



Voices Israel Group of Poets in English

Voices Newsletter August 2018

AUGUST MEETING DATES AND PLACES

HAIFA

**Tuesday, August 14
at 7:30 pm**

Susan Rosenberg's
Leon Blum 42/46
Haifa
Tel: 04-838-1218

TEL AVIV

**Thursday, August 22
at 7:30 pm**

AACI
94 A Allenby Street,
Tel Aviv

JERUSALEM

**Tuesday, August 14
at 6pm**

Ruth Fogelman's
2/5 Ararat Street
Jewish Quarter, Jerusalem
Call Ruth for directions

UPPER GALILEE

**No Meeting until
October 17 from 5-7pm**

Reuven and Yehudit's
128 Keren HaYesod
Artists Quarter, Tzfat

Coordinator:

Wendy Blumfield

Tel: 04-837-6820

Mobile: 054-524-0412

wendyblum@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

Mobile: 058-414-0266

poetsprogress@gmail.com

BET SHEMESH / MODIIN

No August Meeting

Judy Belsky's
Nahar Hayarden 120/4
Floor 2
Bet Shemesh

Coordinator:

Dr. Judy Belsky

drjudybelsky@gmail.com

NETANYA & SHARON

**Tuesday, August 27th
at 7:30pm**

Susan Olsburgh's
2/6 Zalman Shazar.
(3rd floor) Ramat Poleg

Coordinator:

Susan Olsburgh

Tel: 09-885-5629

olsburgh.susan@gmail.com

WESTERN GALILEE

**Sunday, August 26
at 8:30pm**

Kibbutz Evron

Coordinator:

Phyllsie Gross

Tel: 052-874-6880

phyllsie@hotmail.com

LONDON UK

For information please
contact Esther.

Esther Lipton:

eblipton@talk21.com

GUSH ETZION

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

Coordinator:

Mindy Aber Barad

Tel: 05-4667936

maber4kids@yahoo.com

SOUTHERN

Please contact Miriam
for more details.

Coordinator:

Miriam Green

Tel: 05-7388640

miriamsgreen@gmail.com

ASHKELON

Please contact
Chaim for more details

Coordinator:

Chaim Bezalel

bezalel.levy@gmail.com

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2/6 Zalman Shazar
Ramat Poleg, Netanya

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AUGUST 2018

Dear All

I hope many of you will have had an opportunity to look at the Voices Israel Facebook page and see the great photos taken in Haifa by Judith Fineberg and Naomi Yalin of the excellent workshop held earlier this month at the home of our membership secretary Susan Rosenberg. The workshop was very ably led by Professor David Caplan of Ohio Wesleyan University. He gave a detailed analysis of two poems, which exemplified the use of memory in poetry. An astonishingly quickly convened workshop, the brainchild of Wendy Blumfield, enabled 15 Voices members to enjoy the expertise of our distinguished visitor. Many thanks to all involved and particularly to Professor Caplan. Nicholas Dunne-Lynch has distributed our now traditional evaluation forms. A report of the evaluation will feature in the September newsletter.

As I hope you are all aware this is the submission period until 3 October 2018 for the 28th Reuben Rose Poetry Competition. Please do be sure to submit. Fees are very reasonable and this is our only source of income other than membership dues. There are three prizewinners and ten honourable mentions available. You could be one of these people!

The 44th Voices Israel anthology is now at the printers. Our treasurer Chanita Millman is on standby to complete the arduous task of mailing out the anthologies to all paid up members. Make sure you are on the register by paying your dues if indeed this has escaped your attention. Hopefully, we shall have a launch of the new anthology as we did last year – probably in early autumn.

I want to share with you the joyous morning I had earlier this month with three groups of children at the international summer school at Even Yehuda. Using an AA Milne poem 'Solitude' with the youngest group, entering Bet in September, and a poem by Kit Wright 'The Magic Box' with the two older groups, Daled and Vav, the children listened to a reading of the poem, read it themselves, identified what they liked and then giving their own ideas I was able to weave the suggestions together into a very acceptable pastiche. I give an example below. This was all done under the Voices Israel banner. Do let me know if you would like to be involved in reaching out to young potential poets in this way.

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The Magic Box

We will put into our box a box of smiles,
a first word of a baby,
a magic book, potions and a magic stick,
a magic stick to make people happy.

We will put into our box, my dog,
a skin of snake, a skull of a lion,
gold jewellery.

We will put into our box
a pencil and a notebook,
an orange beach, red rain and secrets,
a spark from the fire on Venus,
sunset at the beach and a rainbow.

Green Group (entering Daled in September)

Talking of weaving together reminds me that our own Avril Meallem has just co-produced her second book of Tapestry Poetry. Congratulations to her and Shernaz Wadia. Other Voices members are also so creative, contributing to many journals and magazines. Our secretary lists these but please don't be shy and do inform Linda Suchy about your publications. If you are able to give Voices Israel a mention then so much the better.

I hope you will find August not too hot. I know many of our members will be on holiday, help look after the children and grandchildren and hopefully still have time for their own creativity.

With warm best wishes for all your endeavours.

Susan

Susan Olsburgh President Voices Israel



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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW (RETURNING) MEMBER

- **Ira Director**, Bet Shemesh

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS !!!!!

- **Please remember that Voices Israel has announced the opening of the 29th annual Reuben Rose Poetry Competition. Submissions will be closed on *October 3, 2018*. Submission and payment via Submittable only. The announcement is attached as a separate document to help you with the information you need to submit your poems.**

CONGRATULATIONS

- to **Michael Stone** (Jerusalem) whose poems "Bird Arrows" and "The Voice" were published in *Poetry Pacific* (Nov. 2017).
- to **Wendy Blumfield, Susan Rosenberg, Susan Olsburgh**, and the entire **Haifa** group for putting together in a matter of a few days an amazing workshop with **Professor David Caplan** (and thank you Prof. Caplan!) (Following is an unsolicited review from one of the participants.)

First, I must thank Wendy for grabbing the chance to give us all an educational, constructive and inspiring workshop today with Professor David Caplan. The efforts of all involved helped towards making the event a resounding success. Thanks to Professor Caplan for agreeing to come and give of his talents through explanations, tips and ideas. Thanks to Linda for sending out the last minute notification to us all, to Susan R for her gracious hosting, and to Susan O for mediating so splendidly. I came home bursting with ideas, ready to ignore everything else for the next week, to sit happily composing poetry.... draft after unsuccessful draft... **Miriam Webber** (Haifa group)

- to **Matthew Anish** (USA) whose poem "A Sense of What Lies Beyond" was published in the July issue of *Beyond Bree* (July 2018).
- to **Matthew Anish** (USA) who writes a monthly column about collectibles for Barrs Postcard News and Ephemera. [Barr's Postcards News & Ephemera](#)



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- to **Esther Cameron** (Israel) The second of three parts of her essay "Put That Smartphone Down and Listen" is now online at the website for Sasson Magazine. The essay is a summary of a book by Rabbi Uri Cohen, *Kelim BeYad Keleinu*, which discusses the effects of the media, particularly the cellphone, from a Torah perspective. The book is a successor to Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* and the work of Neil Postman, but the Torah sources add depth and focus and suggest a way of orienting ourselves vis-a-vis these phenomena.
- to Avril Meallem, together with her poetry partner Shernaz Wadia in India, on the publication of a second collection of "Tapestry Poetry: A Fusion of Two Minds in an Innovative Genre of Poetry. Available on: <https://www.amazon.com/> and other Amazon websites and on-line book stores. In Israel it can be purchased directly from Avril (aemeallem@gmail.com)
- to Pesach Rotem whose poem "Dreaming in Tibetan" was published in *Tuck Magazine* at <http://tuckmagazine.com/2018/07/02/poetry-1580/>.
- to Dr. Judy Belsky on the publication of her new book of poems "Avraham and Sultana," the story of her grandparents' immigration from Turkey to Seattle in the 1920s. Available for purchase from the author.

REFUAH SHLEMA

- to **Matthew Anish** (USA) we wish him the best of health and a speedy full recovery.

HELP NEEDED

Voices Israel is looking for someone to serve as our Webmaster. This position would require approximately 2-3 hours per month of your volunteer time in your own home. No need to travel! Must have computer, of course.

If you are interested and willing to join our volunteer team, please contact our President, Susan Olsburgh, at olsburgh.susan@gmail.com.

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AUGUST 2018 GROUP POETRY SELECTIONS

A MODEST LIFE Iasi Romania 1942

Potato skins
Boiling in the pot
Earth's heavy smell
Always damp,
Whether cold or hot
In the musty cellar,
Mina, at five,
Her father no longer alive
The youngest of six
Mina failed to thrive
Her mother thrifty
Worked so hard
For her flock to survive

At 15, Mina
Barely full grown
Twirled paper cones
Packed eggs
Pulled herrings
From kegs
Sliced cheese.

Pinko the boss's boy
Enticed by her melancholy
Began to tease
But succumbed
And with hopes
of happiness to come
Under a curtain
They married.

60 years together
Romania, then Israel
They both packed eggs, sliced
cheese
In their makolet
No holidays, no ease
Six a.m. till eight p.m.
No wars, heat or cold
Deterred them
They missed not a day
Devoted, seeming
Mere shadows almost fading
away

Both slim and small
One daughter, five
grandchildren
And the shop kept them all

Some people receive
Accolades, certificates,
applause
Nobody applauded Mina,
She received no awards
But loudspeakers broadcast
her demise
A crowded funeral
Under clouded skies
A cram-packed shiva
Their modest apartment
Invaded, fraught with cries
And Pinko sitting silent, lost
Unable for once to calculate
the cost
His other half now far above
But surrounded by love
Naomi Yalin, Haifa selection

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LONGING TO TOUCH

Longing to touch
we look instead

Slowly pass the minutes
as we gaze at the palpable space
between our hands

Yearning to touch
yet restrained by invisible walls

Our eyes search
for the feelings
only hands can express

Simcha Angel, Jerusalem selection

* * * * *

From Where, Here, Looking Forward to Where

Dan Brown's published "ORIGIN"

returned me to years long gone
when visits to the synagogue were regular
prayers said rapidly without thoughts of
from where did they – or I - come.

I enjoyed the communal singing
the choruses with the cantor
the songs reaching upwards
while hearts beat musically
the rhythm enhancing feelings within.

Many years have passed
and with every this is now
what is the future
to where will we go or be
when the red burning sun has lived its life?

Star gazers return *near* to the Big Bang

from where it came
its moment of action
and to where it will go?
Silence!

Alas! Our proclaimed atheist hero**
solves the unknown with his last word

Godspeed !

** *Edmond Hirsch, Atheist born to destroy all religions*

Ezra Ben-Meir, Western Galilee Selection

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The Sacred and the Profane Numbers

What are numbers when removed from price tags,
ID cards, tombstones, mortgage deeds? I am unable
to grasp their nature. Is there a world of pure numbers
just like there is a world of pure forms?
I can see the pure numbers as masked apparitions
never completely revealing themselves,
perpetually commuting: dancing in pairs
(odd and even, odd and odd, even and even),
coming together in sets or sequences whose rules
can or cannot be guessed, scores, droves, hordes,
hosts, legions, multitudes, now and then making room
for perfect numbers, surrounded by their brood of divisors
or for prime numbers, in their prim loneliness.
At times two consecutive numbers step away
from one another, the gap immediately filled
with the infinity of numbers between them.

What are they, these choreographic, carnivalesque figures?
Have they been created together with the universe
their number increasing as time passes? Are they angels
enacting before the Creator the abstract laws of creation?
Are they as devoid of free will as the angels? Do they sing
holy-holy-holy is the Lord of Numbers, Who has stopped droves,
killed legions, let millions be killed according to His will?
(How many to make a drove? A legion? What are six millions?)
Are they utterly unaffected by the numbers down here?
Is 98, for instance, unstained by the fact of being branded
on the body of the poor cow, has 122517 no complicity at all
for its presence on the forearm of the frail old lady ?

* * *

Do you remember, child? You came home late after a concert
schlepping the unwieldy bassoon, and had yet to prepare
for the math test next day. Will you sit with me, you asked,
and of course I was only too happy to sit with you, I even
took a ream of sheets for myself, to let math flow between us.
We began enjoying ourselves, we were in secret competition.
The numbers tried to confound us, jumped like mischievous fairies
from one branch to another on the many-tiered fractions,
surreptitiously moved from the left to the right of the zero,
resisting our efforts to reduce their vital space to a compact,
manageable, elegant form. They fought a good fight.
But between the two of us they did not stand a chance.

Iris Dan, Haifa Selection

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Metamorphosis

Mother sits by herself
amidst the ageless beauty of
stained glass and architecture,
waiting.

Then, she watches her daughter
slowly glide down the aisle
on the arm of a future
king.

What must she think,
this descendant of slaves,
they who picked cotton
in the Colonies.

Her future grandchildren,
their blood and heritage
mingling with that of all
previous ethnic groups.

The fabric of the British monarchy
changed again.

Joyce Serlin

Netanya/Sharon selection

The Fabric of Life

My mother-in-law wove carpets and cushions

Of wool she had dyed, then spun

From her other son's sheep

I look at them now half a century later

Where are we now and why did we leave

We had an ideal. A life with commitment

Now unravelling as the warp loosens

Where the weft intersected

Leaving holes that no-one can mend

Clinging to the comforts of life

We pull the weft this way and that

Trying to keep the warp under tension

Egos, corruption, squeeze through the threads

Embolden the loops

Destroy the design of

The fabric of existence

Made difficult to bear

My daughter has left, was she right, was she wrong

My sons are still here, are they right, are they wrong

The fabric of my dream is coming loose

Can we weave it together again?

Susan Bell

Netanya/Sharon selection

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EDITOR'S CHOICE PAGE

Sleep's Sea

Dive into sleep after lunch.
Out in a flash
with nary a splash..
At night it can take an hour
to slip into sleep's bower,

And there is an order,
teeth, pajama, and shower.
Relax, write, read,
And if I am lucky indeed
I drift off unknowing.

Michael Stone, Jerusalem

Song of Jerusalem

City of Kings
David and Solomon
Golden city of our home
Song of Songs
your music brings
Angels playing on flutes
and strings
Long ago when the Temple stood
Solomon's song could be heard
Song of Jerusalem let me hear
Once again your heart so dear

Deborah Ben Sasson, Akko

Talent and Work

She glides on floating strands
From warp to silky warp
And weaves her gluey threads
With tensile strength like steel

Inside a plan ingenious
She traps, digests, creates
Near bursting with a purpose
Like eggs inside her shell

A dancer on the wire
An acrobat on the wall
She weaves her dangerous art form
And fools the naked eye

A master with no glory
This magic, hers by grace
The wand of evolution
In someone else's grasp

She spins that she might eat
She eats that she might grow
She grows that she might bear
A future yet to come

Janice Block, Bet Shemesh/Modiin

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POEMS FROM OUR OVERSEAS MEMBERS

Ships Sailing into Eternity

Soon we all will
pass into eternity
The years are not always kind
So we must take joy while we still can
We should be thankful for the gift of life which
had been given to us
The ships are in the harbor waiting to take us
to the other shore
Let us not grieve
Rather look at creation
with the "awe and wonder"
it deserves

Matthew Anish, USA

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Lavender

Stragglng the red brick wall
Are lavender bushes.
In summer when a benign sun smiles
And the wind is without presence
Then do I pick and pinch the green leaves
Releasing a delicate perfume
Which soon fades in the dry air
In autumn when the purple flowers
Have shrivelled and died
My pinched portion is grey, brittle
Full of a unique heavy scent
That intoxicates spiders and beetles
And me!

Esther Lipton, UK

Vanishing Point

I chased it once
for days
driving through three states
and as many provinces
that prairie vanishing point
where three dimensions intersect
where protracted blacktop
and sentinel telegraph poles
meet a distant golden horizon
then melt
into limitless sky

Chased it
and chased it again
on subsequent days
seeking, wondering, always musing
about flat-earth theory
speculating
about prostrate terrain
and it's nexus
to obsolete
geographic hypotheses

Chased it
incessantly, obsessively
until
I looked back
in the driving mirror
on morning three
and wasn't sure
if I'd passed it
or if it
that planar enigma
I pursued so relentlessly
was now chasing me

Don Mulcahy, Ontario, Canada