POETS ON THE EDGE
An Anthology of Contemporary Hebrew Poetry

Selected and translated by Tsipi Keller
Introduction by Aminadav Dykman
A Mother Goes About

A mother goes about with a dead child in her belly; this child hasn’t been born yet.
When his day comes, the dead child will be born, head first, trunk and buttocks, and he won’t swing his arms, won’t cry a first cry.
They won’t slap his behind, won’t trickle drops into his eyes, won’t diaper him after washing the body. He will not be like a live child.
And his mother won’t be placid and proud after the birth, will neither worry about his future, nor wonder how she will provide for him, whether she has enough milk, clothes, whether she has room for another crib. This child is a virtual saint, he wasn’t born even before he was born.
He’ll have a small grave at the edge of the cemetery, and a small memorial, a modest marker.
And this is the life of the child killed in his mother’s womb in January, 1988, for political and security reasons.

torched his flesh.
The epidermal nerves were struck first, the hair fueled the blaze, God, he yelled, they’re burning, and that’s all he could do in self defense.
The flesh was already burning with the shack’s boards, which fed the blaze in the first stage.
He no longer possessed comprehension; the fueled blaze in the flesh numbed his sense of future, and the memory of his family.
He was no longer connected with his childhood. And he screamed without any mental brakes and lost all relation with his kinsfolk; he didn’t ask for vengeance, deliverance, didn’t ask to see tomorrow’s dawn.
He only wished to stop burning, but his own body sustained the flame. He was as if bound and strapped—but he wasn’t thinking about this either.
And he continued to burn with the vigor of his body made of flesh, marrow and sinew. And he burned a long time. And inhuman sounds emanated from his throat, for numerous human functions had already ceased, except for the pain the nerves conduct in electric currents to the pain center in the brain.
And it didn’t last more than one day. And it is fortunate that his spirit surrendered on this day, for he deserved to rest.

The Tale about the Arab Who Died in the Fire

When the blaze caught his body it didn’t happen gradually. There was no prior bursting of heat, nor a blast of choking smoke, and no sense of a nearby room one could escape to.
The blaze caught him instantly—this has no simile—peeled his clothes,

Lullaby

They’ll sing to you your virtuous Ma and Grandma, the fringe of Ma’s kerchief brushing the blanket.
They'll sing, Ma and Grandma, 
an old wistful song. 
In the dim enclave in Djibalia 
they sat clasped together: 
a broken father spitting blood, 
and the fifteen-year-old son 
coiling himself like a hoop 
around the crushed body— 
the remnants of his father. 
Two lovers, 
two love-birds, 
their captors mocked them.

Ma and Grandma sing you a song 
so you may sleep without harm, sweet child; 
Rachel weeps for her children 
with bitter tears. A grieving voice. 
And you'll grow up to be a man, 
and the pain of Djibalia you won't forget, 
and the misery of Shatti you won't forget, 
and the villages of Betta and Hawara, 
and Balata and Djelazoon, 
for their outcry rose for many nights.

Train of Thought

Who is she to talk? 
Who is she to talk? 
What else has she got to say? 
She has a twisted need to suffer. 
And in our land such pretty landscapes: 
vineyards hanging from the mountain ridge, 
the shade of clouds on the plain, 
and light, 
and fenced-in lots. 
And three olive groves as well, 
uprooted as punishment. 
And three old women, toothless.

Due to old age, what else? 
Brutality is not the only viewpoint. 
Then why, suddenly, on the pure Sabbath, 
on the joyous Sabbath, 
an image encroaches of the man they had beaten to death. 
Him and his son you shall not put to death on the same day.

The blot of a light cloud 
settled on the plain. 
In Zichron Yaakov the wine vats burst 
with the nectar of grapes. 
And our barns, too, spill over with grain, 
and the ravines overflow with water, 
and beneath the overturned stone 
a scorpion crawls. 
The song of nature. 
And that Arab they beat to death. 
Virtually pelted his flesh. 
But not in Zichron Yaakov, 
and not in Mazkeret Batya. 
These are veteran communities, 
languid, blending in the scenery.

Who is she to talk? 
Who is she to talk? 
She is just looking for ways to suffer, 
to say a bad word. 
She is not one of us, 
she doesn't see all that's good and beautiful in life. 
She doesn't see us as we are. 
We came to our homeland. 21

Rina Slavin  
Rina Slavin lies in bed all day, 
pen and paper nearby,

אמות מתפללות על ילד מ🧐ב בצっと
יולדת צ ожи ליגלד רצתי.
בזכאים אימיו ילד ילד צוחק
רחימת חוחה, ג'ג חוכמה.
והוא בקורי לא יגווע.
והוא לא יشكرו צרעה ראותיה
ליא נטעוフラ על גחורה
ליא נטעו פאתיFLASH
ליא טחות אחות
לאמר לרצות חוגה.
והוא לא יירה כימי ילד בי.
יאמא שליח לא נحيا רגיעה עגשה אחור שבלדה
פגם לא חיה את געווה קבר צעידה.
וליא נשאלה או עצמאה געווה קפרים אחור.
יאמא של חיה זי חוכל.
יאמא של חיה זי ב stddev.
יאמא של בוחר קוף לחול ליריעה.
יולדת צوجه צדיך במנזר.
לא נביא בקירו נברא.
昶נהו לכייב קוזי במקאת ביר מברונית
ייזים בריוז יפש.
שっております ליגלד.
יאמה וולדה צורה.
שーンהו אהוב וכמו אמו.
בכמסות פיליסטית במקומיות.
כשאותו אומת גבוף זה לא קרה בעדרה.
לא כתה לפני פרץ זה,
ואגaddListener הושמע
והוזה נהגה מכל חקר
וחמור.
ובכש רבים לא קרב.
והוא מסתכל כביר...
וךера מגרון קולה את אוזניי
וכך או המדורים אמרייהם הבクラブ
האיל הראות והזכחים
become המדרון המועדים הכיב..
והוא לא נושה עזרו מיזים
וא 노력شعוק יесь
ובכם לא קרב
וכו
וכו.
ишרוי אמאスポット
אמות חזותות שלך,
כובמי מפגשים שלך
ונפגשיםثمانה ביצרה
ישורוי אמאスポット
אומר סextracomment נושג
בחמתם האשל גברנות
ישבר אחותינו כדן
א amacıyla ומעץ הריאה
ובון בעידן טראומה.
فورת את גמר חותיו שבינ
לזוחק קפוצו - שארית אבני.
 VOID אוכל
כפל זיכרון.
לצודל לדומ שוברונים.
אמותスポット ישוריה ל ford
שוחט על בול גשם, גזר בים
רומח מעבר על קווית בקולה
בכי ממרים. קול앤ב.echo.
אൺ תכלד ותאהה לאיש

295

294