



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English Voices Newsletter December 2018 DECEMBER MEETING DATES AND PLACES

HAIFA

**Tuesday, Dec. 18
at 7:30 pm**
Naomi Yalin's
8 Kikar David
Neve Shanan
04-8229792

TEL AVIV

**Tuesday, Dec. 25
at 7:30 pm**
Phella Hirschson's
Call Phella for her address
03-629-4117

JERUSALEM

**Tuesday, Dec. 25
at 6pm**
Toby Shuster's
5 Aza Street, Apt. 3,
Rehavia, Jerusalem

UPPER GALILEE

**Wednesday, Dec. 12
from 5-7pm**
Reuven and Yehudit's
128 Keren HaYesod
Artists Quarter, Tzfat

Coordinator:

Wendy Blumfield
Tel: 04-837-6820
Mobile: 054-524-0412
wendyb@netvision.net.il

Coordinator:

Mark Levinson
Tel: 054-444-8438
nosnivel@netvision.net.il

Coordinator:

Ruth Fogelman
Tel: 02-628-7359
ruthfogelman@gmail.com

Coordinator:

Reuven Goldfarb
Tel: 04-6974105
poetsprogress@gmail.com

BET SHEMESH / MODIIN

**Tuesday, Dec. 11
at 8:00pm**
Judy Belsky's
Nahar Hayarden 120/4
Floor 2
Bet Shemesh

NETANYA & SHARON

**Sunday, Dec. 30
at 7:30pm**
Susan Olsburgh's
2/6 Zalman Shazar.
(3rd floor) Ramat Poleg

WESTERN GALILEE

**Sunday, Dec. 16
at 8:30pm**
Kibbutz Evron

LONDON UK

For information please
contact Esther.

Coordinator:

Dr. Judy Belsky
drjudybelsky@gmail.com

Coordinator:

Susan Olsburgh
Tel: 09-885-5629
olsburgh.susan@gmail.com

Coordinator:

Phyllsie Gross
Tel: 052-874-6880
phyllsie@hotmail.com

Coordinator:

Esther Lipton:
eblipton@talk21.com

GUSH ETZION

Please contact Mindy if
you are interested in the
group re-starting.

SOUTHERN

Please contact Miriam
for details.

ASHKELON

Please contact
Chaim for more details

BERLIN, GERMANY

For information please
contact Britta.

Coordinator:

Mindy Aber Barad
Tel: 05-4667936
maber4kids@yahoo.com

Coordinator:

Miriam Green
miriamsgreen@gmail.com

Coordinator:

Chaim Bezalel
bezalel.levy@gmail.com

Coordinator:

Britta R. Kollberg
brkollberg@yahoo.de

President

Susan Olsburgh
2/6 Zalman Shazar
Ramat Poleg, Netanya
Tel: 09-885-5629
olsburgh.susan@gmail.com

Assistant President

Helen Bar-Lev
3 Hairus St.
Metulla 1029200
Tel: 077-353-5548
helentbarlev@gmail.com

Secretary

Linda Suchy
Haim Laskov 5/7
Netanya 4265605
Tel: 054-497-8812
secretary.voices@gmail.com

Treasurer

Chanita Millman
15 Shachar St.
Jerusalem 96263
Tel: 02-653-6770
millmanm@zahav.net.il

Membership Coordinator

Susan Rosenberg
42/46a Leon Blum
Haifa 33852
Tel: 04-838-1218
susanndick@gmail.com



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT DECEMBER 2018

Dear All,

I hope you have had occasion to check out the new Voices Israel Group of Poets in English Website <https://www.voicesisrael.com>. Amongst the expected data there is also very useful and carefully prepared material about links to resources, writing tools and affiliations - much dynamic and relevant material. Judy Koren is settling to her role as webmistress brilliantly, constantly updating and using much initiative.

Details about the upcoming Voices workshop in Jerusalem on 17 December are posted on the web but in addition our very dedicated secretary Linda Suchy has sent all members an invitation to hear Dr Judy Belsky in action. This will be my third workshop with Judy Belsky and I have always come away very satisfied, encouraged and stimulated by Judy's expertise and approach. There is still time (just) to reserve your place (see separate flyer below).

On 16 December the submission process to the 2019 Voices Israel Anthology, Volume 45 begins. Do select your poems for the attention of the judges, our Chief Editor, Dina Yehuda and her team, who are serving their second term - Wendy Dickstein, Phella Hirschson and Amiel Schotz. They are all set and raring to go. A bumper crop is hoped for, building on the strength of last year's volume and the lively launch we had in September. Of course, two copies of the forthcoming volume will be deposited in the National Library of Israel as have all previous years' anthologies of Voices Israel.

Currently arrangements are being made for the Annual General Meeting of Voices Israel. Usually this is held in Tel Aviv towards the end of January and after the formalities there will be one of our popular open mike sessions. Full details will follow in next month's newsletter.

Possibly by next month the results of the 2018 Reuben Rose Competition may be ready. Competition Administrator Mark Levinson will keep us updated about the outcomes. In the meantime, I know a lot of serious effort and commitment is being given voluntarily by the judges, led by eminent Overseas Judge Peter Thabit Jones.

As we move into our Mediterranean winter, with its longer nights and colder, windy days, I offer you Percy Bysshe Shelley's comforting thought

"O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

Of course, Chanukah begins this Sunday evening so I wish you all a joyous eight days of bright candle lights.

Susan

Susan Olsburgh
President
Voices Israel



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

Voices Israel

invites you
to a workshop
with
Dr. Judy Belsky

Imagery, Imagination and Poems that Build to a Series

The workshop will center on creating a Series, over-lapping, inter-related poems that revisit a theme or setting and build to a whole.

We will focus on poems that weave between the rich terrain of childhood and the present. Imagery is the engine that delivers your poems. The emphasis is on fresh and powerful imagery.

at Poetry Place, 9 Ha'Ma'aravim Street, Jerusalem
(off Agron Street, behind the Astoria Waldorf Hotel)
(Bus 13 goes very close)

on Monday, 17 December, 2018
(registration closing December 10)

1:00-1:30 Registration, coffee, introductions
1:30 – 4:30 Workshop with a 15-minute break
4:30 – 5:00 Summary, tea, departures

Price 60 NIS

Discount for Voices Members: 40 NIS

Payable in cash (*correct change please*) at the door

Light refreshments included

Opportunity for book stall for those attending who wish to sell.

To register please notify our Secretary, with your name and telephone number, at secretary.voices@gmail.com



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

REMINDER: NEW PAYMENT INFORMATION

There is a new option for payment of dues, etc., to Voices. As always, payments can be made by cheque sent to our Treasurer. Send a cheque made payable to **Voices Israel** to Chanita Millman, 15 Shachar Street, Jerusalem 96263. **However**, letters sent by Israel Post have been known to get lost and/or arrive very late.

The new option is by bank transfer made either online or at your personal bank:

Pay by bank transfer to:

Kolot (Voices) Israel
Discount Bank, Clal Branch 159
Account 6624199

PLEASE NOTIFY CHANITA BY EMAIL WHEN YOU MAKE A BANK TRANSFER:

millmanm@inter.net.il

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS (REPEAT ANNOUNCEMENTS)

THE DERONDA REVIEW is looking for poems and short prose for an issue with a section on "Utopia." Other topics, especially seasonal poems, also welcome. Send up to five poems to derondareview@gmail.com, maber4kids@yahoo.com or P.O.B. 6709 Efrat 90435, Israel.

Helen Bar-Lev reminds us that there are various contests offered through Winning Writers: Essential Contests for Serious Writers - Subscribe Free at fundsforwriters.com

Recommended by Reuven Goidfarb: *Voices of the Middle East and North Africa*, *Nimrod International Journal*, **Thematic Submission for Voices of the Middle East & North Africa: Poetry**, <https://nimrod.utulsa.edu/>

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Klarina Priborkin, Kiryat Ono

CONGRATULATIONS

To **Matthew** Anish, USA, who had two poems published in the November issue of Beyond Bree, a Mensa publication.



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

DECEMBER 2018 POETS' PAGE

Writers' Block

The light is gone. My muse has fled.
I chase after her in the darkened corridors of my brain,
But she is fleet of foot, and I am not.
Seemingly fresh ideas encounter thick walls with no wiggle room.
While webs of mixed metaphors ensnare my thoughts,
Endless clichés form road blocks everywhere,
And all paths end in blind alleys.

Francine Treat

Western Galilee Selection

I wrestle with love
Down on a soggy mattress
Locked in a choking embrace

Warm tears and cold sweat
A slippery mesh of skins
Logic can't have a firm hold

Twisted limbs and broken hearts
Crumbling old perceptions
Who will have the upper hand?

Frieda Ezriev

Southern Group Selection

Climate Change

No such thing
harrumphed the Trump
it's all a conspiracy
cooked up by the Chinese!

So what if the polar bear
has nowhere to go
brown bear too for that matter
and while we're at it
let's bulldoze some of those national parks
real estate is more important than trees
just look at that mess in California
too many trees – believe me – too many trees
let's frack more land
get more oil
provide more jobs

"But the water"
cried the residents of Flint
"The water!"

Phyllis Gross

Western Galilee

Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

He Says, She Says: A Landing

He comes in for a landing
So does she

He likes this white-metalled place
Nine floors up
That sits outside the narrow window ledge
Likes it, even with these spikes usurping
His hard-earned rightful space

Her landing is the shadowed, narrow, concrete
Ledge of the bedroom window of the
Apartment opposite

He notices and calls to her
Come and be with me here
Where it's much more comforting in the sun

Spying the spikes, she warbles to him her fears:
Even if she wants to, there's not enough clearing
To nuzzle side-by-side
Her left wing may get caught in those spikes or
Even worse, punctured
Or her feathers may be grabbed and pulled out

You can do it; you can do it
His battery of chirps more insistent to her resistance
Challenge yourself; do what you think you can't
His warbles cajoling and alluring
Oh he does sing a pretty song
Come be with me here in the sun, not the shadows
There's room for us both; pay these spikes no mind

A few unchirped moments pass between them
And suddenly she is flying across
Almost, but not quite, catching her left wing
In that forest of spikes
But she maneuvers, and avoids their vigilance

Together they sit; perhaps it's a romantic moment
But not as they thought
She was right – not enough comfort for two

She flies back to her own landing
He flies off
So does she

Donna Bechar
Netanya/Sharon Selection



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

kindness at the mall

a break from shopping
to eat lunch
on my way again
wanting to check the list
of things to do, nicely
noted on my phone

but no phone in my bag
couldn't be – check again
and again, but no, no phone

hold the hysterics!
where was I? lunch, sandwich,
tray, checking mayoral news....

race back to my table
tray gone, attentive server
answers my plea –
“did you find a phone?” –
with a smile. “yes! it's at the
food counter.”

near tears of relief, a hug to
this fine woman and off to
retrieve my phone
left a tip for the workers
went on my way
returned once more to
express my gratitude again
she refused the bill extended
but not another hug

of all places – kindness at the mall

Edit Gavriely

Haifa Group Selection

Images

Click!
Little legs climbing
Steep stone steps
Concave with age.

Up, up to my grandparents' flat
Past the smelly half landing
An outside toilet for three families
Fitting into the curve of the close stairwell.
Hold your nose and wee.
Pieces of torn newspaper on a string
For wiping.
One more flight to manage.
Out of Glasgow's damp cold
Into the warmth of love
And good cooking.

Click!
My grandmother at her stove
My favorite, stewed cow's lung, ready
Home-made lokshen drying
Over the back of a chair

Click!
Beyond her kitchen window
The flat industrial roof
Of a workshop.
Recycled commercial gherkin tins
Purloined from the downstairs deli.
Manure procured from
Following the Clydesdales
Bucket and spade in hand.
Tomatoes growing and some flowers.
A hidden garden.
Stretched out on a towel sunbathing
One could imagine.

Click!
My bedroom
The door opening
To my warm landing
A comfy armchair.
On the wall
My grandmother's
Wood-framed mirror
Reflecting.

Malijoy Livingstone

Netanya/Sharon selection

Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

STAR OF THE NORTH

(inspired by Dylan Thomas)

It is morning in the village
The workers eat thick slabs of bread and jam
Drink large mugs of sweet black tea
Trucks and tractors wait by the water tower
Sun's first rays peep over the eastern hills
A choreography of gulls dance high over the still dark valley

In the potato field, Ben Shrir smokes his pipe and herds the workers
His ruddy face absorbing the heat of the morning sun
His wife Dina Shrir has thick muscles in her legs
Her smoky voice urges the village young
To keep up with the plough churning over the dusty potatoes
From the dry sour earth
Gathering up the potatoes in their sacks
Backs bending, knees creaking
Gulping water from the cold sweet urns

In the kitchen, Anna Pilpel chops the salad
Mounds of red and green vegetables
Collapse beneath her sharp knife
And her sharp tongue gossips about the village nurse
Expecting again by the Polish carpenter

At the door of the bakery, Salem takes air,
His white floury arms on his hips
His curly mustache whitened by the dough
They say that he was a tailor in Baghdad
But now he bakes bread as sweet as cake
And gives cookies to the children on their way to school

Maya Chlor rises at five each new day
Mops her floors and washes the walls
And shines the windows of her house
Before leaving for the nursery where ten babies await her mops and pails
In the nursery, she moves ten babies from room to room
Mops the floor and washes the walls and shines the windows
When all is bright and clean, she washes the bottoms of ten babies
And puts them in their cribs, whether or not they want to sleep

It is afternoon in the village
Ten babies sleep in the nursery
That was mopped and cleaned after the midday meal
The workers return from the fields and orchards
To shower and rest
Ben Shrir and his thick wife Dina
Stretch their muscles as they lie in bed
And make love

(cont. on next page)

Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

(cont. from previous page)

The winds of Galilee rustle over the valley
Trees sigh in the hot afternoon
The Polish carpenter rises from the bed of the village nurse
And she checks the temperatures of her patients

Mendel Handel brews tea for his wife
In the porcelain tea-set they brought
In the battered suit-case from Berlin
And serves thin biscuits on a three-tiered plate

The sun sets on the village
Ben and Dina Shrir take clean shirts from the laundry
Prepare for the evening meal
Maya Chlor washes all her cups and plates
And scrubs her kitchen cupboards before her children return from the pool.

Around the dining hall the cactus bushes absorbing the day`s sun
Open their fragrant buds
Salem of Baghdad brings the sweet yeasty bread to the tables
The night air is scented with rotting orange peel
Collected on the compost heap
For animal fodder

Night falls on the village
In the distant hills, the jackals howl
A dog barks,
A baby cries and is offered his mother`s breast
Potatoes lie undisturbed in the dry sour earth
And tomorrow`s bread dough starts to rise in the heat of the night
A scream of passion is heard through a cottage window
And echoes down the dark valley
The people of the village slumber
Resting their stiff limbs
Murmuring through their disturbing dreams

Wendy Blumfield
Haifa Group Selection



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

The Mystery of Our Existence

But a step and we move on,
to life or onwards to the beyond.
It is a matter of perspective
here or there.

In unending circles
we are but one ring.
A small important link
in the spiritual chain.

I'll weigh
this special truth
of our existence,
as a speck of mystery.

We are printed letters
in a book of generations.
Each one with his prisms
adding to the infinite light.

Inspired by "*In View of the Fact*" by
A. R. Ammons, an important American poet.

Dawn

The coming day brings creation.
I shall increase my awareness
of this reality that exists,
and will take it into my soul.

All is transitory in human terms,
yet a minute is just like a century.
God measures unknown dimensions
with His heavenly eye.

I will carve my own place
and touch the linear minute
This is and will be my own corner
of a nexus to the divine.

We can glance at the sun's light
and check out Nature's wonders.
Then take a stand of daily awe
in all that lives and dies as a matter of course.

I will use this very opportunity
to climb the Godly mountain.
I'll face nook and cranny
following the winding course.

Hayim Abramson
Beit El



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

Climate Change

Birds change their haunting flights across the seas
yet on terra firma
even earthworms
may look further afield
while we humans barely notice the rising of seas
as unavoidably, water expands
to drown low islands
their populations small as they are
unwillingly transfer to safer locations
while coastal plains presently over-manned by humans
will water-log those
who sought horizons of peaceful or stormy views.

I, we, fail to visualize the relentless sea-rise
the present seven billion humans
will crush together
as wars and everyday violence
even more than today
will proliferate.

Wait! There is a future -
as seas increase three metres or more
in height -
there will be queues
desperately
seeking tickets
for rockets to Mars!

Ezra Ben-Meir

Western Galilee Selection

Climate Conundrum

Forest fires despoil,
Cities battle floods,
Oceans crawl up shores,
Polar beasts seek ice
As icebergs drown the shores.

Carbon, smog and gas
Occupy the news.
People want to know
If industry trumps life.

Must economic growth
Make the market boom
And bring the planet's crash?

Eli Ben-Joseph

Western Galilee Selection

POEMS FROM OUR OVERSEAS MEMBERS

Chanukah Senryu

Candles burn tonight
Remember the Maccabees
Winter miracle

Matthew Anish, USA



Chanukah Menorah

I have an electric menorah
Thanks to Thomas Edison
I lit it today
It still works!
I will light it when the holiday rolls around
Many people like Chanukah - some more than Christmas - dare I mention that!
Well, an Orthodox friend of mine ceded the ground on that score
But whatever else happens
My menorah will be shining this winter
My MENORAH
Light cutting through shadow!!
Something we all need!

Matthew Anish, USA



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

Exit. Keep clear at all times.

This street alone seems to be the outlet
for dozens of exits. Mitte, Berlin's city center, offers its guided tour
along speaking doors, each one of them a reminder on
the emergencies of our lives.

Fire—a rare sight—and waters running from overflowing
sinks, leaking pipes and faces. Keep clear
at all times, your bathroom and image and
exit. Keep clear what is left of the street in front
of your house from the shouts and fights and from
the never-ending silence upstairs. Some
never make it down to the exit. Keep
clear at all times, from new plans and furniture arriving, blocking
the driveway and resolution. Keep clear and remember that
at all times means day and night, in, before, and after, even
a minute before and seven years after
your last takeoff or your last Berlin tour
de force. Next time, please take
a few moments to locate the exits.
The nearest exit may be behind you. And after
all, there is always the option to
please, keep this door closed at all times.

Britta R. Kollberg
Berlin, Germany

Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

Tree of Life



They were the early birds, the shomrim, making sure each Shabbat of making minyan for the first mourner's kaddish. The earliest early birds were Cecil and David, the ambassadors, developmentally disabled brothers in mid-life, seeing to each Shabbat's perfect flow, prayer books and "Good Shabbos" at the ready, cheerful, gregarious Cecil of the wonderful laugh, more serious David, honored for his good-humored work at Good Will and daily devotion to showing up, any time, at any congregation in Squirrel Hill that needed one more for minyan. Dr. Jerry, always modeling radical kindness, touching his patients bare handed, with public hugs in the hysterical early days of HIV, making house calls, impromptu, after hours, looking in on, then sitting and schmoozing with the very old, Dr. Jerry who heard a shot, hurried into the hall to be of help, and died. Dentist Richard, donating a day a week of crowns and root canals to immigrants, to the down-and-out. Light-hearted Mel who loved his baby grandson to the moon and beyond and would always jump in to fix the smallest thing at shul and never gave up on the Pittsburgh Pirates. New grandpa, Daniel, mentor, and enthused volunteer with the elderly. And so two babies are robbed of zaides. Irving, of the wide smile and guaranteed hello at synagogue, always helping others follow in the siddur. Rose, still vibrant at ninety-seven, the bubbe said to know her children, grandchildren, and great grandchild better than they knew themselves. Warm, elegant, and inspiring Joyce, retired researcher, leaving behind bereft women each naming her best friend, along with a broken-hearted stream of grad students. Bernice and Sylvan, the sweetest, most helpful couple you'll ever know, said neighbors, married 62 years, dying where they once stood under the chuppah.

Eleven lives lost in mass murder's maelstrom, ripped from the tree of life while davening. The next shabbat, a mourning multitude went to shul from sea to shining sea, unafraid to be afraid and still show up, a Yom Kippur-sized portion of American Jews, the regulars, once-a-yearniks, and seculars, and supporting Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, many who never imagined stepping inside a synagogue but together made history's largest minyan for the reading of Parashat Chayei Sarah, learning together how Abraham got Isaac all settled down with that nice girl of the tribe, Rebecca, his fabled sons, Isaac and Ishmael, reunited to bury him at Machpelah, the force of ill winds and ill luck spent, the deal of everything sealed for Abraham before he passed.

Lacking the advantage of the Holy One's voice in one's ear, meddling angels, and a one hundred seventy-five year long go of it to get things right, these eleven departed souls made it to blessed memory the ordinary way, by how they lived their portion, not by how their portion was savagely shortened, exemplars of goodness "hiding" in plain sight and at the fulcrum of tikkun olam, everyday modern men and women, ordinarily gone missing from the news until tragedy or obituary calls, this time bequeathing quiet, timeless, inspiring stories of just and merciful Jews of generous connectedness which was their walk with G-d, earning each the crown of Shem Tov, of a good name.

Diane Ray
USA



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

Pagan Festival 2018

Brumm, Brumm Brumm Brumm
Primitive and earthy the drummers' beat
Rhythmic monotonous incessant sounds greet
The dancers encircle all dressed in black
Hold staves which they thwack and thwack
Big bellied men with beards and long locks
Wear ribbons and bells above their socks
Nose and ears pierced with shiny rings
Chins and lips stabbed by lethal pins.

Brumm, Brumm Brumm Brumm
Women with flowered skirts and black faces
Dance as if just arisen from coffin cases
Wear pointed hats adorned with fluffy dead rats
Or belts hung with stuffed baby bats
Bodies embellished with bizarre tattoos
Snakes, flowers, fishes, a veritable zoo
Secret messages, gothic designs
Astral drawings and mathematical lines.

Brumm, Brumm Brumm Brumm
They prance and dance for moon, trees and rivers
With shouts and jumps, the watchers quiver
Thumps and stomps on brown parched grass
Call on their rain god to visit then pass
He answers their prayers with a huge thunder storm
The ground it is flooded so they all march home.

Brumm, Brumm Brumm Brumm

Esther B Lipton

London

Paternal Love

He feeds her apple piece by piece
She kicks her little legs at each bite
Flings her arms around his bowed neck
With a wordless love he entwines
His arms tightly around her body
And infusing affection, holds her still
Renewing their unbroken bond
Kisses the crown of her troubled head
As she sits trapped in her wheelchair.

Esther B Lipton

London