

Selected Works in Hebrew/Israeli Literature **Compiled by the Center for Israel Education**

Tens of thousands of Hebrew literary works were published since the late 18th century. This list of Hebrew literature works that have appeared in English are suggestive and highly limited. For example poetry is virtually absent from this compilation. Great Hebrew writers such as Asher Barash, Yosef Haim Brenner, M.Z. Feierberg, Yitzhak Leib Peretz, Saul Tchernerichovsky, and many many others, and every major and minor writer who focused exclusively on Zionism is not in this list below. The best basic introductory anthology of Hebrew Literature is Robert Alter's Modern Hebrew Literature, Behrman House, 1972. He includes writing examples of the authors not found in our list. Alter's introduction to his book is as good as one can find on the topic.

Ken Stein, December 2014

[Shmuel Yosef Agnon \(1888-1970\)](#): S.Y. Agnon, or Shai, immigrated to Israel in 1907. A prolific Hebrew writer whose works depict the decline of Galician Jewry and the pioneers of Israel, Agnon received the 1966 Noble Prize in Literature, becoming Israel's first Nobel laureate.

Suggested works:

A Book that Was Lost and Other Stories

A Guest for the Night

[Nathan Alterman \(1910-1970\)](#): Alterman was a playwright, poet, and journalist whose influence on Labor Zionism and socialist Jewish policies left him remembered for contributions to politics, despite never holding office. After the Six Day War, he was one of the founders of the Movement for Greater Israel which advocated keeping the newly conquered territories and settling them with Jewish population. His most well-known poem, *The Silver Platter* is read in memorial ceremonies on *Yom Hazikaron*.

Suggested works:

Little Tel Aviv

The Silver Platter

[Yehuda Amichai \(1924-2000\)](#): Amichai is one of Israel's most well-known poets, and the Poet Laureate of Jerusalem. His work was translated into over 40 languages. He won numerous prizes in both Israel and internationally for his poetry and was one of the first Israeli poets to write in colloquial Hebrew.

Suggested works:

Poems of Jerusalem and Love Poems

The Selected Poetry Of Yehuda Amichai

Aharon Amir (1923-2008): A prize winning author, Amir was one the founders of the Canaanites Movement in Israel that sought to establish Israel as a Cultural Empire in the Middle East. He was a prolific author and the founder of the literary quarterly *Keshet* (Rainbow) which published works by many Israeli authors. He was also a poet and a translator, translating into Hebrew many important authors, including Joseph Conrad and Herman Melville.

Suggested works:

Kadim (only available in Hebrew)

A Separate Peace (only available in Hebrew)

Aharon Appelfeld (1932 -): An Israeli author, professor and Holocaust survivor Appelfeld was born near Czernowitz, then part of Bukovina, Romania, today in Ukraine and came to Palestine in 1946 from a Displaced Persons Camp. His works mainly draw on his childhood experiences and most are set in Europe during World War II.

Suggested works:

Badenheim 1939

Until the Dawn's Light: A Novel

David Avidan (1934-1995): One of Israel's leading new generation of poets, Avidan introduced modern and innovative Hebrew conjugations into his writings whether in prose and/or in poetry. He also explored the use of computer and artificial intelligence in the use of verbalization. He was a recipient of many literary awards.

Suggested works:

Lipless Faucets (only available in Hebrew)

Pressure Poems (only available in Hebrew)

Hanoch Bartov (1926): A distinguished member of the "1948 Generation" of authors, Bartov, fought in the Jewish Brigade and the *Hagannah*. In his versatile career, he was a journalist, a pundit and a prolific writer. He has been the recipient of series of literary recognitions such as Israel Prize for Literature and Bialik Prize.

Suggested works:

Everyone had Six Wings

The Heart of the Wise (only available in Hebrew)

Yehoshua Bar-Yosef (1912-1992): Bar-Yosef was born in Tzfat and later moved to Jerusalem. He worked as a journalist and began writing and publishing books that reflected both the Old *Yishuv* and the New *Yishuv*. His books explore the old religious customs and their impact on marriage and family lives. His style is descriptive and full of sensual undertones.

Suggested works:

Hissda Goes Up the Mountain

Magic City (only available in Hebrew)

Chaim Nahman Bialik (1873-1934): Israel's "national poet," Bialik was born in the Ukraine and came to Israel in 1924. After interviewing survivors of the Kishinev Pogrom in 1903, he wrote his famous poem, "*Be-Ir ha- Haregah*" ("In the City of Slaughter") in which he condemned Jewish passivity in the face of external threats and violence. The poem served as a rallying call to young Jews throughout Eastern Europe to create Zionist youth organizations.

Suggested works:

Songs from Bialik: Selected Poems of Hayim Nahman Bialik

Random Harvest: The Novellas of C. N. Bialik

Erez Biton (1942-): Biton, whose parents were Moroccan, was born in Algeria and came to Israel as a young child after spending several months in a French transit camp. When he was 11 years old, he was blinded from an explosion of a grenade which he found in the fields near his home. He graduated from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Ba-Ilan University. While working as a social worker and psychologist, he began writing poetry. Many of his works depict the struggle of the Mizrahi in Israel.

Suggested works:

A Moroccan Gift (only available in Hebrew)

Book of Mint (only available in Hebrew)

Rachel Bluwstein (1890-1931): Considered the “founding mother” of Modern Hebrew poetry, she helped define the culture of the *Yishuv* and later the State of Israel. More than twenty different editions of her collected poetry and other writings have been published since her death continuing to impact future generations.

Suggested work:

Flowers of Perhaps: Selected Poems of Ra'hel

Orly Castel-Bloom (1960-): One of Israel’s most original and innovative authors, Castel-Bloom was born in Tel-Aviv in 1960. Her novels and stories are punctuated by postmodern motifs and she has received numerous literary prizes including the Prime Minister’s Prize three times. Her 1992 novel *Dolly City* was nominated in 2007 as one of the ten most important books since the creation of the State of Israel.

Suggested works:

Dolly City

Human Parts

Amir Gilboa (1917-1984): Known for drawing upon his military experiences and biblical issues of morality in his poems, Gilboa moved to the Land of Israel from the Ukraine in 1937. His many influential poetry collections, including “The Light of Lost Suns,” “Seven Dominions,” “Isaac” and “To Write The Lips Of Those Asleep,” earned him the Bialik Prize in 1971 and the Israel Prize in 1982.

Suggested work:

The Light of Lost Suns

Lea Goldberg (1911-1970): Dedicating her life to the literary movement in the *yishuv*, she produced numerous works in the areas of children’s books, drama, and poetry. In 2011, it was decided that Goldberg’s image would appear on the new 100 shekel banknote.

Suggested works:

And this is the Light

Lea Goldberg: Selected Poetry and Drama

Uri Zvi Greenberg (1896-1981): His first works were published in Hebrew and Yiddish when he was fighting in the Austrian army on the Serbian Front during World War I. After he made *aliya* in 1923, he distinguished himself as a poet and one of the major proponents of Revisionist Zionism. His poems depict the landscape of Israel, reflecting themes from the Bible, compassion and a prophecy of destruction.

Suggested works:

Selected Poems

A Great Fear and the Moon (only available in Hebrew)

The Book of Indictment and Faith (only available in Hebrew)

David Grossman (1954-): Born in Jerusalem, Grossman began working as a youth correspondent for the Israel Broadcasting Authority when he was ten years old. He embarked on a literary career in 1983. Grossman's works, which have been translated into thirty languages, focus on political and social issues. He is often critical of Israel's handling of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

Suggested works:

Someone to Run With

The Yellow Wind

To the End of the Land

Haim Gouri (1923-): A poet and author who was a member of what has become known as the "1948 Generation," Gouri served in the *Palmach* and fought for the liberation of the Negev in the 1948 War of Independence. He is a distinguished poet who has impacted generations with his patriotic poems about the War of Independence and the Holocaust. One of his poems "Song of the Camaraderie" is one of the iconic poems of Israel.

Suggested works:

The Chocolate Deal

Words in My Love-Sick Blood

Flowers of Fire (only available in Hebrew)

Avigdor Hame'iri (1890-1970): Hame'iri was born in Hungary and served as an officer in the Hungarian military during WWI. After he made *aliya* he published the first satirical newspaper in the *Yishuv* and established the country's first satirical theater "Hakumkum" (The Kettle) in 1927. A poet, novelist, non-fiction author and playwright, his works depict his love for the country and his experiences in the war. One of his most famous poems is "From the top of Mount Scopus Peace upon You, Jerusalem". He is the recipient of many literary prizes, including Israel Prize for Literature in 1968.

Suggested works:

The Great Madness

Hell on Earth (only available in Hebrew)

Haim Hazaz (1898-1973): Born near Kiev in 1898, Hazaz moved to the land of Israel in 1931 settling in Jerusalem. He won the first Israel Prize for literature in 1953 and the Bialik Prize twice in 1942 and 1970. His works are characterized by the tension between the old and new Jewish worlds.

Suggested works:

Gates of Bronze

The Sermon & Other Stories

Yehudit Hendel (1921-2014): Hendel was one of the first women writers to come to prominence after the establishment of the State of Israel. Her books always drew public attention and many of her works were adapted to stage and screen. She has won numerous literary prizes.

Suggested works:

Street of Steps

Small Change

Yoram Kaniuk (1930-2013): A participant in the Battle for Jerusalem in 1948, Kaniuk emerged as one of Israel's most distinguished authors. He has received numerous literary awards as well as an Honorary Doctorate from Tel Aviv University in 2011 and the prestigious French decoration of *Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* in 2012.

Suggested works:

Himmo, King of Jerusalem

The Last Jew

Sayed Kashua (1975-): An Israeli-Arab author born in 1975 in Tira, located in the "Triangle" region of Arab towns in central Israel, Kashua spent most of his life living in Jerusalem. A journalist and author of four novels in Hebrew, he is also the creator of "Arab Labor," a popular Israeli sitcom that provides a satirical look at life for Israel's Arab citizens. Kashua has won several Israeli Television Academy Awards for the show's writing in addition to the Prime Minister's Prize for Literature in 2005.

Suggested works:

Dancing Arabs

Second Person Singular

Yehoshua Kenaz (1937-): Kenaz was born in Petah Tikvah. In addition to his acclaimed novels, he has worked as an editor for the *Haaretz* newspaper and as a translator of French literature into Hebrew. A recipient of numerous prizes, Kenaz was awarded the Agnon Prize in 1993 and the Bialik Prize in 1997. Several of his works have been adapted into films.

Suggested works:

After the Holidays

Infiltration

The Great Woman of the Dreams (only available in Hebrew)

Etgar Keret (1967-): Called a "genius" by the *New York Times*, Etgar Keret is one of the leading literary voices for Israel's younger generation. His books and short stories have been translated into over thirty languages and many have been adapted into films. Also an accomplished screenwriter and director, in 2007, Keret and his wife Shira Geffen won the Cannes Film Festival's "Camera d'Or" Award for their movie *Jellyfish*.

Suggested works:

Suddenly, a Knock on the Door

The Bus Driver Who Wanted To Be God & Other Stories

[Ephraim Kishon \(1924-2005\)](#): While living in Hungary before making *aliya* to Israel, his only reminder of his religion was that Judaism was written on his ID card. Once in Israel, he not only “became” totally Jewish but with his satirical writing, more “Israeli” than many of his characters. His writing captured all the weaknesses and ills of Israel’s emerging bureaucracy while articulating the mood and the spirit of Israel society. He is most well-known for his films, including *Sallah Shabbati*, Israel’s first Academy Award nominee.

Suggested works:

Immigrant Upon Us (only available in Hebrew)

The Funniest Man in the World: The Wild and Crazy Humor of Ephraim Kishon

Shulamit Lapid (1934-): An award winning prolific author and poet, Lapid was born in Tel-Aviv. Her father was one of the founders (David Giladi) of *Maariv* newspaper. Her son is journalist turned politician, Yair Lapid.

Suggested work:

Gai Oni (Valley of Strength)

Apples from the Desert: Selected Stories

Savyon Liebrecht (1948-): Born in Munich, Germany to parents who survived the Holocaust, Savyon Liebrecht moved with her family to Israel in 1950. She has published six collections of short stories, two novels and numerous plays. She twice has been named Israel’s playwright of the year - in 2004 and 2006.

Suggested works:

A Man and a Woman and a Man: A Novel

Apples from the Desert: Selected Stories

Hanoch Levin (1943-1999): Levin an author, playwright, director, poet and dramatist. He is known to have created some of Israel’s best plays since he began writing in the late 1960s. His satirical style of writing infused with sharp commentaries on Israeli society has enabled him to rise to the top of Israel’s theatrical world. He has written over 50 plays as well as numerous poems, screenplays and essays.

Suggested works:

The Labor of Life: Selected Plays

Yaakobi & Leidental: A play with songs

Aharon Megged (1920-): An immigrant to the Land of Israel from Poland in the 1920s, Megged has published over forty books during his illustrious career. Much of his works contain autobiographical elements including his experience living on a kibbutz as a young adult. Megged is the winner of numerous awards, including the Israel Prize for Literature in 2003.

Suggested works:

The Living on the Dead

The Flying Camel and the Golden Hump

Igal Mossensohn (1917-1994): Mossensohn was a prolific writer who became a subject of social controversy because he wrote about issues of ethnic tensions between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews in

Israel. He wrote more than 20 plays and many books, but he gained his fame in a series of books (total of 21) for children and young adults named *Hasambah* (Hebrew acronym for “A Band of absolute Secrecy”) in which he depicted a group of youngsters being deployed in the service of national causes.

Amos Oz (1939-): Oz is a decorated Israeli writer, novelist and journalist. He has publicly endorsed a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He was one of the first Israeli intellectuals to do so, in his 1967 article, “Land of Our Forefathers.”

Suggested works:

My Michael

A Tale of Love and Darkness

Dahlia Ravikovitch (1936-2005): Known for her lyrical, intensely personal and highly emotional poems, Ravikovitch’s prolific works include more than twenty volumes of poetry, short stories and children’s books and have earned many awards, including the prestigious Israel Prize and the Bialik Prize. Her poetry has been canonized in Israel and her collected works were translated into English in 2009.

Suggested works:

Hovering at a Low Altitude: The Collected Poetry of Dahlia Ravikovitch

A Dress of Fire

Pinhas Sadeh (1929-1994): Sadeh participated in the battle for Jerusalem in 1948 and in the 1950s began writing stories and poems for children. He published his first novel to critical acclaim in 1958. A controversial figure who was both loved and rejected by many, Sadeh was also a prolific translator. His work is known for its many theological and mystical elements.

Suggested works:

Life is Parable

One Man’s Condition (only available in Hebrew)

Zelda Schneurson Mishkovsky (1916-1984): One of the most widely acclaimed and personally beloved of Israeli poets, Zelda began writing poetry while she was attending a religious teacher’s college in 1950. Her poetry was and is enormously popular with readers of all backgrounds, in Israel and abroad, and has garnered many prizes. Zelda’s poem “For Every Person there is a Name” is recited each year on Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel.

Suggested work:

The Spectacular Difference: Selected Poems of Zelda

Yaakov Shabtai (1934-1981): Born in Tel-Aviv, Shabtai was a novelist, playwright, poet and children’s author. In 1982, he was awarded the prestigious Agnon Literary Prize posthumously. His best-known novel *Zikhron Devarim* (Past Continuous) is considered a masterpiece of Hebrew literature. In 2007, a survey of leading publishers, editors and critics named it as the best Hebrew book written since the creation of the State.

Suggested works:

Past continuous

Uncle Peretz Takes Off

Nathan Shaham (1925-): Regarded as one of the prominent writers of the *Palmach* Generation, Shaham participated in the 1948 War of Independence. He is the author of more than 40 books whose subjects are derived from Israel wars, Kibbutz life, and the emerging Israeli society.

Suggested works:

Rosendorf Quartet

Grain and Lead (only available in Hebrew)

Meir Shalev (1948-): Meir Shalev has published numerous, children's books, novels and collections of short stories was born in Nahalal in 1948. His titles include, "The Blue Mountain," "Esau," "A Pigeon and a Boy," and "Michael and the Monster of Jerusalem." In 2006, he was awarded the prestigious Brenner Prize for literary excellence.

Suggested works:

A Pigeon and a Boy

The Blue Mountain

Moshe Shamir (1921-2004): Shamir fought in the 1948 War of Independence during which he lost his beloved brother Elik about whom he wrote a moving novel. After the June 1967 Six Day War, his political views turned "hawkish" and he became active in the Greater Israel Movement. Shamir wrote numerous historic novels depicting heroic figures that reflected his beliefs in Israel's destiny.

Suggested works:

With His Own Hands

He Walked through the Fields (only available in Hebrew)

Anton Shammas (1950-): Shammas is an Israeli Arab novelist and playwright and was the first Israeli Arab to write a novel in Hebrew. His Hebrew novel *Arabesques* gives a riveting look at Palestinian Christians and was chosen as one of the best books of 1988 by the *New York Times Book Review*.

Suggested work:

Arabesques

Avraham Shlonsky (1900-1973): Shlonsky is considered one of the most prominent poets in Israel's history. He was first and foremost the first representative of what was considered Modern Hebrew poetry. He introduced elements of symbolism to Hebrew poetry and his immense influence in style and rhythm was considered revolutionary. He was linguistic innovative and coined new words both in his poetry and in the publishing and editing positions that he held throughout his prolific career.

Suggested works:

Thunder (only available in Hebrew)

Vow (only available in Hebrew)

Miriam Yalan-Stekelis (1900-1984): Stekelis was born in Russia. Her father, Dr. Yehudah Leib Wilensky was a Zionist leader who had been a delegate to the first Zionist Congress in 1898. She made *Aliya* at the age of 20 and settled in Jerusalem where she started to write poetry as she worked in the National

University Library. While her initial works were aimed at adults, she became most well-known as an author of children's poetry and literature.

Suggested works:

The Journey to Island maybe (only available in Hebrew)

The Flower I gave Ruti (only available in Hebrew)

AB Yehoshua (1936-): Described by the New York Times as an "Israeli Faulkner," Yehoshua is one of Israel's most acclaimed writers of fiction. Best known as a novelist and playwright, Yehoshua won numerous international and Israeli literary awards. His books have been translated into 30 languages and adapted for television, theater, and film.

Suggested works:

The Lover

Five Seasons

Mr. Mani

S. Yizhar (1916-2006): Born Yizhar Smilansky, he was the son of Ze'ev Smilansky, one of the leaders of the Second *Aliya*. A politician, academic as well as an influential author, Yizhar won numerous literary prizes including the Israel Prize for Literature in 1959. He served as a member of the First and the Sixth *Knessets*.

Suggested works:

Khirbet Khizeh: A Novel Five Seasons

Days of Ziklag (only available in Hebrew)