains the work of more than 40 poets. The page is being updated as new poems come in, so scroll down to find the latest! Poems for posting on this page may be sent to derondareview@gmail.com.

"NOW" EXHIBITION AT THE GEZER GALLERY

Now

April through June 2024

*You are invited to a virtual
international multimedia
exhibition in our Gezer Gallery
FaceBook Group with artists from
Austria, Canada, Israel,
South Korea, Swaziland, USA*

Now

Paintings: Choi Ok Young '최옥영', Leslye Dale Tofflemire, Debbie Director, Ira Director.

Drawings: Erika Jean Chamberlin, Hilde Engelmann, Mary Kushilevich.

Sculptures: Kathy Anderson, Ho Baron, Chandra Garsson. Photographs: Haim Berman,

Enon De Groot. Poetry: Karen Alkalay-Gut, Tami Hattis, Judy Koren, Moore Ngwenya, Olga Stein, Jan Steckel. Fabric design: Judy

Halper. Graphic design: Ian Kirkpatrick.

AI: Uzi Dornai. Song: Gene Keller

curated by Ira Director

Gezer Gallery, Kibbutz Gezer, Israel

More at

www.facebook.com/groups/gezergallery/.

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.

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GREEN GOLEM: THE ZIONIST LITERARY MAGAZINE

Green Golem is a new online Zionist literary magazine that is now open for submissions. Visit the Golem at <https://greengolemmag.com/>.



We're calling the project *Green Golem: The Zionist Literary Magazine*. The golem, a stone creature from Jewish mythology, is a symbol of Jewish innovation and self-defense. The color green represents Israel's farmers and kibbutzniks; Israel's green energy advancements; and the green uniforms of the IDF, who protect Israel today.

Green Golem will consider quality fiction, nonfiction, and poetry of any kind, but with special preference to works that include Jewish or Zionist elements; works that are set in the State of Israel; works by Jewish authors; works by Israeli authors of any faith; and works by U.S. and international authors who support Israel. Besides writing, we will also ask for submissions from painters, drawers, and other visual artists.

ISRAEL ASSOCIATION OF WRITERS IN ENGLISH (IAWE) - NEWSLETTER

The quarterly newsletter of the Israel Association of Writers in English, aChord, edited by David Brauner and Libi Siporin, can be viewed [here](#).

JERUSALISM - MAY 4, POST-SHABBAT EVENT

Jerusalemism welcomes any and all poets to join an open mic event and share some poetry! Doors will open at about 8:30 pm and the poets will be invited to start sharing work at around 8:50 pm. There will be a sign-up list for participants (so come early to ensure a spot). Each poet will have a slot of either up to five minutes or three poems (whichever comes first). The venue is Besarabia, 34 Ben Yehuda Street, Jerusalem.

See <https://www.facebook.com/events/405238619008747>.

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CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

COVERSTORY BOOKS – 2024 POETRY COMPETITION - Entry fee - £5 per poem. 1st Prize: £200, 2nd Prize: £80, 3rd Prize: £40. Deadline Sunday 19th May 2024, results announced by the end of June 2024. All prize winners: – publication in a future edition of the New Contexts anthology. Full details at <https://coverstorybooks.com/open-submissions/>.

Minyan Magazine – submission guidelines read:

Minyan Magazine publishes poetry and flash fiction written by Jews and their allies alongside one another. Although we like work with a Jewish theme, we also enjoy work with secular themes. Send us your best, regardless of the theme! Please note that we are a journal of tolerance. It would be a great idea to look at our previous issues to get a sense of what we publish, and all of our issues are free to read! Send us your best!

Unsolicited submissions containing three to five previously unpublished poems or up to three flash fiction stories are welcome year-round.

Full details at - <http://www.minyanmag.com/submissions.html>

Deronda Review - Annual reading period begins mid-May. This time the theme is "trust." More information soon.

Otherwise Engaged Literature and Arts Journal seeks submissions from anywhere in the world. Submit 3-5 poems in .doc, .docx, or .rtf formats. When entering a submission include a 20-50 word biography to be printed alongside your piece in the event that it is accepted for publication. Deadline: 13 May 2024. Submit by e-mail to otherwiseengagedjournal@gmail.com. The publication will be available in print on Amazon by 3 August 2024. Contributors will receive a pdf copy. No submission fee. No pay. Read sample of last publication at <https://a.co/d/OPWyZqD>

STREETLIGHT'S 2024 POETRY CONTEST - April 8th to July 1st. 1st Prize — \$150. 2nd — \$100. Entry Fee: \$10 FOR UP TO 3 POEMS. Up to three of your best, previously unpublished poems. Any subject. Contest deadline is Monday, July 1st 2024 midnight EST. Competition winners will be announced July 15th 2024. Only winning authors will be contacted. However, all entries will be considered for general publication in Streetlight. If your poetry is a good fit for a subsequent issue, we will get in touch to see if it is still available.

More details at <https://streetlightmag.com/2023-poetry-contest/>.

Kakalak Anthology of Poets and Artists - 2024 Poetry & Art Contests - Submissions are open through May 31. Please, before submitting, read the guidelines <https://kakalakanthology.com/general-submission-guidelines/>.

Use "SUBMIT ART" or "SUBMIT POETRY" buttons to link to individual contests.

FOR ALL SUBMISSIONS: ELIGIBILITY: Anyone, FEE: \$10 to submit up to 3 pieces.

BAR SAGI – JERUSALEM POST ARTICLE

There was a great article in the Jerusalem Post on April 29th about Bar Sagi and the Voices Israel Bar Sagi Prize. See <https://www.jpost.com/j-spot/article-798935>.

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