



# Program

**Elisa Spungen Bildner**  
President, Jewish Book Council

**Naomi Firestone-Teeter**  
Executive Director, Jewish Book Council

**Abigail Pogrebin**  
Ceremony Host

**Tracy Brown**  
introduction of the Children's Picture Book Tracy and Larry Brown Family Award

**Shoshana Nambi**  
Winner of the Children's Picture Book Tracy and Larry Brown Family Award

**Arielle Levites**  
Introduction of the Mentorship Award in Honor of Carolyn Starman Hessel

**Ellen Frankel**  
Winner of the Mentorship Award in Honor of Carolyn Starman Hessel

**Joy Greenberg**  
Co-President, Jewish Book Council

**Jane Weitzman**  
Introduction of the Hebrew Fiction in Translation Jane Weitzman Award

**Maayan Eitan**  
Winner of the Hebrew Fiction in Translation Jane Weitzman Award

**Lenore Weitzman**  
Introduction of the Holocaust Memoir Award in Memory of Dr. Charles and Ethel Weitzman

**Michael Frank**  
Winner of the Holocaust Memoir Award in Memory of Dr. Charles and Ethel Weitzman and the Sephardic Culture Mimi S. Frank Award in Memory of Becky Levy

**Sean Singer**  
Winner of the Berru Award in Memory of Ruth and Bernie Weinfeld

**Dani Shapiro**  
Winner of the JJ Greenberg Memorial Award for Fiction

**Presentation of the 72nd National Jewish Book Awards**

**Michael W. Twitty**  
Winner of the Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award

See pages 5-55 for detailed information on each winning title, including winners remarks



## Ceremony Host: Abigail Pogrebin

*photo credit: Lorin Klaris*

Abigail Pogrebin is the author of *Stars of David: Prominent Jews Talk about Being Jewish*, which went into 10 printings, and *My Jewish Year: 18 Holidays, One Wondering Jew*, which was a finalist for a 2017 National Jewish Book Award. A former Emmy-nominated producer for “60 Minutes,” she has written for *The Atlantic*, *Newsweek*, *Tablet* and *The Forward* and she was a co-host — with Orthodox Rabbi Dov Linzer— for the *Tablet Magazine* podcast, “Parsha in Progress.” Abby moderates public conversations for the Streicker Center, Shalom Hartman Institute, and the JCC in Manhattan. She is a past President of Central Synagogue in New York.



# Winners



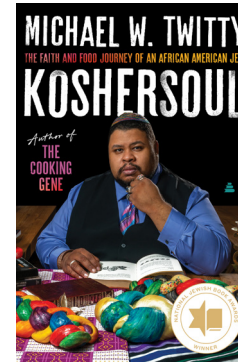
# KosherSoul: The Faith and Food Journey of an African American Jew

Michael W. Twitty

HarperCollins/Amistad Books

photo credit: Noah Fecks

Jewish Book of the Year  
Everett Family Foundation Award



A triumph of a book, *KosherSoul* explores the connections between the Jewish and African diasporas over specific touch points, such as identity and food, while making a case that not only are the two communities not so different from one another, but also that their links in cuisine and identity highlight a deeper connective tissue than anyone ever thought possible. This eye-opening book includes conversations with people from different demographics within both communities, along with deep dives into theology, identity, and, of course, food, allowing readers to reexamine how they think about the Jewish community and giving them permission and impetus to reflect on their heritage and religion in a new way. An impactful and tremendous achievement.





Ellen Frankel

*photo credit: Sarasota Photo Studio LLC*

I started my job as Editor-in-Chief at The Jewish Publication Society as a complete novice. My first day in publishing was as an editor-in-chief. I never took a course in Jewish Studies. I learned on the job. Everyone was my teacher.

To all who came before and showed me the way,  
To all who came after and set me straight,  
To all who came to me for help and taught me something new,  
To all whom I went to for help and didn't make me feel a fool,  
Thank you!

“There's nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein.”—Red Smith

Mentoring is similar. Just draw near to your apprentice and give blood.

Mentorship Award  
in Honor of Carolyn Starman Hessel

In Arielle Levites's nomination for Ellen Frankel, she wrote that “Ellen's special contribution has been in telling unknown and under-explored stories and nurturing first-time authors who otherwise might have been overlooked.” During her eighteen years as Editor-in-Chief and CEO of The Jewish Publication Society, Ellen mentored authors and staff and guided many students and scholars alike through their careers (and sent former interns, including Naomi Firestone-Teeter and Miri Pomeranz Dauber to JBC!). She championed many women scholars starting with Aviva Zornberg and brought to life the Folktales of the Jews project, which made the stories of forgotten Jewish communities accessible to a larger audience. She has an unwavering commitment to make obscure texts accessible to lay audiences, which she continues now in her writing and speaking. And to add to all of this, Ellen is a National Jewish Book Award-winning author, teacher, storyteller, lecturer, and a former board member of Jewish Book Council. We are so pleased and honored to present this year's Mentorship Award in Honor of Carolyn Starman Hessel to Ellen Frankel.



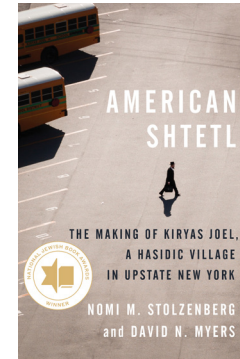
## American Shtetl: The Making of Kiryas Joel, a Hasidic Village in Upstate New York

Nomi M. Stolzenberg and David N. Myers

Princeton University Press

photo credit: Scarlett Freund

Working together with a writing partner can be complicated. It is all the more so when the co-author is your life partner. Nomi began to develop an interest in Kiryas Joel in 1994, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the public school district in Kiryas Joel was unconstitutional. David would hear about Nomi's work and the litigation that continued to engulf Kiryas Joel at the dinner table. In 2004, he gingerly asked Nomi if he could join with her to conduct research on Kiryas Joel. For the next fifteen years, we worked together on researching and writing the book. It is fair to say that we not only came from different disciplines but had different styles and rhythms of writing. Our ability to work through our differences mirrored the subject matter of our book, which is ultimately about how we live with difference. The title of our book, *American Shtetl*, references the foundational values of American society that support, and sometimes thwart, the toleration of diverse ways of life; and the Jewish experience of navigating the American terrain. We are deeply grateful to our three wondrous daughters, Tali, Noa, and Sara, who became adults in the course of our writing this book, and whose mix of curiosity, tolerance, and impatience helped us bring it to completion.



American Jewish Studies  
Celebrate 350 Award

The outstanding legal scholar Nomi M. Stolzenberg and the eminent historian David N. Myers spent fifteen years studying Kiryas Joel, a Hasidic Satmar village in New York State. The result, *American Shtetl*, is a riveting account of how a shtetl arose sixty miles outside of New York City.

Surviving Bergen-Belsen and landing in postwar Brooklyn, Satmar's charismatic Rebbe Joel Teitelbaum dreamed of replicating in this new land the East European shtetl that had been destroyed. This brilliant study shows the Satmar Hasidim embedded in a "process of unwitting assimilation" of contemporary norms and acquiring land to build houses, schools, synagogues, and the infrastructure of a new community. Their endeavors sparked a dozen lawsuits.

A tale of real estate and politics, this history, in the masterful hands of this married couple, concludes that these Hasidim did not replicate the Old World shtetl. What the Satmars created instead is one of the most vibrant religious, self-segregated communities in the United States.



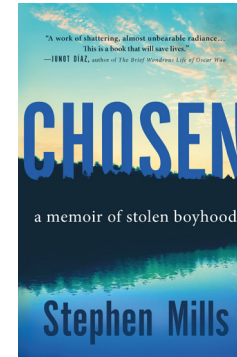
photo credit: Peter Augustin

# Chosen: A Memoir of Stolen Boyhood

## Stephen Mills

Metropolitan Books

I am so grateful to the Jewish Book Council for recognizing *Chosen*. It is a tremendous honor for me as a writer. More than that, it is a milestone for our entire community. Jewish children suffer the same rates of sexual abuse as those in the general population. Whenever I speak at a synagogue or JCC, I'm pulled aside by those—college kids, young adults, seniors—who need to share their own heartbreaking stories, many for the first time, always in hushed tones. I get long emails from countless others, desperate for someone to bear witness. But our collective shame and denial would have them bear their pain in silence. I was one of them. It took me fifty years to share my story. By bestowing this award, you have underscored the enduring power of books to tell difficult truths and foment the messy process of communal healing and change. Facing past cases of abuse is an urgent task, because until we hear from survivors, we are helpless to build in effective protections for children today. I would like to dedicate this award to those who are working every day to support victims and keep kids safe.



Autobiography and Memoir  
The Krauss Family Award in Memory of  
Simon & Shulamith (Sofi) Goldberg

Beautifully written and bravely told, *Chosen: A Memoir of Stolen Boyhood*, is the story of sexual abuse that the author suffered as a young boy at Jewish summer camp, and his lifelong struggle to recover and ultimately fight back against the perpetrator.

As a thirteen-year-old boy, Stephen Mills is chosen for special attention by his summer camp's charismatic director. Mills, whose father died when he was four, places his trust in this authority figure, who first grooms and then molests him for two years. The story follows Mills from the time the abuse occurred into his adult life, as the trauma leads to self-loathing, drug abuse, and horrific nightmares. It is all made worse by the discovery that his abuser is moving from camp to camp, molesting other boys. Only a painful personal reckoning brings Mills to the process of recovery— as well as a decades-long battle to stop a serial predator, find justice, and hold to account those who failed the children in their care.

Inspiring and deeply moving, *Chosen* is the rare book that is impossible to put down even as it aches the heart.



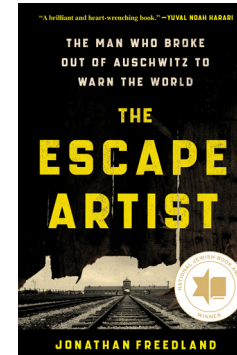
# The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World

Jonathan Freedland

HarperCollins Publishing

photo credit: Philippa Gedg

Rudolf Vrba is a towering figure of the 20th century: a Jew who pulled off the near-impossible by escaping from Auschwitz, who did it to warn the world and whose report, written with his fellow escapee, Alfred Wetzler, led to the saving of 200,000 Jewish lives. And yet for decades, outside the circle of scholars and experts, his name was barely known. My hope is that through this book, we might not only marvel at what is a thrilling adventure story of courage and extraordinary ingenuity, but also learn some of the timeless lessons to be drawn from Vrba's singular life. About how history can change a life, even down the generations; how the difference between truth and lies can be the difference between life and death; and how people can refuse to believe in the possibility of their own imminent destruction, even, perhaps especially, when that destruction is certain. Those notions were stark and vivid in the Europe of the 1940s. But they have a resonance for our own time too.



Biography  
In Memory of Sara Berenson Stone

In *The Escape Artist*, British journalist Jonathan Freedland shares the incredible, little-known story of Rudolph Vrba, born Walter Rosenberg, who was the first person (and one of only four in total) to escape from Auschwitz. In April 1944, the Czech teenager, with fellow prisoner Alfred Wetzler, did the impossible and secretly maneuvered out of the hellish camp and into the treacherous countryside. In the days that followed, they provided a first-hand account of the Nazi killing machine, including detailed drawings and descriptions of the gas chambers, chemicals, and crematoria. The report formed the Auschwitz Protocols, which Vrba hoped would sound an alarm worldwide and spur those with power to halt deportations of Jews. He was often met with roadblocks, revealing the pervasiveness of antisemitism across the globe.

If this premise were pitched in Hollywood, it would almost certainly get the green light. Stranger, and more haunting, than fiction, Vrba's life is elevated to the heights of narrative storytelling by Freedland, who is (not surprisingly) also an accomplished suspense novelist. Through clear, digestible prose, the reader feels the intensity, anxiety, and bravery Vrba harnessed to reach the other side of the barbed wire and then rebuild his life in a broken world.



## Shayna Miriam Ruth Black

Kirk House

*photo credit: M.E. Russell*

I am honored to receive the National Jewish Book Award for Book Club Book for my novel, *Shayna*, which was inspired by my father's life. Orphaned at four years old after the murder of his family in a pogrom, he walked west across Europe with relatives who brought him to America. When I saw images of Syrian refugees trudging across Europe to reach safety, I saw my father as he must have been a hundred years before, a hungry, frightened and despairing child. Beyond the fear and the physical deprivation was the grief of losing his mother, a loss which never left his heart. These elements stirred within me and emerged as fiction in the novel, *Shayna*. Only after I finished did I realize I'd been attempting to give my father a better life, to replace, if only through fiction, the family he had lost.



Book Club  
The Miller Family Award in Memory of Helen  
Dunn Weinstein and June Keit Miller

We meet Shayna Rifkin when she is a teenager in Obodiva, a shtetl in Ukraine. Shayna, who is newly engaged, sees her world destroyed by the Cossacks. However, her challenges are just beginning, as her life is threatened and uprooted on her journey to safety and freedom. She flees with her orphaned nephew, along with her future husband, Yussi, and his stalwart mother, Manya. Together and individually, they face what appear to be insurmountable obstacles. Shayna's spirit is tested and at times even fractured, but the love of Yussi and his mother help provide resilience when there is little to grasp. Their journey through Belgium and eventually to America, in steerage, will give the reader an intimate look at the plight of immigrants in the early twentieth century. In America, they reunite with a successful long-lost brother, who runs sweatshops and proves to be another disappointment; the family love she sought to reclaim is shattered. Eventually, Shayna succeeds in creating a better life and a loving family. Through talent and hard work, life in America is no longer illusive.

This intimate glimpse into the immigrant experience is both heart-wrenching and eye-opening. The author has gone to great lengths to insure authenticity and make the reader feel connected to the protagonist throughout her journey. A wonderful, compelling, and sincere story of loss and discovery.



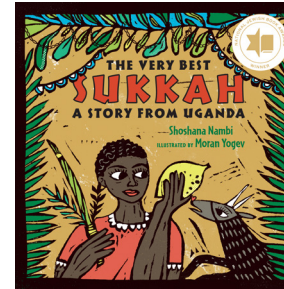


## The Very Best Sukkah: A Story from Uganda

Shoshana Nambi; Moran Yogeve, illus.

Kalaniot Books

Childrens Picture Book  
Tracy and Larry Brown Family Award



Every year during Sukkot, each family in the Abayudaya community of Uganda chooses a Sukkah decoration theme that highlights the gifts and creativity of that family. Delightful Soshi wants her family to win the annual Sukkah decorating competition and has been gathering Nsambya tree branches for the roof. The art teacher decorates her Sukkah with art from her students. Other families choose mangoes, bananas, passion fruits, pineapples, and jackfruits to decorate theirs, making the village smell like sweet, ripening fruit by the end of the eight-day holiday. When a sudden storm destroys the Sukkah of Daudi and his daughter Rebecca, who have decorated their booth with battery powered lights and fancy embroidery from the city of Mbale, author Shoshana Nambi, a rabbinic student, shows community reliance without being didactic or curtailing self-expression in her characters. Soshi's desire to be the winner is heart-warming and encourages self-reflection. Visual artist Moran Yogeve, who has family roots in Ethiopia, invites us into the Abayudaya community with attractive East African patterns and soul-stirring colors. This distinctive book not only opens us to the celebratory life of the Abayudaya but also inspires new ways to highlight Jewish celebrations throughout our world community.



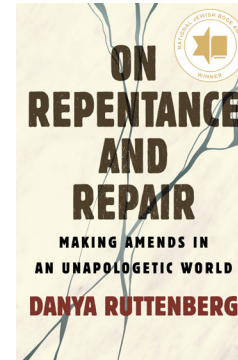
photo credit: Sally Blood

# On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World

## Danya Ruttenberg

Beacon Press

Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice  
Myra H. Kraft Memorial Award



As children, we learned that saying “I’m sorry” was a cure-all for any conflict or argument. The cycle of “argue, say sorry, and move on” has been our preferred conflict resolution model, perpetuated in modern times at all relationship levels. In these past few years, as we have begun to properly attend to our emotions and reckon with our painful histories and backgrounds personally, communally, nationally, and globally, and to find a growing need for reconciliation and social justice, this cycle feels woefully inadequate. And our most recent model of conflict resolution—cancel culture—can only carry us so far.

Enter Danya Ruttenberg’s *On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World*. Ruttenberg refreshes old, forgotten advice from the twelfth century rabbi Maimonides, gives an overview of his views on repentance in the Jewish text the Mishneh Torah, and offers us a five step process toward a more wholesome way to repair relationship breakdowns. She then applies the five steps to examples from all relationship levels, from interpersonal to global, and discusses the implications of this process for our own justice system.



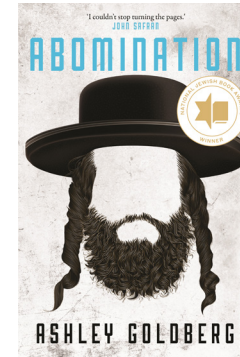
# Abomination

Ashley Goldberg

Penguin Random House Australia

photo credit: Dan Soderstrom

I'm overwhelmed and honoured to have won the Debut Fiction Prize. I never imagined that my novel would receive this kind of recognition from the other side of the globe. I want to thank the judges, the Jewish Book Council and Penguin Random House Australia. Also, special thanks goes to Justin Ractliffe who believed *Abomination* was destined for such accolades even when it was nothing more than a manuscript in his inbox.



Debut Fiction  
Goldberg Prize

Ashley Goldberg's debut novel, *Abomination*, is a duet. Half of it takes place in Australia's close-knit ultra-Orthodox Jewish world, where Yonatan Kaplan is a respected husband, rabbi, and soon-to-be-father; the other half takes place in the secular Melbourne of Yonatan's childhood friend Ezra Steinberg who has long since chucked away his religious observance. Yonatan and Ezra haven't spoken in years, but when a molestation scandal from their time at yeshiva together creeps back into the headlines, their paths cross again.

Goldberg's fast-paced, engrossing, emotional novel offers a window into Australia's Hasidic community, where loyalty and obedience are coins of the realm, and there is no room for dissent or modern ideas. Goldberg beautifully paints the warring impulse for justice and truth, and chronicles the betrayals and dishonesty one finds in both the religious and secular world. At its heart, *Abomination* is a story about friendship and the bonds that hold two people together long after being battered by the forces trying to keep them apart.





## My Second-Favorite Country: How American Jewish Children Think About Israel

Sivan Zakai

NYU Press

photo credit: Igor Zakai

Even little children have very big ideas. I'm so grateful to the Jewish Book Council for recognizing that children's voices—like all other voices that together constitute the beautiful symphony of contemporary Jewish life—matter. This book, *My Second-Favorite Country: How American Jewish Children Think about Israel*, is the result of a decade-long collaboration between Jewish children and adults who care about learning from and teaching children. Thank you to the wise and patient children (who are now teenagers!) who explained to me, year after year, how Israel functioned in their hearts, minds, and imaginations. Thank you to their parents, teachers, and school leaders who made it possible for these children to participate in the Children's Learning About Israel Project; to the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University for funding it; to my wonderful colleagues at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion for creating a culture that encourages the investigation of deep educational questions; and to all the folks at NYU Press for working their magic help transform these words into a book.

Education and Jewish Identity  
In Memory of Dorothy Kripke



In *My Second-Favorite Country*, Sivan Zakai shares her findings from the first longitudinal study of how American Jewish elementary school children think about Israel. Although Israel education is now a central feature of the American Jewish educational experience, to date there has been little data to suggest how Jewish children think and feel about Israel. Zakai's research helps to fill this gap.

The author also suggests that most educational institutions have yet to clearly define goals for Israel education, and that professional development in this field must continue to evolve, to better support educators in understanding both the subject matter and how children learn. Zakai claims that only by exploring these two disciplines in parallel will these programs prepare participants to support students in grappling with a set of inherently complex ideas that are often reserved for older learners.

*My Second-Favorite Country* is an important work for any reader interested in how Israel education must develop to better meet the needs of today's Jewish children.



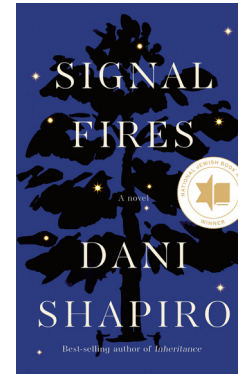
## Signal Fires Dani Shapiro

Alfred A. Knopf

photo credit: Beowulf Sheehan

*Signal Fires* was a long time in the making. I began the novel fifteen years ago, lost my way, and the manuscript ended up in a drawer. I spent those years writing a number of memoirs, including *Inheritance*, for which I was deeply honored to receive the 2019 National Jewish Book Award. But *Signal Fires* was the one that haunted me, the one that almost got away. In my computer files, it's labeled "Magic Novel" — partly because I didn't have a title, and partly because that's what it felt like: miraculous, magical. We were in lockdown when I rediscovered the pages, while cleaning my office closet, and in a way, all of the events of my life — my discovery about my biological identity, my husband's serious illness and recovery, our son growing from a boy into a young man, and finally the pandemic, that unlocked the world of these characters for me. I'm enormously grateful and doubly honored to receive this very meaningful award.

Fiction  
JJ Greenberg Memorial Award



Dani Shapiro, already renowned for her memoirs, has written a masterful novel in which she examines what lies beneath the lovely facades of a quiet street in Jewish suburbia. Bouncing back and forth across time and space, eschewing traditional chronology as the novel moves from a fateful night in the 1980s to New Years Eve Y2K to a pandemic-Zoom class, and back again, *Signal Fires* shows how relationships and patterns between people can crystallize, even when the underlying causes remain unspoken.

From a poignant rendering of the inner workings of the mind of a woman suffering from Alzheimer's, to explanations of dazzling astronomical phenomena as seen through the eyes of a precocious young boy, to mouthwatering descriptions of a son's gastronomic exploits, Shapiro weaves a beautiful tapestry from the tenuous gossamer threads that link two Jewish families. The novel is engrossing and difficult to put down, but make no mistake; its achievement is a quiet one. Ultimately, *Signal Fires* burns with a powerfully hopeful claim: love and care between people can ease the ache of brokenness and loss.



## Cooking alla Giudia Benedetta Jasmine Guetta

Artisan Books

photo credit: Ray Kachatorian

Jews have lived in Italy for over two thousand years, but very little has been done so far to preserve their culinary tradition, and the depth of their contribution to Italian cuisine has remained vastly untold until recently. It is a problem of size rather than relevance: there are approximately only 40,000 Jews in Italy, a number that keeps dropping year after year. Gathering materials for this book, I have visited many congregations, spoken with home cooks young and old, and I have come across an alarming finding: a lot of dishes that were once considered standard Jewish Italian fare have already largely been forgotten, and at this rate, in a few generations, the wealth of culinary heritage that constitutes the Italian Jewish food legacy might get lost. I'm forever grateful to my publisher for giving the Jews of Italy a voice abroad so that our recipes and stories can reach a wider audience. I'm also extremely thankful for the support that Jewish Book Council offers authors through its invaluable network: I would have never been able to reach as many readers as I did without their help, and when it comes to preserving a story, every single reader counts.

Food Writing & Cookbooks  
Jane and Stuart Weitzman Family Award



The deep-fried artichokes called Carciofi alla Giudia is a well-known Italian Jewish specialty, but who knew that S cookies and Veal Scalloppine with Lettuce are Jewish, too, the first served during Passover, the second to mark the feast of Sukkot? Such revelations are frequent in Benedetta Jasmine Guetta's illuminating book, *Cooking alla Giudia: A Celebration of the Jewish Food of Italy*, as she dives deep into the history and food practices of Italy's Jews, beginning in the first century CE and continuing up to the present day. Through appealing recipes and prose, Guetta traces the lasting influence of Jewish cooking on Italian cuisine: it was Jews who introduced eggplant into the Italian kitchen and who turned hardship and poor ingredients into such inexpensive but tasty snacks as filetti di baccalà fritti (battered stockfish). Guetta highlights the regional specialties that developed in Jewish communities large and small; for those who want to explore Italy's Jewish heritage, she helpfully includes travel essays that feature Jewish sites, shops, and restaurants throughout the country. Today, when only about 27,000 Jews remain in Italy, *Cooking alla Giudia* ensures that the significant Jewish contributions to Italy's culinary and cultural heritage will not be lost.



photo credit: Silan Dillal

# Love

## Maayan Eitan

Penguin Press

Hebrew Fiction in Translation  
Jane Weitzman Award



Maayan Eitan's *Love* can be read in one breath. In lyrical, propulsive prose, *Love* takes the reader deep into the life of a young sex worker in Tel Aviv, even as it constantly shifts who that worker is, exactly, and whether the narrator is one woman or multiple women or all women. *Love* is frank about desire, power, danger, and disappointment, as well as the fundamental right of a woman to do what she feels like doing. Crucially, it makes the reader question what the truth is. It depicts a complex, multicultural society where every person—Russian, Ethiopian, ultra-Orthodox, or secular Israeli—is searching. Occasionally, that search leads to finding love in the so-called wrong places.

Because *Love*'s author is also its translator, this elegantly translated novel also offers the opportunity to consider the translator as writer, the role of the translator altogether, and the transcendent power of translation as art.



## An Unchosen People: Jewish Political Reckoning in Interwar Poland

Kenneth B. Moss

Harvard University Press

photo credit: Benjamin Stein

I am deeply honored to see *An Unchosen People* receive this recognition from the Jewish Book Council. And I hope I do not sound perversely ungrateful if I admit that, truly, I find it hard to relate to this book without sadness and concern. *An Unchosen People* examines a moment when it became evident to many Jews that their prospects were grim and that really they did not have it in their power to alter their collective fate, no matter what they did. Of course, individuals sought to respond meaningfully to the situation, and the intellectual, cultural, and political creativity that this situation incited in some Polish Jews is at the heart of my book. But none of the people I came to know in my research saw much to celebrate. And there is also a cloud of concern hanging over our present too. The phenomenon that most worried the people I studied was the unexpected power of illiberal ideologies taking shape around them and the unexpected weakness of the liberal order within which they'd hoped to build a life. I wish I could say that these matters are no longer relevant to Jewish history, but I cannot.

History

Gerrard and Ella Berman Memorial Award



This is a work of passionately engaged scholarship that delves into the political thinking of Polish Jews before World War II. Using diaries, novels, autobiographies, letters, essays, sociological studies, and other sources, Moss uncovers the profound hopelessness of Polish Jews, including non-Zionist ones, regarding their future in the face of rising antisemitism. Moss discovers an intense yearning to emigrate in a world where there was usually no place to go, along with an intense interest in Palestine, not out of Zionism but out of sober analysis of their present and despair over their future in Poland. This is a haunting book that raises questions about the limits of Jewish ideologies in the face of fierce hostility in the state and society, and the inability of Jewish political movements to engage in effective collective action. Written in a compelling and riveting style, this is a book that will provoke discussion and soul-searching among readers of all types.





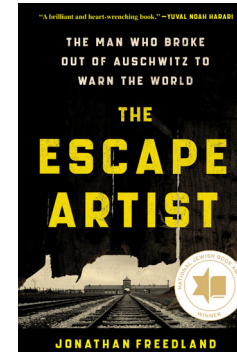
## The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World

Jonathan Freedland

HarperCollins Publishers

*photo credit: Philippa Gedge*

Rudolf Vrba is a towering figure of the 20th century: a Jew who pulled off the near-impossible by escaping from Auschwitz, who did it to warn the world and whose report, written with his fellow escapee, Alfred Wetzler, led to the saving of 200,000 Jewish lives. And yet for decades, outside the circle of scholars and experts, his name was barely known. My hope is that through this book, we might not only marvel at what is a thrilling adventure story of courage and extraordinary ingenuity, but also learn some of the timeless lessons to be drawn from Vrba's singular life. About how history can change a life, even down the generations; how the difference between truth and lies can be the difference between life and death; and how people can refuse to believe in the possibility of their own imminent destruction, even, perhaps especially, when that destruction is certain. Those notions were stark and vivid in the Europe of the 1940s. But they have a resonance for our own time too.



Holocaust  
In Memory of Ernest W. Michel

This riveting true story of Rudolf Vrba's escape from Auschwitz is hard to put down. Vrba, born Walter Rosenberg, was seventeen when he arrived in Auschwitz. He soon realized it was a factory for murder and became determined to escape "to tell the world."

Jonathan Freedland's brilliant writing keeps us on edge as Vrba and his companion, Alfred Wetzler, plot their escape. They first created a hideout to evade the hundreds of SS men and their dogs who were looking for them, and then crawled under electrified fences to become the first Jews to escape from Auschwitz.

But their daring escape was only the first part of their audacious plan. Blessed with a photographic memory, Vrba was determined to create the definitive report on the structure and process of the killings at Auschwitz. He not only wanted to warn the Jews of Europe, he also wanted to reach Roosevelt and Churchill, who, he assumed, would act to save Jewish lives.

Freedland keeps us in suspense with a gripping account of Vrba and Wetzler's trek over mountains and rivers. Constantly fearful, they survived several harrowing close calls to reach the Jewish leadership in Slovakia, their home country. At first, those leaders were skeptical. But Vrba's detailed drawings of the camp and the statistical data he memorized convinced them that Auschwitz was a death camp and they compiled a fact-filled report, The Auschwitz Protocols, that was smuggled out of Slovakia and eventually reached the highest echelons of the Allies.

But Vrba's hope that the report would encourage resistance was not realized, and he became embittered by the allied governments' failure to prevent the deportation of about 600,000 Hungarian Jews. But many historians now believe that the Auschwitz Protocols were instrumental in saving the last 200,000 Jews in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, and that Vrba deserves to be recognized and honored as the person who saved them. Jonathan Freedland's compelling book is the ideal vehicle for ensuring that recognition.



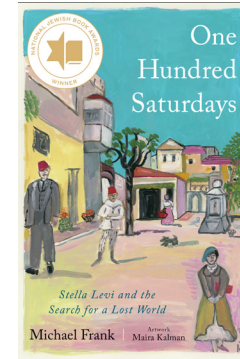
# One Hundred Saturdays: Stella Levi and the Search for a Lost World

Michael Frank

Oxford University Press

photo credit: Marta Barisione

I would like to express my deep and abiding thanks to the Jewish Book Council for embracing and celebrating *One Hundred Saturdays*. I feel very lucky to have been able to hear, absorb, and transmit Stella Levi's many-layered story and, through it, to offer readers a chance to come to know, as I have, the lost world of Jewish Rhodes and the dynamic young woman who came of age in its vibrant Sephardic community. This book was a labor of love, a long, challenging, and life-changing experience for me personally. It has taught me to be patient and to listen—and always to ask those ten (or sometimes fifty!) follow-up questions.



Holocaust Memoir  
In Memory of Dr. Charles and Ethel Weitzman

This beautifully written book is based on journalist Michael Frank's one hundred interviews with ninety-nine-year-old Stella Levi, one of very few Holocaust survivors of her small Jewish community of Rhodes, Greece. It is also exquisitely illustrated with watercolor drawings by Maira Kalman.

Stella did not want to be defined by her experiences during the Holocaust. She wanted to tell Michael about her vibrant life in the old Sephardic Jewish community in the Judeira, the Jewish neighborhood of Rhodes, whose first settlers were descendants of the Jews who fled from the Spanish Inquisition at the end of the fifteenth century. Stella describes her close-knit community in the Judeira as akin to a very large extended family, steeped in Jewish tradition and observance. Her vivid narrative allows us to follow in her footsteps as she describes the streets and the shops, imagining that we can smell the spices and hear the women singing and sharing stories as they prepare for Shabbat. That vibrant community was destroyed when ninety percent of the Jews were murdered in the Holocaust.

In July 1944, the Germans, who by then occupied Greece, suddenly ordered all the Jews of Rhodes—1,650 people—to report for deportation at the harbor. They were all loaded onto boats to begin a torturous journey of three and a half weeks to Auschwitz, a trip that was longer than that of any other Jewish community in the world.. Only 151 people from the transport survived the Holocaust, among them Stella, who is probably the last living survivor.

Stella explained that Greek Jews had such a low survival rate because they did not understand the German commands and could not get help from other Jews because they did not speak Yiddish, the language of most European Jews. In fact, the other Jewish women in Auschwitz did not believe the Greek women were really Jewish until they saw them lighting Shabbat candles and reciting the Hebrew prayers. What saved Stella was that she had gone to a French-Jewish school and could talk to the women from Belgium and France who translated for her.

This short note cannot possibly capture the richness and poignancy of the one hundred stories in this book. It can only attest to the unique experiences of the Greek Jews in Auschwitz, a topic that is largely unexplored, and to the great pleasure of following the fascinating life of Stella Levi.



## The Prince of Steel Pier

Stacy Nockowitz

Kar-Ben Publishing

photo credit: Mazingo Photography

All I ever did as a kid was read, write, and roller skate. Now I've been able to do two of those things professionally, as a school librarian and as an author. I hope that when Jewish kids read *The Prince of Steel Pier*, they can see themselves on the pages, like I always wanted to when I was growing up. I have many people to thank for helping me bring Joey Goodman's story into the world. First, thank you, Rena Rossner, my wonderful agent, who rejected this manuscript the first time I sent it to her, as she should have! Thank you to the lovely Joni Sussman and everyone at Kar-Ben Publishing, as well as my brave editor, Amy Fitzgerald. Thanks to PJ Library and PJ Our Way for all that they do for Jewish children's literature. Many, many thanks to the Jewish Book Council, and the esteemed judges for the National Jewish Book Award. I cannot express how grateful I am for this recognition. And finally, thank you to my beautiful, supportive family: my mother and father; my brother and his family; my amazing kids; and my husband, Richie, the love of my life.



Middle Grade Literature

Period fiction set in the second half of the twentieth century is tricky for younger readers; the book must balance the strange and the familiar much more delicately than works for adult readers. The book cannot rely on the pre-packaged powers of widespread nostalgia, nor on the undeniable attraction of, say, Arthurian England. And yet, the shores of Atlantic City can be as captivating as the ramparts of a medieval castle — when described by the right author.

Likewise, the characters need to be “of-a-time,” with antiquated appetites and abilities (yearning for a Kodak Instamatic, say, or adept at Skee-Ball), and yet the character must feel like someone the reader could know, would like to know — maybe even is.

The book would need to marry the setting with a plot that could not happen anywhere else, at any other time, and yet feels like a reflection of the young readers' very own worlds. And it must spin a story full of larger-than-life characters: Mafia gangsters, say, or thuggish henchmen, or toothpick-chewing tough, and yet must burrow into the heart of what makes adolescence so universally painful: feeling unappreciated, invisible, powerless.

Stacy Nockowitz does all of these things in *Prince of Steel Pier*. Joey Goodman is like many other scrawny Jewish protagonists who get in over their head (in this case, “babysitting” the daughter of a New Jersey Mafia boss), conceal too much from the only people who can help them (in this case, his large and bickering family), and then must face painful truths and accept help from unlikely places. What is remarkable about this book, though, set in 1970s Atlantic City, is how captivating the story is, how compelling the characters, and how the smell of salt water taffy and rotting fish serves as the backdrop for a deep dive into the meaning of cultural continuity, of survival. When the world is changing in a way that the old generation cannot resist, as it did for the now-faded hotels on the Boardwalk, how can the young generation find roots down in the cigarette-littered sands, and also wings in some new form of community, family, Jewishness not yet discovered? *The Prince of Steel Pier* asks these questions and responds to them with humor and depth.

This book touches on antisemitism, on the pain of aging, and death, and it does not shy away from showing both the wonders and the horrors of living in a large family.

The book is at once a fairy-tale, as the name suggests, and yet, it feels so real, so genuine, that even readers too young to know the heft of a Skee Ball will find themselves longing for a visit to Steel Pier.





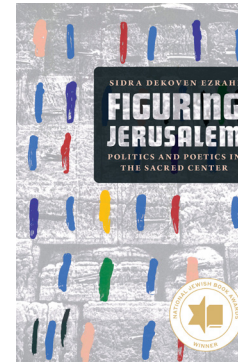
# Figuring Jerusalem: Politics and Poetics in the Sacred Center

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

The University of Chicago Press

It has become commonplace to refer to the Temple Mount as Judaism's holiest site, inspiring messianic claims that, in today's political constellation, could bring about Armageddon. But does Judaism really ascribe holiness to any specific place? *Figuring Jerusalem* argues that the claim to exclusive sovereignty over the Temple Mount obliterates two millennia of Jewish creativity, which was engendered, precisely, by recognition that God's glory fills the universe. As Jews in their far-flung diasporas developed substitutions for sacred space, they crafted symbolic forms that implicitly gestured toward what could never be physically approached—not, anyway, until the days of the ever-tarrying Messiah. Study, prayer, exegesis, piyyut were substitutes for sacrifice: every synagogue became a miniature Temple (“mikdash me’at”). But even more radically: the aspiration of proximity to the sacred center actually derives from misreadings of classical Hebrew texts. The Divine was never confined to physical space, even in the Bible, even in Jerusalem. Mt. Moriah, the rock upon which Jerusalem was founded, was presumed to have been sanctified by the tragedy of Isaac's sacrifice. *Figuring Jerusalem* argues that the akeda—the aborted sacrifice—is, structurally and rhetorically, a comedy, in the classical sense. And, further: when Solomon purports to build a House for the Divine to dwell in, he is rebuked by God Himself: “build a house to my name” [I Kings: 8]. There are, similarly, trenchant readings of the Song of Songs, a text attributed to Solomon but lacking any references to the Temple that he built or to the Divine—emerging here, rather, as a splendid poem of love not for Jerusalem but in Jerusalem; and of Maimonides' Guide, which explicitly abjures privileged space or any claims of proximity to the Divine. *Figuring Jerusalem* concludes with appreciative reappraisals, in the context of the modern city, of the fictions of Jerusalem's Nobel Laureate, S.Y. Agnon, and of the capacious, world-embracing poetry of Yehuda Amichai.

Modern Jewish Thought and Experience  
Dorot Foundation Award in Memory of Joy  
Ungerleider Mayerson



Jerusalem, “the most longed-for and fought-for city,” may also be the most written about city in the world. In this brilliant study, Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi sets out to examine and illuminate descriptions of the city by re-reading classical texts ranging from the Bible via medieval Jewish thought (Maimonides' Guide) to Modern Hebrew literature (Agnon and Amichai). In the last few decades, scholars have raised our awareness of political theology and the role it plays not only in pre-Modern societies but also in what we may call Modern secular society and its political sphere. Ezrahi's *Figuring Jerusalem* propels our understanding of the connection between the sacred and the “here and now” and the ways it is constructed by tracing and valorizing the poetic and political posture of the texts. The contribution of this study, or better to say, literary archaeology, is manifold; first and foremost, it presents key literary moments of the Jewish imagination as they construct their “Jerusalem.” It presents a rigorous and highly creative method of reading “canonic Jewish text,” seamlessly moving between several disciplines including literary interpretation, sociology of religion, history, and political philosophy. It challenges and expands the conventions of the “Jewish canon” as it equally examines Maimonides and Agnon, Song of Solomon, and poetry of the Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai. Ezrahi's insightful presentation is also a delight to read.



## Today in the Taxi Sean Singer

Tupelo Press

photo credit: Olivia Seally

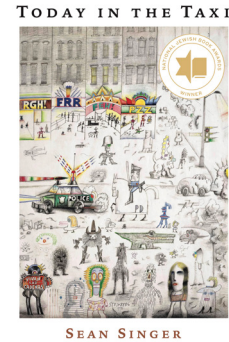
Maxine Kumin said: “Writers are all secret Jews.” She was talking about something real. She was drawing our attention to a commonality of the tribe of writers.

Poets should aspire to being “secret Jews” because it would mean being in a slippery category: assimilated, but invisible; indebted to the Psalms and Proverbs, but seeking new texts; being born into something as old as three millennia, but tasked with questioning everything about it; it would mean knowing that since the Shoah, every word is broken and incomplete.

Poets are cognizant of the human semaphore and scripture because someone in the tribe had the insight to bear witness, tell stories, and eventually write them down.

Existing as a poet, feeling that outsidership in your body, having to go so deep into yourself, to envelope it and implicate it, is to be in an in-between place, an exile, holding a hatchet to cut new trails in the cartography. Jewish identity is like that.

Writers are the voice of self-preservation, a will to be through language, a chance to understand the other as the other. In my book, I attempted to articulate this identity and its vagrant, shifting, homesick modes.



Poetry  
Berru Award in Memory of Ruth and  
Bernie Weinflash

In *Today in the Taxi*, Sean Singer takes us on daily treks across New York City as the speaker picks up and drops off passengers. Just as each ride shares a similar structure, each prose poem shares a similar form. The aesthetics of the book reflect the nature of the job, yet this democratic form also houses an operatic range of human experience. The heart of each poem is a turn from the narrative situation of the ride to the driver’s interiority, which weaves the daily fragments of humanity into a history rooted in the wisdom of jazz musicians and Jewish thinkers ranging from Franz Kafka to a female Lord. *Today in the Taxi* does not “build up” to revelation but the “other way around”—Singer’s poems reject traditional power structures and instead return to the worker and his streets. These are radically Jewish poems that are determined “somehow to bless whatever the journey needs.”



## The Heresy of Jacob Frank: From Jewish Messianism to Esoteric Myth

Jay Michaelson

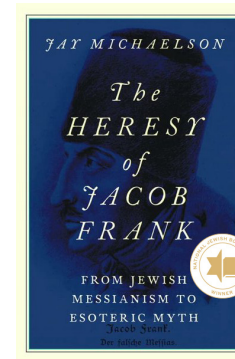
Oxford University Press

photo credit: Beowulf Sheehan

*The Heresy of Jacob Frank* has been a labor of love and obsession for seventeen years. I had intended to write my doctoral dissertation on a wise, pious Hasidic master named Rabbi Aharon of Staroselye, but found myself “cheating” on my research, seduced by a mercurial, highly unpius heretic named Jacob Frank. I am deeply grateful to my dissertation advisor, Professor Rachel Elior, for steering me “off the derech” in more ways than one, and to the rest of my committee at Hebrew University, including Pawel Maciejko and Ada Rapoport-Albert ז”ל. Thanks also to my editors at Oxford University Press, to colleagues who have supported this work over the years, and to the Jewish Book Council for this unexpected honor.

Jacob Frank is, in my ways, an unredeemable figure. Yet as we face threats of resurgent ethno-nationalism, fundamentalism, and repression, perhaps his teachings of skepticism, liberation, and humanism are once again worthy of consideration. If nothing else, his work is an object lesson in the power of human creativity and imagination, which, despite what those of narrower perspective may insist, truly knows no bounds.

Scholarship  
Nahum M. Sarna Memorial Award



Jay Michaelson’s *The Heresy of Jacob Frank* is a groundbreaking work that examines the religious philosophy of one of the strangest—and least understood—figures of Jewish history, the iconoclast Jacob Frank (1726-1791). Brilliantly unpacking thousands of Frank’s later oral teachings surviving in Polish (known as Words of the Lord), Michaelson shows that Frank was not simply a second Sabbatai Zevi, or a conniving sex-crazed opportunist, as many prior scholars have thought, but a serious and complex thinker who stood at the precipice of tradition and modernity. While Frank embraced skepticism, a rational antinomianism, and a this-worldly materialism (i.e., the celebration of sensual and sexual pleasure)—and thus in these respects can be said to have anticipated the Haskalah, Reform Judaism, and even some aspects of Hasidism—Michaelson deftly demonstrates that Frank continued to frame these “modern” ideas using traditional mythic imagery, older messianic and Kabbalistic tropes, and an unusual blend of Jewish-Christian syncretism.



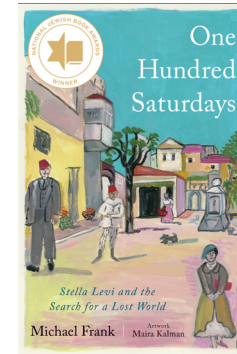
## One Hundred Saturdays: Stella Levi and the Search for a Lost World

Michael Frank

Avid Reader Press

photo credit: Marta Barisione

I would like to express my deep and abiding thanks to the Jewish Book Council for embracing and celebrating *One Hundred Saturdays*. I feel very lucky to have been able to hear, absorb, and transmit Stella Levi's many-layered story and, through it, to offer readers a chance to come to know, as I have, the lost world of Jewish Rhodes and the dynamic young woman who came of age in its vibrant Sephardic community. This book was a labor of love, a long, challenging, and life-changing experience for me personally. It has taught me to be patient and to listen—and always to ask those ten (or sometimes fifty!) follow-up questions.



Sephardic Culture  
Mimi S. Frank Award in Memory of Becky Levy

In evocative prose, Michael Frank brings the reader into the remarkable and unforgettable world of Stella Levi, a nearly 100-year-old native of the Aegean island of Rhodes who survived Auschwitz-Birkenau. Mediated by Frank's sensitive questions and prompts following a chance meeting between the two in New York City, Stella recounts the world of the lost Sephardic Jewish community of Rhodes prior to the war—from Ottoman to Italian rule—as well as the darkest chapters of her life that commenced with the onset of the Nazi occupation. Frank shows that Stella's story needs to be told and heard, not only because of the poignancy of the tale and the urgency and clarity with which she narrates it, but also because it serves as a rare tribute to the fate of the Judeo-Spanish-speaking Jews of the eastern Mediterranean whose experiences tend to remain sidelined within the broader collective memory of the Holocaust. Part biography, part history, part ethnography, part meditation on the power of memory and forgetting, and partly an account of the blossoming friendship between two strangers over the course of a hundred meetings, *One Hundred Saturdays* offers profound insight into one woman's story and the tragic fate of an entire community. The accompanying illustrations by Maira Kalman add an additional dimension of creative representation and connection to the text.





photo credit: Jorge Colombo

# Let There Be Light: The Real Story of Her Creation

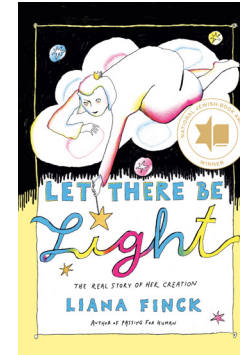
Liana Finck

Random House

Visual Arts

Can one conceive of a more difficult subject to illustrate than Creation? How to do it without pretentiousness, mockery, or kitschy and pablum religious sentiment? Liana Finck's wry, poetic, and beautiful *Let There Be Light* manages to grapple with exceedingly difficult and sometimes distant ideas in a way that is personal, respectful, and moving.

Whatever God is or is not, the literary character called "God" in Scripture is problematic. Pinning down God in a text gels and coalesces ineffability into personality. It limits the God Who Is A Verb ("I am being what I am becoming," Exodus 3:14,) making God into a more static and less dynamic entity. Finck takes those limitations and runs with them, imagining the inner life of the Deity, who is here gendered female and acts as—well—a creative artist.



Such reflexivity is fair play, given that those who first wrote down the biblical text were themselves writers, whose stock in trade was language. They created the character "God" out of words, thus in their image. And they had that character turn around and return the favor, creating all that is (including us— "in God's image") from words (and from clay, in a hat tip to artists working in other media).

Finck's text is by turns poetic and pragmatic, lilting and down to earth. Her line and wash illustrations—simple, yet highly evocative—are a perfect complement. They may seem child-like, but try producing a "child-like illustration" and you will find that only a consummate artist is capable of doing so. In their timeless straightforwardness, these images leave room for a panoply of emotions, and make space for us to project ourselves into the story and, dare one say it, into the Divine personality as well.

The result moves us well beyond what we ever might have expected from a graphic novel so "simple" in appearance. We experience an intense and personal identification with the Creator, and sympathy for Her monumental task. We are moved to sorrow for the devastatingly sad parts of the tale, we rise with elation when the story soars. Most of all, we are gifted with encompassing love and appreciation for the timeless relevance of these tales of the earliest times of Earth—the story of us— that Liana Finck has captured with such profound love and empathy.



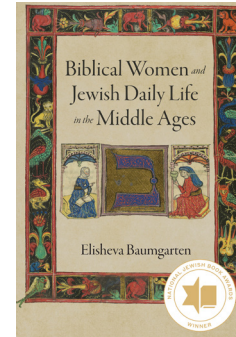
## Biblical Women and Jewish Daily Life in the Middle Ages

### Elisheva Baumgarten

University of Pennsylvania Press

photo credit: Hila Shiloni

*Biblical Women* focuses on stories told to women about women, specifically, the female protagonists of the Bible. Its origin is to be found in multiple impulses: to uncover the stories medieval Jews told each other to explain their daily lives to themselves; to gain insight into those who left no written record; and to pay tribute to the knowledge our medieval foremothers and fathers possessed and the ideas in which they believed. Studying the way medieval Jews connected these stories to their practices elucidates the lives of people often not included in the historical record and acknowledges their worlds of meaning. I sought to demonstrate that Jewish women were far more literate than scholars have acknowledged to date and that they, like their male counterparts, challenged and melded traditions in new and unexpected ways, in order to align the worlds of practice and belief they inhabited, both Jewish and Christian. Their interpretations of stories we still tell today, allow for a connection between past and present and illuminate a facet of the Jewish past that is seldom studied.



Women Studies  
Barbara Dobkin Award

How can we learn about the spiritual lives of ordinary Jewish women in medieval northern France and Germany when their words were so rarely preserved? For Elisheva Baumgarten, the Bible provides the key, since basic knowledge of biblical characters and events was a given for women and men at all levels of Jewish society. This familiarity enabled women to invoke biblical models to explain their domestic and religious practices and to connect themselves to a larger cosmic narrative. Baumgarten employs many sources, including liturgy and poetry, illuminated manuscripts, tombstone epitaphs, handbooks of customs, and biblical commentaries, as well as comparisons to contemporary Christian documents. Her beautifully illustrated volume shows how women's biblical expertise linked their marital, maternal, and communal lives to Jewish collective memory. Through references to Eve and the matriarchs, women imbued their domestic and ritual experiences with meanings beyond the immediate moment. Similarly, the figure of Abigail came to exemplify charitable giving and financial agency, while invocations of Deborah honored women who functioned in the communal domain as teachers and merchants and were also modest and supportive wives.



# A “Jewish Marshall Plan”: The American Jewish Presence in Post-Holocaust France

Laura Hobson Faure

Indiana University Press

*photo credit: Archives de Paris*

Laura Hobson Faure expresses her gratitude to the many people who made this book possible. First and foremost, I would like to thank my former PhD advisor Professor Nancy L. Green, for many wonderful years of guidance and mentorship. I would also like to thank the archivists who shared their expertise, especially the staff of the Joint Distribution Committee Archives, the Mémorial de la Shoah and the CASIP-COJASOR Foundation, including (but not only!), Linda Levi, Isabelle Rohr, Shelley Helfand, Misha Mitsel, Sherry Hyman, Ariel Sion, Karen Taieb, and Laure Politis. This book has also benefitted from the comments and support of “The Modern Jewish Experience” editors Marsha Rozenblit and Deborah Dash Moore, as well as the staff at Indiana University Press. Many friends and colleagues (see my book for the long list!) provided precious advice and concrete help along the way. Finally, I thank my family for their unconditional love and support: my parents, Jim and Sherry Hobson, my grandparents, Max and Lottie Halperin (z”l), my sisters Lisa, Nicole and Jenny, and my (très) belle-mère Brigitte Meudec-Mouhica. My husband, Jérôme Faure, and our children, Léo and Talia, have infused my life with just the right balance of joy and chaos. Their love has made this book possible.

Writing Based on Archival Material  
The JDC-Herbert Katzki Award



In *A “Jewish Marshall Plan”: The American Jewish Presence in Post-Holocaust France*, Laura Hobson Faure analyzes the postwar encounter between American Jews and the French Jewish community in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Utilizing sources from sixteen archives in France, Israel, and the United States, Hobson Faure crafts a meticulously detailed transnational social history of the interaction between American Jews associated primarily with the JDC (Joint Distribution Committee) and the US Army that highlights the vast sums of philanthropic assistance that characterized the Jewish Marshall Plan, based in deeply held feelings of transnational solidarity, which were nonetheless tangled in complex social and political dynamics. Hobson Faure’s painstaking approach to archival research leaves almost no page unturned, incorporating documentation, oral history, press accounts, memoirs, and more to craft an innovative, indeed path-breaking, history of the postwar reconstruction of the Jewish community in France and the leading role played by the JDC, in a work that will surely become the new standard in the field.



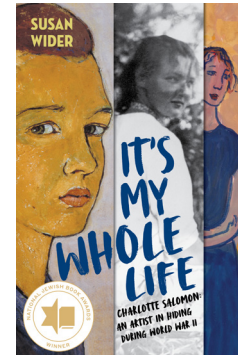
## It's My Whole Life: Charlotte Salomon: An Artist in Hiding During World War II

Susan Wider

Norton Young Readers

photo credit: William Junor

In 1943, in the German-occupied Mediterranean village of Villefranche-sur-Mer, a local physician hid 1300 paintings in his basement. Their creator, modernist painter Charlotte Salomon, would not survive World War II; her paintings would. When I discovered that there were no biographies for young readers about Charlotte Salomon (1917 Berlin—1943 Auschwitz), I began researching her life. Here was a young woman who fought back against racism, psychological abuse, a family history of suicide, love gone badly wrong, invalidation as an artist, all while Adolf Hitler's occupying forces moved ever closer. The National Jewish Book Award for Young Adult Literature honors my work to offer the power of Charlotte Salomon's life and art to young readers and young creators. Thank you to the Jewish Book Council; to my agent Rosemary Stimola; to Simon Boughton, Kristin Allard, and their team at Norton Young Readers in New York; and to Victoria Keown-Boyd, Oliver Wearing, and their team at W. W. Norton and Company in London.



Young Adult Literature

From the age of twenty four to twenty six, Charlotte Salomon created over 769 individual paintings while in hiding from the Nazis. The body of work titled *Life? or Theater?* is autobiographical and can be compared to Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*, except that Salomon's chronicle of her life reads more as a precursor to the graphic novel genre. Salomon and her husband were eventually captured by the Nazis and sent by train to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, just before dawn on October 10, 1943, she and her unborn child were murdered in the gas chambers. A few months earlier, Salomon and her husband had given *Life? or Theater?* to a trusted friend for safekeeping. While giving him the wrapped parcels she is thought to have said "Keep this safe, it's my whole life."

*It's My Whole Life* by Susan Wider tells Salomon's story in an accessible and engaging way, especially for a younger reader, perhaps for a young adult like Salomon herself. Salomon's story is not an easy one to tell; her paintings, and Wider's book, speak about fascism, suicide, abuse, familial trauma, murder, and more. Yet with warm language and vivid details, a portrait of an extraordinary artist emerges. Wider's research is meticulous but effortlessly incorporated as she weaves the story together using Salomon's paintings, family photos, and historical photos, all beautifully printed. Charlotte Salomon's work is often overlooked and Susan Wider's brilliant book is poised to change that.



# Named Awards

Naming an award is a fitting way to honor a special person or remember a loved one. Thank you to all of the individuals and foundations that have supported the National Jewish Book Awards and Jewish Book Council programming and resources.

#### **Jewish Book of The Year Award: Everett Family Foundation Award**

Endowed by the Everett family in 2003, this prestigious award honors the best nonfiction book of the year.

#### **American Jewish Studies: 350 Award**

The Celebrate 350 Committee commemorated the 350 years of Jewish life in America and conducted a year-long series of celebrations. This award provides the opportunity to remember the event and honor books that will contribute to the next major milestone.

#### **Autobiography and Memoir: The Krauss Family Award in Memory of Simon & Shulamith (Sofi) Goldberg**

This award was dedicated to the memory of Simon and Sofi Goldberg by their daughter, Carmel Krauss.

#### **Biography: In Memory of Sara Berenson Stone**

Born in Bogalusa, Louisiana, Sara Berenson Stone (1915–2018) was a devoted philanthropist and voracious reader. One of a handful of Jewish students at Duke University, she graduated in 1935 and moved to New Orleans, where she began her eighty-year long advocacy for Jewish causes. A prolific reader of fiction and nonfiction, Mrs. Stone had a particular interest in biographies pertaining to the Jewish experience. This award honors writers whose work has elucidated the lives of those, past and present, who exemplify what it means to live, work, and think as a Jew. By the high quality of their writing, our award winners have given their subjects and themselves an honored place in our literary canon.

#### **Book Club Award: The Miller Family Award in Memory of Helen Dunn Weinstein and June Keit Miller**

The Book Club Award recognizes an outstanding work of fiction or nonfiction that inspires meaningful conversation about Jewish life, identity, practice, or history, and which has the potential to nurture Jewish continuity. The award recognizes the power of books to promote Jewish community and thought-provoking discussions.

#### **Children's Picture Book: Tracy and Larry Brown Family Award**

An illustrated story or nonfiction book designed to be read aloud to children ages 3 to 8 years old or a board book intended for children 0-3 years old. This category should also include early readers and chapter books if they are intended for readers in the same age-range. The award will be shared by the author and illustrator.

#### **Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice: Myra H. Kraft Memorial Award**

This award is dedicated to the memory of JBC Board member Myra H. Kraft by Robert Kraft and family. Myra loved to read, and for many years served as the leader of the Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice Award panel.

#### **Debut Fiction: The Goldberg Prize**

This prize is supported through a generous grant by the Samuel Goldberg & Sons Foundation.

#### **Education and Jewish Identity: In Memory of Dorothy Kripke**

Dorothy Kripke was a prominent writer of books for Jewish children, including the *Let's Talk About . . .* series, stimulating interaction between children and parents. This award, created by her family, cherishes the memory of Mrs. Kripke.

#### **Fiction: JJ Greenberg Memorial Award**

The Fiction Award is endowed by Jewish Book Council Board member and past president Blu Greenberg and her husband, Rabbi "Yitz" Greenberg, in loving memory of their son, JJ Greenberg. This is an eternal tribute to JJ's love of reading, especially Jewish fiction.

#### **Food Writing & Cookbooks: Jane and Stuart Weitzman Family Award**

This award recognizes a cookbook or work of food writing— including, but not limited to, memoir and history—that explores Jewish identity, history, and culture through a culinary lens.

#### **Hebrew Fiction in Translation: Jane Weitzman Award**

A work of contemporary Israeli fiction, originally published in Hebrew, that has been translated from Hebrew in the current judging year.

#### **History: Gerrard and Ella Berman Memorial Award**

The Bermans, lovers of Jewish history, endowed this award to ensure the continued study of our glorious past and to honor outstanding books in the field.

#### **Holocaust: In Memory of Ernest W. Michel**

This prize honors writers who produce exceptional books on the subject of the Holocaust. Ernest Michel, born in Mannheim, Germany, survived six years in forced labor camps, including two and half years in Auschwitz. He and two friends escaped from a death march from Auschwitz four weeks before the end of World War II. He was the only survivor to serve as a correspondent for the German news agency DANA at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial in 1945. After arriving in America, he began to speak about his life experience and started working for the United Jewish Appeal. He served as Executive Vice President of New York UJA from 1970 to 1989, served as the organizer and chairman of the World Gathering of Holocaust Survivors in 1981, and was a founding trustee of the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. In 1993, he published his memoir, *Promises to Keep: One Man's Journey Against Incredible Odds*.

#### **Holocaust Memoir: In Memory of Dr. Charles and Ethel Weitzman**

A nonfiction book that recounts an individual's experiences during the Holocaust, including memoirs written by survivors, co-authored books in which a survivor works with a writer to tell his or her story, accounts of a survivor's experiences written by a member of his or her family (such a child or grandchild), or by another author that has access to and uses primary documents. A

recently discovered or recovered diary or memoir written by someone who did not survive the Holocaust is also eligible.

#### **Modern Jewish Thought and Experience: Dorot Foundation Award in Memory of Joy Ungerleider Mayerson**

#### **Poetry: Berru Award in Memory of Ruth and Bernie Weinflash**

The Berru Award for Poetry is dedicated to the memory of Ruth and Bernie Weinflash, who were respected leaders in their northern New Jersey community for over fifty years. A dynamic couple with both substance and style, they were not just avid readers, but also were astute critics, honing in on what spoke to both them and to the world at large. The arts were an important part of their lives. Ruth, a former actress and a lively and gifted orator, chaired the Cultural Arts Committee for many years at the JCC on the Palisades in Tenafly, New Jersey. She also designed programs in local schools, introducing children to the lives of famous historical activists in order to spark interest in working to make this a better world. Bernie, an active member of many boards, served for over twenty years on the board of the Jewish Book Council. A true humanitarian, he believed that when people came together for a communal purpose, positive momentum would be ignited. With intellect, compassion, and vision, both Ruth and Bernie immeasurably enriched the Jewish community, understanding the important relationship between Jewish culture and Jewish survival.

#### **Scholarship: Nahum M. Sarna Memorial Award**

Dr. Nahum M. Sarna was a leading biblical scholar who touched many lives through his work at Brandeis University, and through the written word in his books. His family, headed by sons Jonathan and David, established this award in his memory.

#### **Sephardic Culture: Mimi S. Frank Award in Memory of Becky Levy**

Mimi S. Frank, a JBC Board member, endowed this award in memory of her grandmother, Becky Levy, who shared with her Sephardic recipes, a love of cooking and baking, and her culture from Tekirdag, Turkey.

#### **Women's Studies: Barbara Dobkin Award**

This award honors a leading figure in Jewish philanthropy and an outspoken advocate for Jewish women's rights. This award was established by Barbara Dobkin's friends, who wish to honor her extraordinary devotion to this cause.

#### **Writing Based On Archival Material: The JDC-Herbert Katzki Award**

This award honors a book of modern historical writing published in English based on archival material that includes footnotes and bibliography.

# About JBC





# Jewish Book Council

Jewish Book Council, founded in 1943, is the longest-running organization devoted exclusively to the support and celebration of Jewish literature. For over seventy years, we have worked closely with Jewish authors and their books, and used literature to bring people together for meaningful discussions around Jewish life, identity, and culture. We facilitate over 1,400 author events across North America annually; provide resources to more than 2,500 book clubs; publish an annual print literary journal; and give out over twenty annual literary awards, including the National Jewish Book Awards.

Jewish learning embodied in the printed word has played a crucial role in the development and strengthening of Jewish communities throughout the world. Jewish Book Council is proud to carry on this important tradition.

## Major Programs

**Jewish Book Month:** This special month on the Jewish calendar is traditionally observed during the thirty days before Hanukkah. As part of the celebration, JBC advises local communities on exhibits, fairs, book clubs, author speaking tours, and book-related programs. JBC also prepares educational and promotional materials.

**Jewish Literary Conferences:** JBC sponsors an annual conference for writers of adult books and another for writers and illustrators of children's books. Both conferences are designed to assist aspiring writers.

**JBC Book Clubs:** This is the central address for thousands of Jewish book clubs. It offers book clubs a one-stop shop to improve their reading experiences and enhance their conversations. JBC Book Clubs provides reviews, discussion questions, and reading lists. In addition, it offers features designed just for book clubs, such as guides to starting a new club, a personalized book recommendation service, and the opportunity to "host" authors through video chats.

**JBC Network:** The JBC Network serves as a coordinating hub for book tours for Jewish authors and Jewish-interest books, sending more than 250 authors to over 120 communities across North America each year, as well as providing year-round resources and support for program coordinators.

**JBC Read On:** This program is a speakers' bureau for authors who have previously participated in the JBC Network. Read On connects these authors to additional venues.

Artwork by Claudine Eriksson  
Artwork by Ilya Milstein

Natan Notable Books: Natan Notable Books is a twice-yearly award for non-fiction books on Jewish themes. The award highlights vital books and authors, and brings innovative and important ideas to the attention of diverse audiences.

National Conference Support: Jewish Book Council serves as a resource for national conferences directed at the Jewish community, providing speakers, arranging book displays, and organizing book sales at events.

National Jewish Book Awards: Conferred annually since 1950, the awards are presented by category, and are intended to recognize authors of outstanding English-language books of Jewish interest and to encourage the reading of quality books of Jewish content.

*Paper Brigade*: A collection of articles, interviews, fiction, poetry, and visual arts, JBC's annual literary journal reflects today's diverse Jewish literary landscape in America and abroad.

PB Daily: The digital arm of Paper Brigade, PB Daily, provides daily updates on the world of Jewish literature from around the web, including information on new Jewish-interest books, reviews, feature articles, interviews, and videos.

Unpacking the Book: Jewish Writers In Conversation: Unpacking the Book is an annual literary series, administered in partnership with the Jewish Museum in New York City and Tablet magazine, that brings together Jewish-interest authors for conversations about contemporary Jewish life and identity.

Website: [www.JewishBookCouncil.org](http://www.JewishBookCouncil.org) features thousands of book reviews, reading lists, book club questions, event listings, information on JBC programs, and more.

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We wish to publicly acknowledge and thank the people who served on the panels of judges for the 72nd National Jewish Book Awards program:

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Guidelines and submission forms for the 73rd  
National Jewish Book Awards will be available in  
June at [www.jewishbookcouncil.org](http://www.jewishbookcouncil.org)

See You Next Year!



# KOL HAKAVOD

to the winners of the 72nd National Jewish Book Awards, as well as to the entire Jewish Book Council team—including our dear friend and Immediate Past President, Jane Weitzman! May you all go from strength to strength in sharing the voices of Jewish and Israeli authors with the world. Mazal tov!



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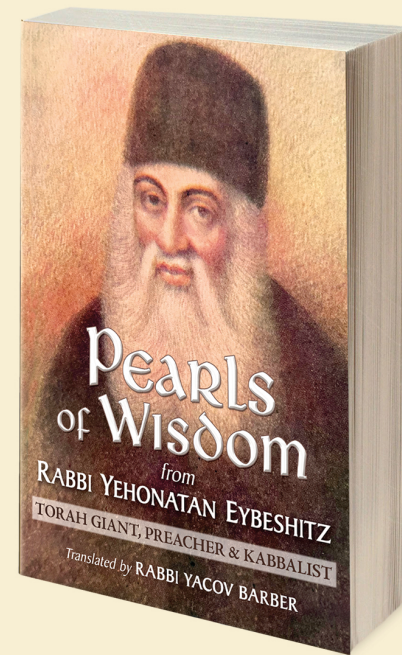
Jewish Book Council is a nonprofit that supports writers and readers through awards, year-round events, editorial initiatives, book club resources, and so much more. Please consider supporting its continued work to promote great literature, ideas, and conversation in our community.

With gratitude,  
**Elisa Spungen Bildner**  
President, Jewish Book Council

Mazel tov to  
Elisa Spungen Bildner and  
Joy Greenberg!

Our Very Best Wishes,  
Jane and Stuart Weitzman

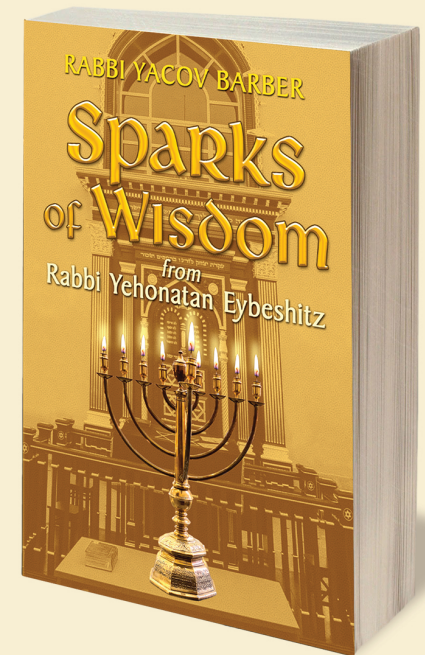
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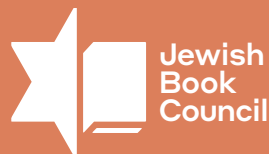
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*Forgotten Night* should be required reading for those who recognize the need to continually reassess the incomprehensible suffering caused via unchecked nationalism.

—David Moscovich

rebecca goodman  
*forgotten night*



## Forgotten Night Rebecca Goodman

ISBN 978-1-956005-61-5

298 pages \$20.00

[spuytenduyvil.net](http://spuytenduyvil.net)



In *Forgotten Night*, Rebecca Goodman (*The Surface of Motion*; *Aftersight*) raises the specter of reborn violences, lingering still in the consequential aftermath of two world wars, the Holocaust and numerous atrocities hidden in plain sight. The narrator's journey lets us in on the larger questions we should be asking in the western world: who are we as a culture? What direction but back into history are we all willing to allow as our purpose. Goodman's prose produces nothing short of a masterpiece.

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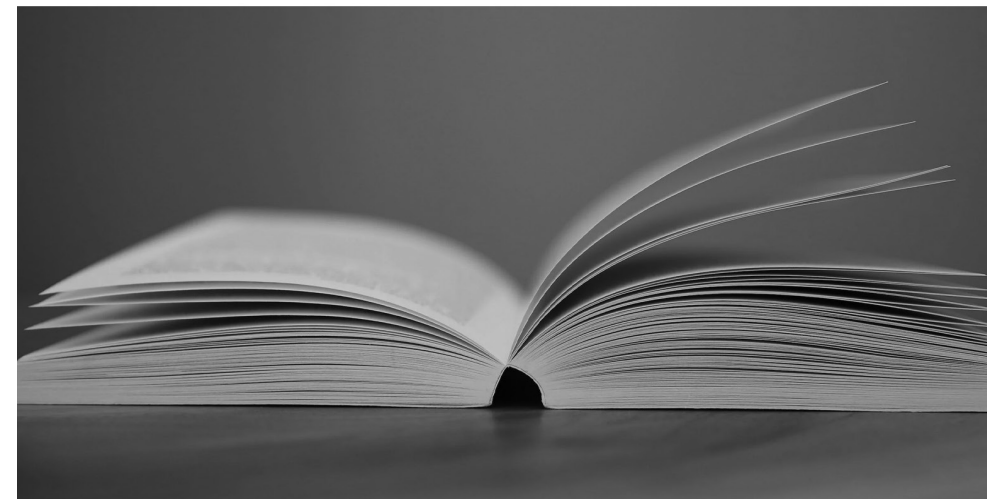
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Yohanah Bahirah Leiva,  
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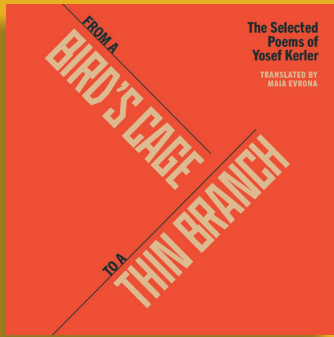
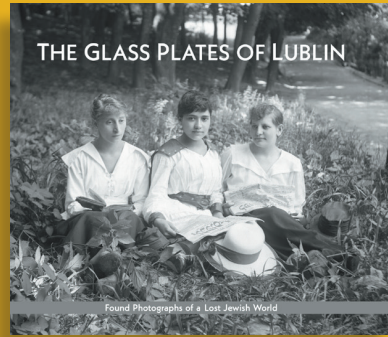
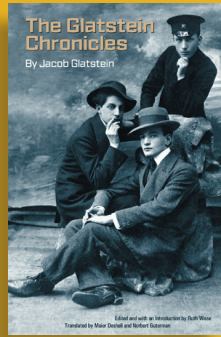
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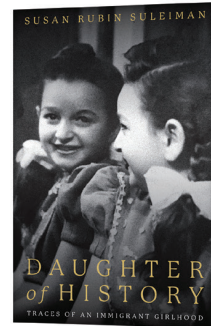
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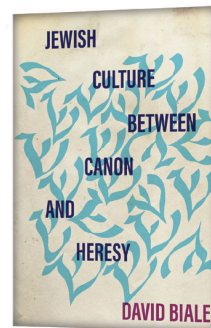
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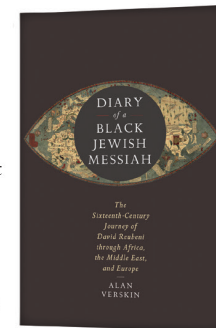
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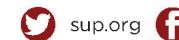


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