

**Freda Johles Forman, ed. *The Exile Book of Yiddish Women Writers: An Anthology of Stories That Looks to the Past So We Might See the Future.* (Toronto: Exile Editions, 2013), 306 pp.**

The *Exile Book of Yiddish Women Writers*, edited by Freda Johles Forman and compiled by the Toronto Yiddish Translation Group, is an anthology in English translation of the writings of thirteen twentieth century Yiddish women writers. Some of these works have never before appeared in English. Bearing the subtitle *An Anthology of Stories That Looks to the Past So We Might See the Future*, *Exile* succeeds an earlier anthology of Yiddish women writers, *Found Treasures* (1994). Forman, who also edited *Found Treasures*, was prompted to publish *Exile* as a consequence of newly discovered literary works by other Yiddish women.

The overarching goal stated in the Introduction to each of these anthologies is to reclaim, through English translation, the lost voices of Yiddish women and thereby extend the narrative of Yiddish literary history. In keeping with this goal, the Translation Group of *Exile* includes new works by seven Yiddish writers (non-Canadian), who had previously been published in *Found Treasures* as well as seven stories written by Yiddish-Canadian women who had immigrated to Canada but had received little critical attention. Moreover, one finds in *Exile* a mixture both of more widely known Yiddish women writers (such as Ida Maze, Shira Gorshman, Chava Rosenfarb and Rokhl Korn) as well as some lesser known Yiddish women writers (such as Sheindl-Franzus-Garfinkle, Mirl Erdberg Shatan, and Chayele Grober). The diversity of style and theme of the latter three attests to the importance of their contribution to the artistic vitality of Canadian Yiddish culture.

Among the Canadian writings is Chayele Grober's memoir of her years of travel with the Habima theatre troupe. Finding both friendship and support in Montreal, Grober describes her experiences as an actor in this renowned theatre group. Her memoir reminds readers of the near global reach of Yiddish, as well as of the fact that the Habima theatre, during the early years of the Russian Revolution, performed in Hebrew. In addition, *Exile* offers us a fresh look at the works of Rokhl Korn and Chava Rosenfarb. Their stories attest to the powerful impact the Holocaust had upon those who, like themselves, had managed to survive, stories that both underscore the impossibility of leaving the past behind and capture the insidious ways in which the secrets and horrors of the past inform the present and the future.

*Exile* also draws attention to Ida Maze's fictionalized biography in which the author recalls a time when writing in Yiddish was openly and actively encouraged. Further, in *Mrs. Maza's Salon*, the author, Miriam Waddington, evokes a time when Montreal was teeming with Yiddish writers; when Maze's 'salon' provided a stimulating venue in which writers (including herself, a young poet), were encouraged to write. Waddington's story also recalls how she became a writer in English as well as a translator

from Yiddish to English, forging in the process a new link in the historical chain of Yiddish literature. Adding to the diversity of the anthology is Rikudah Potash's story, *The Tenth is Born in Mishkenot*. Potash is "that rare Israeli writer who wrote in Yiddish." Here, the author describes daily life within a community of Jews who had emigrated to the Yemenite quarter of Jerusalem from various countries.

In addition, *Exile* offers a glossary of Hebrew words translated into English. Further, it provides Yiddish readers with a valuable bibliography of secondary materials. For example, it cites such sources as the *Canadian Yiddish Press* as well as the books from which the translators collected their materials. In short, the bibliography, in itself, is a rich resource for future literary research. *Exile* also contains an Afterward which features the views of three translators, all of whom are clearly committed to advancing Yiddish literary history through English translation. In short, *Exile* accomplishes what it sets out to do: it broadens and extends the path of Yiddish literary history by introducing a set of vital alternative voices which show us how we can look at the past anew and, in doing so, sharpen our vision of the future.

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