



THE SAMI ROHR PRIZE
FOR JEWISH LITERATURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature Announces 2019 Finalists

New York April 1, 2019 – The Executive Director of the Jewish Book Council Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature, Carolyn Starman Hessel recently made her favorite, indeed magical, phone call of the year to five entirely surprised authors, informing them that they will each be recognized as a Fellow competing for a \$100,000 prize to support their writing. The second prize of \$18,000 and three remaining presentations of \$5,000 each to be announced at the beginning of May will be celebrated at a private event at the new Moise Safra Center in New York City. This is one of the largest literary prizes in the U.S. and by far the largest literary award in Jewish life.

Established in 2007, the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature honors emerging writers who explore the Jewish experience and demonstrate the potential for continued contribution to Jewish literature. Their careers are fostered both by the prize and the continuing contact, meetings and workshops sponsored by the organization. This has helped foster, for the first time in American Jewish history, a Jewish literary community.

English language writers from anywhere in the world are eligible for this Prize. Fiction and non-fiction works are considered in alternate years. The independent jury consists of journalists, academics and publishing professionals.

The five finalists for fiction this year take readers on a world tour of Jewish life over these past centuries, to Hungary, Egypt, medieval Europe, Israel and the United States. And all this is accomplished by the stunning insights that these novelists can convey.

Jewish Book Council, 520 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018

www.jewishbookcouncil.org



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This year's recipients for the 2019 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature are:

[Rachel Kadish](#), author of *The Weight of Ink* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017)
[Michael David Lukas](#), author of *The Last Watchman of Cairo* (Spiegel & Grau, 2018)
[Dalia Rosenfeld](#), author of *The Words We Think We Know* (Milkweed Editions, 2017)
[Mark Sarvas](#), author of *Memento Park* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2017)
[Margot Singer](#), author of *Underground Fugue* (Melville House, 2017)

“It is thrilling to experience the extraordinary depth and range of the works of this year’s fiction finalists. It is deeply gratifying for our family to be able to recognize these emerging writers, and to play a role in their futures,” said George Rohr.

Jewish Book Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting Jewish interest literature. With over 250 touring authors each year; 1,400 book clubs; 1,100 events; its new annual print publication, Paper Brigade; the National Jewish Book Awards; the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature; the Natan Book Award; and a vibrant digital presence, JBC ensures that Jewish-interest authors have a platform, and that readers are able to find these books and have the tools to discuss them with their community.