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Alina Adams: **The Nesting Dolls**
(Fiction, 384 pp., 2020)

The stories of five generations of Soviet Jewish women come to light as a Brighton Beach family prepares to celebrate an anniversary. This ambitious family saga invites us to consider the personal and emotional stakes of political choices.

S. Y. Agnon: **A Simple Story**
(Fiction, 246 pp., Hebrew, 1935; English translation, 1985)

By no means simple, this quasi-love story and portrait of bourgeois life–by the only Nobel laureate to write in Hebrew–uses a deft, comic touch to illustrate the microcosmic inner workings of a small town in Ukraine at the turn of the 20th century.

S. Y. Agnon: **To This Day**
(Fiction, 177 pp,. Hebrew, 1952; English translation, 2008)

This comic tale of a Galician Jew who has lived in Palestine, returns to Europe on the eve of WWI, and gets stranded in Berlin evolves into a profound commentary on exile, Zionism, divine providence, and human egoism.

Marjorie Agosín, editor: **The House of Memory: Stories by Jewish Women Writers of Latin America**
(Short Stories, 272 pp., 1999)

These 22 selections from Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere paint a rich picture of Jewish women's experiences in diverse settings. The protagonists often struggle to maintain ties with their Jewish heritage while also becoming part of a New World society suffused with Catholicism.

Naomi Alderman: **Disobedience**
(Fiction, 240 pp., 2006)

Ronit, a thirty-something single lawyer living in Manhattan, reluctantly returns to England after the death of her estranged father, a prominent rabbi. In London, she must face the small, tight-knit Orthodox community she fled many years ago.

Isabel Allende: **The Wind Knows My Name**
(Fiction, 272 pp., Spanish original and English translation, 2023)

Two children, half a century apart, are forced to leave their families and homelands for uncertain futures. Samuel escapes on the 1938 Kindertransport from Nazi-occupied Austria to England, and Anita flees terror in El Salvador to an Arizona migrant facility, where she is forcibly separated from her mother. Allende weaves together heartbreaking stories of the confusion, fear, and loss at the core of

forced migration. The Bay Area features prominently in the story, which hinges on the activism of a dedicated social worker and an unenlightened San Francisco attorney.

Aharon Appelfeld: **Blooms of Darkness**

(Fiction, 279 pp., Hebrew, 2006; English translation, 2010)

When the Nazis begin to liquidate the Ukrainian ghetto, a mother leaves her 11-year-old son with her best friend Mariana, who is a sex worker. Confined to Mariana's room by day and locked in her closet by night, the boy clings to family memories while witnessing Mariana's depression, alcoholism, abrupt disappearances, and abuse by visiting soldiers. This haunting coming-of-age novel depicts–with powerfully sparse prose–loss, love, and the resilience of the human spirit.

Maya Arad: **The Hebrew Teacher**

(Fiction, 320 pp., Hebrew, 2018; English translation, 2024)

Three Israeli women, their lives altered by immigration to the United States, seek to overcome crises. Ilana is a veteran Hebrew instructor at a Midwestern college. When a young Hebrew literature professor joins the faculty, she finds his post-Zionist politics a threat to her life's work. Miriam, whose son left Israel to make his fortune in Silicon Valley, pays an unwanted visit to meet her new grandson and discovers cracks in the family's perfect façade. Efrat, another Israeli in California, is determined to help her daughter navigate the challenges of middle school and crosses forbidden lines when she follows her into the minefield of social media. In these stirring novellas—comedies of manners with an ambitious blend of irony and sensitivity— celebrated Israeli author Maya Arad probes the demise of idealism and the generation gap her heroines must confront.

Maya Arad: **Happy New Years**

(Fiction, 376pp., Hebrew 2023; English translation 2025)

After emigrating to the United States in the mid-1960s, Leah maintains her connection to Israel by writing an annual letter on the Jewish new year to her old friends from a women's teaching college. Comprising five decades of correspondence, the novel skillfully weaves together Leah's high hopes and deep disappointments as she navigates relationships, marriage, divorce, single motherhood, financial struggles, and professional ups and downs. Leah's relentless optimism and cheerfulness conceal disturbing truths behind her carefully crafted words. As her letters turn increasingly introspective, the secrets and shame that shaped her trajectory unravel.

Jami Attenberg: **The Middlesteins**

(Fiction, 288 pp., 2012)

After thirty years of marriage in the suburbs of Chicago, Richard Middlestein leaves his wife, Edie, while she awaits surgery to address complications due to disordered eating. Their adult children must attend to these crises, but nobody is up to the challenge.

Ronald Balson: **The Girl from Berlin**

(Fiction, 384 pp., 2018)

As they navigate a property dispute in Italy, a couple uncover a handwritten memoir penned by Ada Baumgarten, a young Jewish violin prodigy in Berlin between the wars. Alternating between present and past, the novel involves murder, deception, and greed–along with music, love, and the possibility of redemption.

Rachel Barenbaum, **Atomic Anna**

(Fiction, 448 pp., 2022)

Atomic Anna imagines the lengths to which Chernobyl's principal architect/physicist would go to undo the meltdown, and the concomitant destruction of her self-worth. When the impact of nuclear forces unleashed by Chernobyl's explosion transports Anna to a remote Armenian mountaintop, she discovers her Soviet apparatchik ex-husband had surreptitiously enabled the completion of her

engineering side project: an immense, clandestine time machine. Repeated time travel messes with reality, but becomes increasingly urgent as Anna seeks to disentangle tightly held family secrets across decades to save her loved ones. Returning again and again to right a catastrophic wrong, Anna must rediscover her own humanity.

Giorgio Bassani: **The Garden of the Finzi-Continis**

(Fiction, 200 pp., Italian, 1962, English translations, 1965, 2007, 2011)

This classic novel, adapted into an award-winning film by Vittorio De Sica, chronicles the relationship between the young middle-class narrator and the children of a wealthy, assimilated family in the provincial city of Ferrara. The events take place on the eve of WWII, against the background of the antisemitic legislation and policies of the Italian fascist state.

Rachel Beanland: **Florence Adler Swims Forever**

(Fiction, 320 pp., 2020)

In 1934, Florence Adler drowns off the coast of Atlantic City while attempting her ambitious goal of becoming the first Jewish woman to swim the English Channel. Shifting among seven different third-person perspectives, this darkly comic novel explores the aftermath of the tragedy as experienced by three generations of the Adler family.

Louis Begley: **Matters of Honor**

(Fiction, 307 pp., 2007)

Henryk Weiss, a young Polish Holocaust survivor, has reinvented himself at Harvard as Henry White. In a world governed by genteel prejudice and strong class values, both of his non-Jewish roommates, Archie and Sam, have secrets of their own. Narrated by Sam, this novel probes the inner workings of self-identity, the cost of pursuing external rewards, and thwarted love.

Saul Bellow: **Seize the Day**

(Fiction, 118 pp., 1956)

A day in the life of Tommy Wilhelm, an unemployed salesman who is estranged from his wife and children. Wilhelm is living in a hotel with his cold and disapproving father, and has given his last dollars to a questionable character for speculation in the commodities market. Bellow's novella paints a memorable picture of the inner turmoil of a man on the brink.

Anne Berest: **The Postcard**

(Fiction, 475 pp., French, 2021; English translation, 2023)

Centered around the mysterious 2003 arrival of an unsigned postcard bearing only the names of cherished relatives who perished in Nazi concentration camps, Berest's barely-fictionalized memoir-as-detective story tracks her family's surreal descent into the Holocaust in France, and explores the Shoah's legacy for survivors and their descendants.

David Bezmozgis: **The Betrayers**

(Fiction, 256 pp., 2015)

The novel spans one momentous day in the life of powerful Israeli politician Baruch Kotler, a former Soviet refusenik. Fleeing to Crimea in the wake of political pressure and blackmail, he unexpectedly comes face to face with the man who denounced him to the KGB forty years earlier. Evoking Biblical themes while exploring the struggles of Jews in both Israel and Ukraine, *The Betrayers* poses profound questions about ethics and forgiveness.

Rachel Biale: **Growing Up Below Sea Level: A Kibbutz Childhood**
(Memoir, 256 pp., 2020)

Biale's memoir is composed of linked stories about growing up on Kibbutz Kfar Ruppin in Israel's Jezreel Valley in the 1950s and 60s, when children spent most of their time living apart from their parents in a Children's House.

Geraldine Brooks: **People of the Book**
(Fiction, 372 pp., 2008)

One of the earliest Jewish religious volumes to be illuminated with images, the Sarajevo Haggadah survived centuries of purges and wars thanks to people of all faiths who risked their lives to safeguard it. Brooks has turned the sparsely detailed history of this precious volume into an emotionally rich fictionalization that retraces its turbulent journey.

Geraldine Brooks: **The Secret Chord**
(Fiction, 316 pp., 2015)

This inventive re-imagination of one of literature's most iconic and enigmatic figures–King David–goes beyond the myth to bring the man to life. Brooks traces the arc of his journey from obscurity to fame, from shepherd to soldier, from hero to traitor, from beloved king to murderous despot, and into his remorseful and diminished old age.

Jennifer S. Brown: **Modern Girls**
(Fiction, 384 pp., 2016)

An immigrant mother and her modern daughter wrestle with unplanned pregnancies and unthinkable choices in 1935 New York. They are both forced to confront their beliefs and a changing world.

Angela Buchdahl: **Heart of a Stranger: An Unlikely Rabbi's Story of Faith, Identity, and Belonging**
(Memoir, 352 pp., 2025)

Buchdahl, born in Korea to an American Jewish father and Korean Buddhist mother, is senior rabbi of one of the largest Reform congregations in America. Her memoir weaves together a narrative of growth and discovery with sermonic reflections on Biblical texts. Buchdahl's moving insight into what it means to have a hyphenated identity today is lively, disarmingly forthright, charming, self-deprecating, and astute.

Along the way to becoming the first Asian American rabbi and cantor, Buchdahl was challenged by Asians who viewed her as not truly Korean and by Americans who questioned her legitimacy as a "real" Jew. Her message of inclusion, tolerance, and embrace of the stranger is not just spiritual; it's personal. Many readers have recommended the audiobook, which Buchdahl reads herself, and which includes her cantorial singing.

Zeeva Bukai: **The Anatomy of Exile**
(Fiction, 303 pp., 2025)

This sensitively-portrayed family saga begins in Israel in 1973, with a modern-day Romeo and Juliet story between a Palestinian and a Jew that, like the play, ends in tragedy. The family flees to America to mend, but encounters only more turmoil that threatens to tear them apart.

Ruth Calderon: **A Bride for One Night: Talmud Tales**
(Midrash, 184 pp., Hebrew, 2001; English translation, 2014)

Knesset member and teacher Calderon offers a passionate reading and literary retelling of seventeen passages from Rabbinic literature, with an emphasis on restoring the voices of women. Each chapter begins with the Talmudic text in translation, followed by Calderon's imaginative expansion, reflections, and midrashim.

Talia Carner: **The Third Daughter**
(Fiction, 432 pp., 2019)

In the late nineteenth century, Argentina offered an escape from poverty, pogroms, and the Pale — but held a disturbing secret. When Batya's father leaps at the opportunity to marry her to a rich, well-spoken stranger, the expectation of passage to an easy life in South America ends at a brothel's door. She becomes one of thousands of Jewish young women trafficked through Argentina's brutal underworld. The risk of escape is fraught with menace, including the ancillary dangers for her family back in Russia, but it is Batya's only hope. Carner's deeply-researched novel reveals Russian Jews' degradation under Tsarist antisemitism and their desperation to ensure their children's survival.

Doreen Carvajal: **The Forgetting River: A Modern Tale of Survival, Identity and the Inquisition**
(Memoir, 320 pp., 2012)

After relocating to Arcos de la Frontera, in the Spanish province where her father's family originated, Carvajal explores the fascinating, fraught — and ultimately personal — history of the Sephardic Jews who had been forced into Catholic conversion or exile.

Michael Chabon: **The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay**
(Fiction, 656 pp., 2000)

Two cousins–one from Prague, one Brooklyn-born–come of age during World War II and spin their fantasies, dreams, and fears into a wildly popular comic book series. See for yourself why this panoramic novel won the Pulitzer Prize.

Michael Chabon: **The Yiddish Policemen's Union**
(Fiction, 414 pp., 2007)

It's bad enough that the Jewish mini-state established in Alaska for survivors of Hitler is about to revert to U.S. control after sixty years. Now Yiddish-speaking cop Meyer Landsman has to solve a tragic murder that pits him against his ex-wife/boss, an assortment of odd relatives, and a swarm of corrupt Hasidim with apocalyptic dreams.

Roz Chast: **Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?**
(Graphic memoir, 228 pp., 2014)

The *New Yorker* cartoonist describes the last several years of her aging parents' lives, told through colorful cartoons and family photos. With her signature wit, she offers laughs, tears, comfort, and profound insight.

Catherine Chung: **The Tenth Muse**
(Fiction, 304 pp., 2020)

A brilliant mathematics prodigy, Katherine grows up uncertain about other aspects of her identity. She puzzles over her apparent Chinese and American heritages, while blazing a singular and dazzling path through arithmetic competitions consisting entirely of astonished (and alarmed) boys and men. Katherine discovers the power of performing femininity as she secures herself a precarious place within the old boys' network of math geniuses, even while she struggles to find a balance between love and integrity. Eventually, she discovers that the key to her math mastery is bound up in her family's mysterious legacy.

Rachel Clarren: **The Cost of Free Land: Jews, Lakota, and an American Inheritance**
(Nonfiction, 352 pp., 2023)

Growing up, Clarren only knew the major plot points of her tenacious immigrant family's origins: her great-great-grandparents and their six children fled antisemitism in Russia, ultimately

settling on a 160-acre homestead in South Dakota. Despite tough years on a merciless prairie and multiple setbacks, the Sinykins became an American immigrant success story.

Clarren's ancestors never mentioned that their land, the foundation for much of their wealth, had been cruelly stolen from the Lakota nation by the United States government. Clarren melds investigative reporting with personal family history to reveal the intertwined stories of her family and the Lakota, and the devastating destruction of indigenous land, culture, and resources that continues today.

Rachel Cockerell: **Melting Point: Family, Memory, and the Search for a Promised Land**
(Nonfiction, 416 pp., 2025)

On June 7, 1907, a ship packed with Russian Jews set sail not to Jerusalem or New York, as many on board had dreamed, but to Texas. The man who persuaded the passengers to go was David Jochelmann, Cockerell's great-grandfather. The journey marked the beginning of the Galveston Movement, a forgotten moment in history when ten thousand Jews fled to Texas in the leadup to World War I. In an inventive format that weaves together letters, diaries, memoirs, newspaper articles, and interviews, Cockerell captures history as it unfolds for the Jochelmann family, revealing lives intertwined with some of the most memorable figures of the twentieth century.

Joshua Cohen: **The Netanyahus**
(Fiction, 240 pp., 2021)

Reinventing the Netanyahus' late-1950s Americana period as a college campus satire, Cohen fictionalizes a relationship between Bibi's father, the then-obscure Israeli historian Ben-Zion Netanyahu, and his foil, narrator Professor Ruben Blum, a Bronx-born tax historian who stands in for diaspora Jewry. Alternately hilarious and meticulously rendered, this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel acts as a gateway to exploring Jewish identity, the meaning of assimilation, and the myth of place in Jewish imagination.

Sonia Daccarett: **Roots of the Guava Tree: Growing Up Jewish and Arab in Colombia**
(Memoir, 256 pp., 2025)

Daccarett's memoir recounts a childhood as the daughter of an Ashkenazi mother and a Palestinian Christian father during a time of political unrest in Colombia.

Shulem Deen: **All Who Go Do Not Return**
(Memoir, 288 pp., 2015)

Deen reflects on growing up in, and leaving, New York's Skverer Hasidic community—an escape that ultimately results in his separation from his wife and children.

Edmund de Waal: **The Hare with Amber Eyes**
(Nonfiction, 368 pp., 2010)

The Ephrussis were one of the wealthiest Jewish dynasties in Europe, only to lose nearly everything during the Nazi conquest of Europe. Descendant de Waal traces the family's tale from Odessa to Paris, Vienna, and London through a collection of Japanese netsuke carvings the family acquired in the 1870s.

Portia Elan: **Homebound**
(Fiction, 304 pp., 2026)

Can a computer game become a map for surviving grief? This novel redefines home not as a place, but as the crew we choose. The story moves between 1983 Cincinnati, where teenager Becks Meir grieves her beloved Uncle Ben by learning to finish his unfinished text-adventure game; the late twenty-first century, where ecobiologist Tamar Portman nurtures a sentient robot into consciousness; and 2586, where the hardened sea captain Yesiko scavenges a flooded world with only an elderly storyteller and a mysterious robotic companion.

These three lives, separated by centuries, are stitched together by code, story, and the stubborn human need for connection. *Homebound* imagines future generations making meaning and forging relationships through their inheritance from the past: stories, memory, ritual, and most of all, hope.

Samantha Ellis: **Always Carry Salt: A Memoir of Preserving Language and Culture**

(Memoir, 270 pp. 2026)

The daughter of refugees from Baghdad, Samantha Ellis grew up surrounded by the sounds of Judeo-Iraqi Arabic—a language whose speakers are dwindling in number. In exploring how she can transmit this rich heritage to her son, Ellis considers what we lose, keep, or let go of to preserve our cultures and ourselves. *Always Carry Salt* is an immersive and moving meditation on the power of language, both to connect us to the past and to create a hopeful future.

Emuna Elon: **House on Endless Waters**

(Fiction, 320 pp., Hebrew, 2016; English translation, 2020)

An Israeli writer reluctantly returns to Amsterdam, the city of his birth, where he discovers the surprising truth about his mother's wartime experience. He unearths a remarkable story that becomes the subject of his magnum opus. Part family mystery, part wartime drama, this novel is a meditation on identity, belonging, and the inextricable nature of past and present.

Nathan Englander: **What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank**

(Short Stories, 224 pp., 2012)

In his first collection since *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*, Englander offers eight expertly-crafted stories that paint humorous, irreverent, and unflinching portrayals of Jewish life in America and Israel.

Allison Epstein: **Fagin the Thief**

(Fiction, 336 pp., 2025)

Fagin the Thief reimagines Charles Dickens's London through the eyes of the city's most gifted pickpocket, liar, and rogue. Long before Oliver Twist stumbled onto the scene, Jacob Fagin was scratching out a life for himself. Born in the Jewish enclave of Stepney shortly after his father was executed as a thief, Jacob is an outcast on the street but dearly loved at home. After a light-fingered pickpocket takes him under his wing and teaches him the trade, Jacob forges his own path in the shadows. His solitary life changes when he takes in Bill Sikes, an aspiring teenage robber with a mercurial temper, along with a variety of street urchins surviving by means of theft.

Expanding and deepening Dickens's characterization of Fagin, Allison Epstein reveals the world of those struggling on the lowest rung of Victorian London society, and offers a provocative reexamination of the original hateful portrayal in Dickens's 1838 novel, *Oliver Twist*.

Lillian Faderman: **Harvey Milk: His Lives and Death**

(Biography, 304 pp., 2018)

Contextualizing the local icon—eloquent, charismatic, and a smart-aleck—in a Jewish milieu, this biography chronicles Milk's upbringing and careers before he was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977, positioning himself as a champion of the gay community, racial minorities, women, the working class, disabled people, and senior citizens. Beyond the legacy of his activism and political career, Milk's tragic assassination at the age of forty-eight has indelibly shaped queer history and political strategy ever afterward.

Jason Fagone: **The Woman Who Smashed Codes: A True Story of Love, Spies, and the Unlikely Heroine Who Outwitted America's Enemies**
(Nonfiction, 464 pp., 2018)

Elizebeth Smith Friedman's unconventional path toward deciphering extraordinarily complex intelligence systems started out simply, if idiosyncratically, enough in 1916: parsing the occurrence of tell-tale phrases in Shakespeare. Jason Fagone's brilliant research and evocative writing — earning him Columbia Journalism Review's one of 10 Young Writers on the Rise distinction — conjures the remarkable reads-like-fiction story of pioneering cryptographer wife-and-husband duo Elizebeth and William Friedman.

From finding catch phrases to catching gangsters and smugglers during Prohibition, Elizebeth went on to crack Nazi spy systems snaking throughout South America, penetrate deeply classified information within Hitler's inner circle, and disrupt multiple versions of the Enigma machine. Simultaneously, William plunged into the secrets of Japan's Enigma equivalent, designated "Purple," and spearheaded American investigations of Axis ciphers. While their mutual devotion was strong, their work was secret even to one another. The insistent pressures of unscrambling always-urgent life-or-death puzzles took a terrible personal toll.

Reuven Fenton: **Goyhood**
(Fiction, 288 pp., 2024)

Two estranged brothers from Georgia—one who has become a yeshiva student in Brooklyn and the other who has stayed close to home with a decidedly secular lifestyle—are brought together by an unsettling revelation about their identities. Once reunited, the brothers set off on an unexpected road trip. This Jewish comedy of errors is part coming-of-age story, part absurd romp through the Southern United States, and part serious exploration of identity, lies, and the strength of brotherly love.

Lion Feuchtwanger: **The Oppermanns**
(Fiction, 380 pp., German, 1933; Revised translation, 2022)

Originally published in 1933, while antisemitic brutality was erupting into mainstream German life, *The Oppermans* presents a thinly veiled fictional account of tragic events in real time. It was "intended to sound an alarm," according to the book's new introduction by Joshua Cohen. Feuchtwanger's fearsome vision of unfolding events anticipated social and cultural revolutions that continue to haunt the current political landscape.

Michael Frank: **One Hundred Saturdays: Stella Levi and the Search for a Lost World**
(Nonfiction, 227 pp., 2022)

With nearly a century of life behind her, Stella Levi had never before spoken in detail about her past. Then she met Michael Frank in a chance encounter conducted entirely in Italian. He followed up one Saturday afternoon, visiting her Greenwich Village apartment to ask Stella about the Juderia, the Rhodes neighborhood where she'd grown up in a thriving Sephardic community whose rituals contributed to its vibrant identity for half a millennium. In a poignantly honest and evocative voice, Levi recounts her spirited youth in the eastern Aegean, continuing through the Rhodes Jewish community's unanticipated deportation to Auschwitz.

Winner of two 2022 National Jewish Book Awards, the American Library Association's 2022 Sophie Brody Award for best Jewish book of the year, and named one of the ten best books of 2022 by the *Wall Street Journal.*

Omer Friedlander: **The Man Who Sold Air in the Holy Land**
(Fiction, 256 pp., 2022)

In his debut collection of short stories, Omer Friedlander takes the reader to the narrow limestone alleyways of Jerusalem, the desolate beauty of the Negev Desert, and the sprawling orange groves of Jaffa, with characters that spring to vivid life. A divorced con artist and his daughter sell empty bottles

of “holy air” to credulous tourists; a Lebanese Sheherazade enchants three young soldiers in a bombed-out Beirut radio station; a boy daringly “rooftops” at night, climbing steel cranes in scuffed sneakers even as he reimagines the bravery of a Polish-Jewish dancer during the Holocaust; an Israeli woman monitoring a Green Line checkpoint mourns the death of her son, a soldier killed in Gaza.

These are fairy tales turned on their head by the stakes of real life, where moments of fragile intimacy mix with notes of the absurd. Richly evoking Israel’s nuanced complexity and the human need for connection, Friedlander’s poignant tales are simultaneously heartbreaking, humorous, and enlightening.

Matti Friedman: **The Aleppo Codex: A True Tale of Obsession, Faith, and the Pursuit of an Ancient Bible**

(Nonfiction, 320 pp., 2012)

The 10th century Aleppo Codex, named for the Syrian city in which it was kept, is considered the most accurate manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. However, a large portion of it went missing in the mid-20th century. Investigative journalist Friedman's account of the document's strange path over time feels like a detective thriller, with equal parts history and mystery, conspiracy and convolutions.

Matti Friedman: **Spies of No Country: Secret Lives at the Birth of Israel**

(Nonfiction, 273 pp., 2019)

The four spies at the center of this true story were part of an undercover unit known as the Arab Section, conceived during World War II by British spies and Jewish militia leaders in Palestine. Later, this group became the nucleus of the Mossad, Israel’s vaunted intelligence agency.

Marra Gad: **The Color of Love: A Story of a Mixed-Race Jewish Girl**

(Memoir, 256 pp., 2019)

Gad reflects on her experiences as a biracial American Jew, which become especially relevant as she cares for her racist great-aunt who is now suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. Invoking the Hebrew word *yerusha* (inheritance), this memoir explores the inheritance of identity, disease, melanin, hate, and love.

Romain Gary (Emile Ajar): **The Life Before Us**

(Fiction, 191 pp., French, 1975; English translation, 1978)

Momo, an orphaned Arab adolescent, has been raised by his ailing surrogate mother, Madame Rosa, a survivor of Auschwitz and former lady of the night. A streetwise kid in Belleville, Paris’ immigrant slum neighborhood, Momo narrates a world filled with pimps, prostitutes, and witch doctors as he takes care of Madame Rosa. This moving story, told with sensitivity and black humor, won the Prix Goncourt, France’s premier literary prize, and was the basis for *Madame Rosa*, the 1977 film starring Simone Signoret.

Assaf Gavron: **The Hilltop**

(Fiction, 464 pp., Hebrew, 2013; English translation, 2014)

Taking on one of the most charged geopolitical issues of our time, this award-winning satirical novel follows the growth of a fledgling Jewish outpost on a rocky West Bank hilltop. Exploiting Israel’s byzantine bureaucracies—the government claims the outpost doesn’t exist, while the military insists it must be defended—the settlement takes in a motley group of new members and launches iffy schemes under the wary gaze of the neighboring Palestinian village.

Iddo Gefen: **Mrs. Lilienblum’s Cloud Factory**

(Fiction, 288 pp., Hebrew, 2023; English translation, 2025)

The mysteries surrounding Mrs. Lilienblum’s three-day disappearance, during which her newest invention transforms Negev sand to rain clouds, initiates a high-spirited series of almost-possible events in this droll and entertaining first novel by 2023’s Sami Rohr Prize winner. Gefen’s satirical fable

confides the endearing secrets of a close-knit family and its community, parodies Israel's extravagant tech juggernaut, throws in a "Where's Waldo" type of Outback hiker cult, ponders the quiet burden of unrequited dreams, and wraps everything up in a hilariously tidy and rain-drenched package.

Daniela Gerson: **The Wanderers: A Story of Exile, Survival, and Unexpected Love in the Shadow of World War II**

(Nonfiction, 336 pp., 2026)

The Wanderers is a poignant narrative history and genealogical detective story that uncovers the overlooked experiences of Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust by fleeing into the Soviet Union. The book follows the parallel odysseys of the grandparents of Gerson and her wife as they embark on a 5,000-mile journey through Ukrainian territories, Soviet gulags, and Central Asia. Through contemporary reporting and historical research, Gerson explores the universal struggles of refugees forced to make impossible decisions, ultimately revealing how these legacies of exile and survival continue to resonate across generations and borders today.

Ruth Gilligan: **Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan**

(Fiction, 352 pp., 2017)

Three intertwining voices span the twentieth century to tell the little-known story of Jews in Ireland in this poignant portrait of what it means to belong and how storytelling can bind us together.

Mary Glickman: **Ain't No Grave**

(Fiction, 280 pp., 2024)

Best friends since their childhood in rural Georgia, Ruby and Max care deeply for one another. The inescapable cultural realities separating a Black daughter of sharecroppers and white Jewish son of store owners, however, become insurmountable in adolescence. Ruby runs away to Atlanta without leaving word, and circumstances eventually place her in Leo Frank's match factory. Years later, Max winds up as a stringer to Atlanta's top newspaper, which covers the Frank trial: Frank, a Jew, is accused of raping and murdering his employee Mary Phagan, a white Southern girl. Ruby and Max's enduring love is set against a backdrop of persistent racism and antisemitism.

Peter Godwin: **When a Crocodile Eats the Sun: A Memoir of Africa**

(Memoir, 341 pp., 2007)

As journalist Godwin records the collapse of his native Zimbabwe, he is confronted with his father's deathbed confession. The elder Godwin, who had always claimed to have been British, reveals himself to be a Polish Jew whose mother and sister were killed in Treblinka.

Myla Goldberg: **Bee Season**

(Fiction, 275 pp., 2000)

In this absorbing debut novel, an eccentric Jewish family is shaken apart by a small but unexpected shift in the prospects of one of its members, while revealing the strange congruence between the elementary school spelling-bee circuit, Jewish mysticism, Eastern religious cults, and compulsive behavior.

Goldie Goldbloom: **On Division**

(Fiction, 288 pp., 2019)

Surie, a grandmother of fifty-seven living in Hasidic Williamsburg, is stunned to learn that she is pregnant with twins. Ashamed, she is unable to share the news even with her husband, a *sofer* (ritual scribe) who is ready to retire. As she nurses her secret and starts working clandestinely in a maternity clinic, Surie's understanding of her life begins to alter.

Rebecca Goldstein: **Betraying Spinoza**
(Nonfiction, 287 pp., 2006)

Baruch Spinoza, son of Portuguese immigrants to Holland, was excommunicated by the Amsterdam Jewish community in 1656. Investigating Spinoza's background, education, and his own writings, Goldstein reveals how this yeshiva student became an influential philosopher and, arguably, the Western world's first secular Jew.

Lev Golinkin: **A Backpack, a Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka**
(Memoir, 320 pp., 2014)

In the twilight of the Cold War, nine-year-old Golinkin and his family cross the Soviet border with only ten suitcases, $600, and the vague promise of help waiting in Vienna. Years later, Golinkin, now an American adult, sets out to retrace his family's long trek, locate the strangers who fought for his freedom, and in the process, gain a future by understanding his past.

Allegra Goodman: **This Is Not About Us**
(Fiction, 336 pp., 2026)

When their beloved sister dies, Sylvia and Helen Rubinstein are unmoored. A misunderstanding about apple cake turns into a decade of stubborn silence. Busy with their own lives, their children do not want to get involved, nor do their grandchildren. *This is Not About Us* is a collection of linked stories about growing up and growing old, the weight of parental expectations, the complex connection between sisters, and the love that binds a family across generations.

Amy Gottlieb: **The Beautiful Possible**
(Fiction, 336 pp., 2016)

Spanning seventy years and several continents—from a refugee's shattered dreams in 1938 Berlin, to a discontented American couple in the 1950s, to a young woman's life in modern-day Jerusalem—this novel follows a postwar love triangle between an American rabbi, his wife, and a German-Jewish refugee.

Elizabeth Graver: **Kantika**
(Fiction, 304 pp., 2023)

From Constantinople to Barcelona, Havana, and New York, *Kantika* sings of the joys, hopes, and devastation experienced by twentieth-century Sephardi emigrés. Rebecca Cohen's odyssey begins amid a settled, privileged childhood embraced by generations of well-to-do Ladino speakers. It quickly devolves through loss of home, a tragic marriage, and diminishing family cohesion. Her indomitable resilience, good sense, and values propel her across international boundaries and expectations as she becomes a thoroughly original American.

Max Gross: **The Lost Shtetl**
(Fiction, 416 pp., 2020)

For decades, the tiny Polish Jewish shtetl of Kreskol existed in happy isolation, spared by the Holocaust and the Cold War, virtually untouched and unchanged–until a marriage dispute spins out of control and the whole town comes crashing into the twenty-first century.

David Grossman: **Her Body Knows**
(Fiction, 264 pp., Hebrew, 2002; English translation, 2005)

Two novellas of searing psychological intensity deal with the pain of betrayal. In "Frenzy," Shaul confides to his sister-in-law that he knows about his wife's ten-year love affair. "In Another Life" portrays the thorny relationship between a dying woman and her emotionally blocked daughter.

David Grossman: **To the End of the Land**
(Fiction, 576 pp., Hebrew, 2008; English translation, 2010)

Grossman's epic novel follows Ora, the mother of an Israeli soldier on active duty, as she journeys away from home in order to evade delivery of the news that she fears: her son has been killed in action.

David Grossman: **A Horse Walks into a Bar**
(Fiction, 208 pp., Hebrew, 2014; English translation, 2017)

Winner of the 2017 Man Booker International Prize, this caustic short novel explores the life of a stand-up comic, as revealed over the course of one evening's performance. In the dance between comic and audience, with barbs flying back and forth, a deeper story begins to take shape.

Ayelet Gundar-Goshen: **The Liar**
(Fiction, 288 pp., Hebrew, 2018; English translation, 2019)

Unhappy teenager Nofar is working in an ice cream shop when a frustrated customer unleashes a horrible verbal attack on her. Soon, she has inadvertently accused him of sexual assault, and the eyes of her nation and her classmates turn to her. She relishes the attention at the cost of her conscience. If she continues to lie, a man will be wrongly convicted. But if she reveals the truth, she will be vilified.

Ayelet Gundar-Goshen: **One Night, Markovitch**
(Fiction, 383 pp., Hebrew, 2012; English translation, 2015)

Two men cross the sea to marry women they have never met in order to help the women escape war-torn Europe for the Jewish homeland. Their changing fortunes take them through war, upheaval, terrible secrets, tragedy, joy and loss. Vital, funny, and tender, this debut novel fuses personal lives and epic history in a story of hopeless longing and the desperate search for love.

Ayelet Gundar-Goshen: **Waking Lions**
(Fiction, 352 pp., Hebrew, 2014; English translation, 2017)

An Israeli physician is speeding along a deserted moonlit road in his SUV after an exhausting hospital shift when he hits a man. Realizing that the man, an African migrant, is beyond help, he flees the scene. His life takes a dramatic turn in this gripping and morally devastating drama of guilt and survival.

Ayelet Gundar-Goshen: **The Wolf Hunt**
(Fiction, 383 pp., Hebrew, 2022; English translation, 2023)

Lilach, a longtime Israeli expat, is living a charmed, predictable life in Silicon Valley. She and her tech executive husband are complacent in their close relationship with their now-teenage son, Adam. After a brutal attack on a local synagogue shakes the community's sense of safety, Adam and other Jewish boys enroll in a self-defense class taught by a charismatic former Israeli Special Forces officer. Beyond Lilach's hovering scrutiny, Adam and the teens develop confidence and a deep bond with one another.

When their African American classmate dies at a house party, the tragedy sets in motion antisemitism-tinged rumors implicating Adam. Suppressed tensions in the community ignite, exposing dark secrets at the intersection of race, identity, and privilege.

Yossi Klein Halevi**: Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor**
(Nonfiction, 224 pp., 2018)

This plea for "radical goodwill" takes the form of a series of letters to an imagined Palestinian neighbor, including both concise histories—of such topics as the history of modern Zionism and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza—and Halevi's own memories of growing up an American Jew, afraid that Israel would be destroyed; moving to Israel; and how his romance with the settlement movement ended.

Aaron Hamburger: **Hotel Cuba**
(Fiction, 368 pp., 2023)

In the wake of revolutions and the calamities of World War I, two sisters escape the hopelessness of their 1920s Polish shtetl. Pearl has raised her many siblings since their mother died a decade earlier, and has developed definite opinions about most things, including teenage Frieda's romantic life choices. Pearl's sense of decorum is rivaled only by her talent with a needle and thread; Frieda's only goal is reuniting with her fiance across the Atlantic.

On the verge of boarding the ship, they hear the U.S. has restricted immigration. They decide Cuba is a close enough temporary destination, but get stuck in colorful and vibrant Havana while awaiting permission to enter the Goldene Medina. Their personal self-discoveries are at the heart of the journey, echoing the experiences of the author's family.

Ehud Havazelet: **Like Never Before**
(Fiction, 268 pp., 1998)

Arranged as a series of interlocking short stories, this "broken novel" chronicles three generations of a family in war-torn Europe, the Orthodox communities of Brooklyn, and rural Oregon as they struggle to hold together in the face of "changing cultures and shifting fortunes."

Zoë Heller: **The Believers**
(Fiction, 352 pp., 2009)

After a prominent civil rights lawyer is left in a coma, his wife of forty years, two daughters, and adopted son must examine their lives together and their identities as individuals. When a dark secret involving the paterfamilias is revealed, the complex characters in this bitingly comic novel struggle to rediscover themselves.

David Hirshberg: **Jacobo's Rainbow**
(Fiction, 341 pp., 2021)

The novel chronicles a New Mexican crypto-Jew's developing self-awareness, emerging from tumultuous 1960s activism for civil rights, free speech, and an end to the Vietnam War, while exposing the mesmerizing sway charismatic leaders exercise on impressionable and idealistic followers. Hirschberg depicts Jewish young adults from widely varying circumstances who discover joy in the complex bonds of peoplehood and strength in their resolve to challenge casual and systemic antisemitism.

Alice Hoffman: **The Marriage of Opposites**
(Fiction, 384 pp., 2015)

Set in the early 1800s on the lush Caribbean island of St. Thomas, this fictional reimagining traces the complicated life of Rachel Pomié, mother of the impressionist painter Camille Pissarro, and the marriage of passion that scandalizes her Sephardic Jewish community.

Dara Horn: **People Love Dead Jews**
(Nonfiction, 272 pp., 2021)

Horn's assault on the cloying fascination with "useful Jews" calls for rethinking the motivations behind universal acceptance of Jews-as-different. Being "special" does not mean popular acknowledgement of Jews' decency, worthiness, or desirability as friends and neighbors. Through a series of essays, Horn contextualizes in-your-face personal, historical, and literary encounters with endemic antisemitism, revealing the banal but harrowing conclusion that "hating Jews is normal."

Dara Horn: **The Final Solution to the Jewish Question: A Love Story for the Living**
(Nonfiction, 364 pp. 2026)

Horn looks critically at the present moment for American Jews, exploring the failures of Holocaust education, the long history of the anti-Zionist movement, the compromises of the American Jewish "Golden Age," and the organized effort to poison artificial intelligence with anti-Jewish propaganda. She proposes a path forward rooted in a new understanding of freedom and responsibility.

Delphine Horvilleur: **Living with Our Dead: On Loss and Consolation**
(Memoir, 160 pp., May 2024)

In this moving book by one of France's leading religious figures, Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur recounts eleven approachable stories about her own experiences sharing individuals' loss and mourning, collected during the years she has spent caring for the dying and their loved ones. Rejecting the contemporary tendency to banish death from our thoughts and discourse, she encourages us to embrace its presence as a fundamental part of life. Compassionate, pragmatic, and sensitive, the stories offer insights into real people's extraordinary, normal lives at their most vulnerable moments. The book won France's 2021 Babelio Prize for nonfiction.

Howard Jacobson: **The Finkler Question**
(Fiction, 307 pp., 2010)

This brash, irreverent novel tackles the anxiety of contemporary Jewish life in Britain through the lives of two Jewish widowers and their close non-Jewish friend. At times uncomfortable, always witty, this winner of the prestigious Man Booker Prize offers a darkly satiric perspective on Jewish identity, antisemitism, shifting attitudes towards Israel, and the nature of male friendship.

Rachel Kadish: **The Weight of Ink**
(Fiction, 592 pp., 2017)

A mysterious collection of papers hidden in a historic London home sends two scholars of Jewish history on an unforgettable quest. Set in London in the 1660s and the early 21st century, *The Weight of Ink* is the interwoven tale of Ester Velasquez, scribe to a blind rabbi, and Helen Watt, an ailing historian determined to uncover the identity of the documents' scribe, the elusive "Aleph."

Mitchell James Kaplan**: By Fire, By Water**
(Fiction, 320 pp., 2010)

As the kingdoms of Spain are being unified under Christian rule at the end of the 15th century, Luis de Santángel, chancellor to the king of Aragón, agrees to finance Cristóbal Colón's imminent voyage to the "Indies." A converso examining his complicated relationship with Judaism, de Santángel finds himself increasingly under scrutiny by the Inquisition. Meanwhile, he experiences growing attraction to a beautiful Jewish silversmith in Granada, the last part of Spain under Muslim rule.

Sayed Kashua: **Dancing Arabs**
(Fiction, 227 pp., Hebrew, 2002; English translation, 2004)

This slyly subversive, semi-autobiographical account of Arab Israeli life recounts the story of a Palestinian boy who wins a prestigious scholarship to a Jewish high school but slips into listless malaise as an adult, despising himself, scorning his fellow Arabs, and resenting Jewish Israelis.

Sayed Kashua: **Second Person Singular**
(Fiction, 352 pp., Hebrew, 2011; English translation, 2013)

When an ambitious Arab lawyer in Jewish Jerusalem unexpectedly discovers a love letter his wife wrote to someone else, his hunt begins for the other man. The creator of the Israeli sitcom *Arab Labor* spins a complex psychological mystery, a searing dissection of the individuals who comprise a divided society.

Etgar Keret: **Fly Already**
(Fiction, 224 pp., Hebrew, 2018; English translation, 2019)

Despite the thread that weaves these stories together—our inability to communicate, to see so little of the world around us, and to understand each other even less—the author's love for humanity and our hapless existence shines a bright light throughout, sparking our universal connection to each other.

Etgar Keret: **The Seven Good Years**
(Memoir, 292 pp., 2015)

The seven years between the birth of his son in the midst of a terrorist attack and the death of his father from cancer are the subject of Keret's first nonfiction book published in America. The short vignettes and ruminations are filled with wonder, life, and love; poignant insights; and Keret's characteristic dark humor.

Etgar Keret: **Suddenly, a Knock on the Door**
(Short Stories, 188 pp.; Hebrew, 2010; English translation, 2012)

Keret is the most popular Israeli writer of his generation, with a style and focus that mark a new direction in the nation's literature. The 35 brief stories in this new collection focus on everyday life, leavened with the author's legendary taste for the absurd and the impossible.

Nicole Krauss: **Forest Dark**
(Fiction, 304 pp., 2017)

This hybrid work of fiction, memoir and literary criticism alternates between two distinct stories about two Americans who travel to Tel Aviv searching for something they cannot articulate: a New York lawyer named Epstein in the final stages of giving away his fortune, and a critically acclaimed American novelist named Nicole, suffering a mixture of writer's block, insomnia and restlessness.

Nicole Krauss: **The History of Love**
(Fiction, 252 pp., 2005)

Covering over 60 years and taking the reader from Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe to present day Brighton Beach, this haunting novel deals with issues of loneliness and the need to fill a void left by lost love.

Nicole Krauss: **To Be a Man**
(Fiction, 240 pp., 2020)

Set in locales around the globe, Krauss's first short story collection focuses on tensions and challenges in a wide variety of relationships.

Ilana Kurshan: **If All the Seas Were Ink**
(Memoir, 320 pp., 2017)

At the age of 27, alone in Jerusalem in the wake of a painful divorce, Kurshan adopted the practice of *daf yomi:* reading a page a day of the Talmud. Undaunted by the idea that it would take more than seven years to complete the full text, she adapted to its pace, attuned her ear to its poetry, and discovered her passions in its pages.

Lucette Lagnado: **The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: A Jewish Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World**
(Memoir, 352 pp., 2007)

This award-winning memoir by *Wall Street Journal* reporter Lagnado chronicles her Jewish family's traditions, tragedies and triumphs in their epic 1963 exodus from the splendor of cosmopolitan Cairo to Paris, and finally Brooklyn.

Howard Langer: **The Last Dekrepitzer**
(Fiction, 262 pp., 2024)

A distinctive fiddle tradition sets the Dekrepitzer rabbinic lineage apart from other Polish Hasidim. Although Sam's musical talent marks him for Moscow's symphony circuit, the interruption of WWII forces him into a Red Army uniform. He deserts, only to drift through the Pale of Settlement's heartland, weighed down by bitterness.

As Sam wanders South, Black American sailor-musicians heading home from Naples embrace him and adopt him into their Mississippi community. Both love and racism find him. Sam escapes to New York, where he finds friendship with Black street-corner preacher-musicians.

Aaron Lansky: **Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books**
(Nonfiction, 328 pp., 2005)

In 1980, a twenty-three-year-old student set out to rescue abandoned Yiddish books before it was too late. Filled with poignant and often humorous anecdotes from Lansky's travels across the country as he collected books from older Jewish immigrants, *Outwitting History* also shows how the founding of the National Yiddish Book Center preserved an almost-lost culture of Yiddish writers.

Lihi Lapid: **On Her Own**
(Fiction, 336 pp., Hebrew, 2022; English translation, 2024)

Nina, a beautiful Israeli teen living in a boring town, desperately wants an adventurous adult life beyond the drudgery of her Ukrainian emigrė single mother's life, but she has gotten over her head. Having been enticed into a relationship with a shady older man, she realizes she is being subjected to manipulative sexual predation and flees abruptly into the night. She is discovered and invited in by Carmela, an addled elderly woman who mistakes Nina for her beloved granddaughter now living in the United States. While Nina embraces a new identity and provides Carmela with the care Carmela's family in America fails to offer, her mother is desperate to find her, as is her ruthless abuser. The new neighbors might be onto Nina's subterfuge, but real love may be able to save her.

Jem Lester: **Shtum**
(Fiction, 320 pp., 2017)

Drawn from the author's own experience, *Shtum*'s dark humor powerfully illuminates the heartbreaking- yet-inspiring challenges of raising a nonverbal autistic child (*shtum* is British-Yiddish slang for silence). Struggling to cope emotionally, financially, and as a family, ten-year-old Jonah's parents try unconventional methods, including the legal fiction of divorce, to save their relationship and obtain access to institutional care for their son. Things don't work out quite as anticipated, particularly for now-single father and primary caretaker Ben. Grandfather Georg, whose hidden past holds a key to the family's future, takes them in — revealing nuance in the already-deep emotional attachment among the three.

Primo Levi: **The Periodic Table**
(Memoir, 233 pp., Italian, 1975; English translation, 1984)

A complex and beautifully rendered memoir by the author of *Survival in Auschwitz*. A chemist by profession, Levi uses the elements as a frame for stories of his childhood in the Jewish community of Turin, his work with the Partisans, and some extraordinary experiences after the War.

Savyon Liebrecht: **A Man, a Woman, and a Man**
(Fiction, 256 pp., Hebrew, 1998; English translation, 2001)

This novel, by one of Israel's most celebrated writers, reveals the complex underpinnings of an adulterous romance. Hamutal and Saul's liaison blossoms unexpectedly in the Tel Aviv nursing home where they come to visit their ailing parents, offering them emotional shelter as they struggle with their relationships to their families.

Eleanor Lipman: **The Inn at Lake Devine**
(Fiction, 253 pp., 1998)

In this updated screwball comedy, Lipman employs a deft and light-handed manner to tackle antisemitism, interfaith marriage, and her heroine's quest for inner growth and separation from family.

Michael David Lukas: **The Last Watchman of Old Cairo**
(Fiction, 288 pp., 2018)

In this novel, three stories intertwine to tell the story of the Cairo genizah. First, a Berkeley literature student explores his Jewish mother and Muslim father's tangled roots by researching the history of Cairo's ancient Ben Ezra synagogue (home to the fabled genizah). Meanwhile, a Muslim orphan centuries ago becomes the synagogue's watchman. Finally, British twin sisters Agnes Lewis and Margaret Gibson depart Cambridge in 1897 on a mission to rescue sacred texts that have begun to disappear from the synagogue.

Michael David Lukas: **The Oracle of Stamboul**
(Fiction, 304 pp., 2011)

Set in the heart of the Ottoman Empire during the first years of its chaotic decline, this debut novel follows a gifted young girl who dares to charm a sultan and change the course of history. As the sultan's interest in her grows, so, too, does her reputation and importance, though Eleonora is unsure if her new role is what she wants from life.

Bernard Malamud: **The Assistant**
(Fiction, 246 pp., 1957)

Plagued by guilt after taking part in the robbery of a small New York grocery, Italian-American Frank Alpine tries to make good by taking a job helping the struggling shop's poor Jewish owner. As he works through his moral debt and falls in love with the grocer's daughter, Frank undergoes a painful struggle to transcend the base instincts that engendered his criminal behavior.

Bernard Malamud: **The Fixer**
(Fiction, 352 pp., 1966)

Malamud won both the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize for this novel, set in Kiev in 1911. During a period of heightened antisemitism, an apolitical, nonobservant Jewish handyman is arrested and imprisoned for the ritual murder of a young Russian boy. Refusing to confess to a crime that he did not commit, the "fixer" vacillates between despair, outrage, and hope for justice.

Kirsty Manning: **The Song of the Jade Lily**
(Fiction, 480 pp., 2019)

Eleven-year-old Romy and her parents flee 1938 Vienna for Shanghai; in 2016 her granddaughter Alexandra rushes from England home to Melbourne, Australia, to be with her dying grandfather. This historical novel deals with friendship, motherhood, the price of love, and the power of hardship and courage that can shape us all.

Adam Mansbach: **The End of the Jews**
(Fiction, 310 pp., 2008)

In the 1930s, Tristan Brodsky escapes the Bronx, finds success as a novelist, and marries a sensitive poet. Fifty years later, their hiphop-obsessed grandson, Tris, gets involved with a half-Jewish Czech refugee who is a photographer for a Black jazz band, and starts writing novels, too. Tensions arise when the writers make use of each others' life stories to create new fictions. Exploring the delicate lines between appropriation and exploitation, between Black and Jewish people, and between the give and take of artistic partnership, this sensitive novel is a powerful statement about identity in 20th century America.

Anouk Markovits: **I Am Forbidden**
(Fiction, 320 pp., 2012)

This multilayered story is a sensitive consideration of tradition and commitment, and the conflict between individual independence and the obligations of faith. It follows four generations of the Stern family, members of the Satmar Hasidic sect, from Transylvania to Paris to Brooklyn, focusing on the diverging paths of two daughters, close friends until one wants more than her proscribed world can offer.

Alice Mattison: **In Case We're Separated**
(Fiction, 226 pp., 2005)

Thirteen linked stories use prose to imitate the complex poetic form called a sestina, inviting readers into the lives of four generations of a Jewish family, once from Russia and now scattered across North America. Moments of joy, despair, hope, and puzzlement weave through stories that move back and forth in time.

James McBride: **The Color of Water**
(Memoir, 256 pp., 1995)

Ruth McBride Jordan narrates the hardships she overcame as a Polish Jewish immigrant in rural Virginia who chose to marry a Black man in 1942 and convert to Christianity. Her account is interspersed in alternating chapters with her son's struggle to discover his mother's past and develop his own identity.

James McBride: **The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store**
(Fiction, 385 pp., 2023)

The mystery revealed in the first pages of *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* foreshadows the rich, knotty, and fantastical legacy marking the downtrodden Jewish and Black communities of 1920s Chicken Hill in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. McBride captures the shared vulnerability and humanity—and some cross-cultural angst and superstition—within the interdependent world inhabited by grocery store owner Chona, her impresario husband Moshe, and their Black neighbors. Protecting and rescuing the most at risk among them depends on everyone's resolve and resourcefulness.

Aharon Megged: **FoigIman**
(Fiction, 277 pp., Hebrew, 1987; English translation, 2003)

When an Israeli historian agrees to find a translator for a passionate Yiddish poet and Holocaust survivor whom he barely knows, he unwittingly throws his marriage and personal life into tragic confusion. Winner of a Koret Jewish Book Award, this rich novel of ideas concentrates on language and identity to play out the unresolved conflicts between the Israeli and the diaspora Jew.

Sami Michael: **A Trumpet in the Wadi**
(Fiction, 244 pp., Hebrew, 1987; English translation, 2003)

Set in 1982 in the Arab quarter of Haifa, the Iraqi-born author's bestseller paints a sensitive picture of a Christian Arab family, one of whose daughters enters into a romance with the Russian Jewish immigrant who moves upstairs. Contending with this unlikely turn of events, the protagonists and their families wrestle with complex questions of loyalty and identity.

Arthur Miller: **Focus**
(Fiction, 240 pp., 1945)

A reticent personnel manager living with his mother shares the prejudices of his times and of his neighbors, until he begins wearing glasses and others start to mistake him for a Jew. Playwright Miller's only novel investigates the insidious effects of increasing antisemitism in 1945 New York.

Derek B. Miller: **How to Find Your Way in the Dark**
(Fiction, 368 pp., 2022)

Recently motherless twelve-year-old Sheldon Horowitz survives a suspicious late-night road accident in rural Massachusetts that kills his father. Bereft but resourceful, Sheldon sets out to avenge his death. Sheldon's nascent sleuthing panache and derring-do charm foreshadow future capers in Miller's *Norwegian By Night* (2013), in which an octogenarian Sheldon solves crimes using hilariously farfetched (but effective) tactics.

How to Find Your Way in the Dark weaves a boisterously sly coming-of-age backstory full of murder and mayhem, gangsters and thieves, pranks and revenge, and Borscht Belt shenanigans on the cusp of WWII, while simultaneously offering serious insights into antisemitism, world events, and the enduring value of close friendships.

Tova Mirvis: **The Ladies Auxiliary**
(Fiction, 336 pp., 1999)

Narrated from the collective perspective of a synagogue's Ladies' Auxiliary Committee, Mirvis's inspired debut depicts the perceived threat that the arrival of free-spirited Batsheva poses to the insular Orthodox community of Memphis, Tennessee. The intergenerational conflict that ensues illuminates the difficulty of maintaining tradition while honoring personal freedom.

Tova Mirvis: **The Outside World**
(Fiction, 304 pp., 2005)

This humorously insightful novel follows Tzippy, a 22-year old modern Orthodox woman eager to marry. She unexpectedly falls for Bryan, who, following a year in yeshiva in Israel, has become stringently observant and now calls himself Baruch. The couple moves to the small Orthodox community of Memphis, Tennessee, where they and their parents deal with issues of isolation and assimilation, faith and doubt, destiny and true love.

Eshkol Nevo: **Homesick**
Fiction, 374 pp., Hebrew, 2004; English translation, 2010)

Narrated from multiple perspectives, this novel follows a handful of neighbors in the town of Mevasseret, just outside Jerusalem, whose Arab inhabitants were displaced in 1948. Nevo masterfully explores the dualities of life in Israel, delicately drawing out the hope and love submerged in the hearts of its denizens.

Eshkol Nevo: **Three Floors Up**
(Fiction, 304 pp., Hebrew 2015; English translation 2017)

Three tenants in a suburban Tel Aviv apartment building each tell their stories, and in the process explore the connections between identity, memory and loneliness. On the first floor, a retired officer who fought in the First Intifada confesses his obsession with his young daughter's safety. Above him lives Hani, whose husband travels the world while she stays at home with their two children. On the top floor lives a former judge, who tries to reconnect with her estranged son and falls in love with a man who isn't what he seems.

Achy Obejas: **Days of Awe**
(Fiction, 357 pp., 2001)

The protagonist of this semi-autobiographical novel was born in Cuba and grew up in Chicago in a community of refugees who hoped to eventually return to their homeland. When her job takes her back to Cuba, she discovers that her ostensibly Catholic ancestors are actually conversos who converted to Christianity during the Spanish Inquisition. Enlightened by a revised understanding of her past and her culture, she uncovers new truths about relatives who struggled with their own identities long ago.

Anne-Marie O'Connor: **The Lady in Gold: The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer"**
(Nonfiction, 368 pp., 2012)

Often referred to as "The Austrian Mona Lisa," Gustav Klimt's gold-leafed portrait of Jewish art patron Adele Bloch-Bauer has a complicated and controversial history. O'Connor relates the story of the painting, casting light on its creation during the Viennese Belle Epoque, its confiscation under Nazi rule, and the long struggle over its ownership after World War II.

Julie Orringer: **The Invisible Bridge**
(Fiction, 624 pp., 2010)

In Fall 1937, Andras Lévi leaves Hungary to study architecture in Paris, and his brother Tibor leaves for medical school in Italy. Both men eventually return to Hungary with their wives until the war upends their world. This intricate mélange of historical events and personal drama is an unforgettable story of love, courage, and survival.

Amos Oz: **Between Friends**
(Short Stories, 192 pp., Hebrew, 2012; English translation, 2013)

This group of connected stories, set on a fictional agricultural kibbutz in the late 1950s, offers revelatory glimpses into the members' secrets, longings, and regrets.

Amos Oz: **Judas**
(Fiction, 320 pp., Hebrew, 2014; English translation, 2016)

In 1959 Jerusalem, a young Biblical scholar finds work as a caregiver for a brilliant but cantankerous old man. In the house is also an alluring widow, the daughter of a deceased Zionist leader. This love story and coming-of-age novel is also an allegory for the State of Israel, and for the Christian tale from which it draws its title.

Amos Oz: **Panther in the Basement**
(Fiction, 155 pp., Hebrew, 1994; English translation, 1997)

It is the summer of 1947 in Palestine under the British Mandate. A 12-year-old Jewish boy befriends a British soldier to improve his English, only to find himself branded as a traitor by his friends. A coming-of-age novel with a twist.

Amos Oz: **A Tale of Love and Darkness**
(Memoir, 560 pp., Hebrew, 2002; English translation, 2004)

Past and present spiral in this dense memoir of growing up in Jerusalem in the years before and after Israeli independence. Oz's richly-colored tales of his European immigrant family trying to recreate itself in a foreign landscape allow readers to learn the inner workings of a distinguished writer and gain insight into what impelled him toward his craft.

Cynthia Ozick: **The Puttermesser Papers**
(Fiction, 256 pp., 1997)

In a modern urban version of a classic Jewish myth, Ozick offers her take on the golem. Visionary and malcontent Ruth Puttermesser stars in this surrealistic tale of destruction and rebirth.

Grace Paley: **A Grace Paley Reader: Stories, Essays, and Poetry**
(Short Stories, 400 pp., 2017)

Fifteen of Paley's most famous stories, nineteen essays, and thirty-four poems, all exploring her characteristically grand subjects: war, men, marriage, children, life, and death.

Edith Pearlman: **Binocular Vision: New & Selected Stories**
(Short stories, 375 pp., 2011)

Spanning four decades and three prize-winning collections, these 34 stories are set around the world: from Jerusalem to Central America, from tsarist Russia to London during the Blitz, from central Europe to Manhattan, and from the Maine coast to a fictional suburb of Boston. These charged locales, and the lives of the endlessly varied characters within them, are evoked with tenderness and incisiveness.

Edith Pearlman: **Honeydew**
(Short Stories, 277 pp., 2015)

Set primarily in a fictional suburb of Boston, this collection of splendidly crafted short fiction reflects Pearlman's mastery in exploring the interior lives of her characters and shining light on the meaning found in everyday existence.

Yirmi Pinkus: **Petty Business**
(Fiction, 264 pp., 2012; English translation, 2017)

As they do every year, Yosef Zinman, a well-to-do Tel Aviv grocer, and his beloved wife Zippi plan a vacation during the holiday of Sukkot to Seefeld in the mountainous Tirols region of Austria. This year, more and more relatives join in on the trip, and the expenses quickly begin to add up. To gather all the funds needed, the family goes into the business of inexpensive clothing and fashion shows for workers' unions. The summer promises handsome revenues, but as the Zinman family nears their goal, they become increasingly vexed by their competing interests. Pinkus's biting critique of Tel Aviv's provincial character and its residents' shtetl mentality is delivered with a perfect combination of wit, humor, and tender pathos.

(Translated by Evan Fallenberg and Yardenne Greenspan.)

Letty Cottin Pogrebin: **Shanda: A Memoir of Shame and Secrecy**
(Memoir, 432 pp., 2022)

Pogrebin exposes the fiercely guarded lies and intricate cover-ups woven by her extended family. Beginning with her own long-suppressed secret, she bares the intimate lives of her parents and relatives, revealing the truth about their origins, personal traumas, marital misery, abandoned children, religious transgressions, sexual identity, radical politics, and embarrassing illnesses. While unmasking their charades and disguises, Pogrebin showcases her family's remarkable talent for reinvention.

Dorit Rabinyan: **All the Rivers**
(Fiction, 288 pp., Hebrew 2014; English translation, 2017)

A young Jewish woman from Tel Aviv and a Palestinian artist from Hebron meet and begin a love affair in New York. The impossibility of their relationship becomes even more apparent when they return home to their families and communities. This controversial novel, boldly portraying the strains—and delights—of a forbidden relationship, is a love story and a war story, a New York story and a Middle East story, an unflinching foray into the forces that bind us and divide us.

Stuart Rojstaczer: **The Mathematician's Shiva**
(Fiction, 384 pp., 2014)

Sasha Karnokovitch and his family would like to mourn the passing of his mother, Rachela, with modesty and dignity. But Rachela, a brilliant Polish émigré mathematician, is rumored to have solved the million-dollar Navier-Stokes Millenium Prize problem and spitefully taken the solution to her grave. A motley group of socially-challenged mathematicians arrives to crash the shiva, vowing to do whatever it takes to find the solution.

Fran Ross: **Oreo**
(Fiction, 212 pp., 1974)

This picaresque novel, deemed ahead of its time and now considered a cult classic, satirically chronicles the adventures of a young woman born to a Black mother in her quest to find her Jewish father in New York City. The myth of Theseus is updated, using a mix of vernacular dialects, bilingual and ethnic humor, inside jokes, neologisms, verbal quirks, and linguistic oddities.

James Ross: **Fragile Branches: Travels through the Jewish Diaspora**
(Nonfiction, 229 pp., 2000)

Journalist Ross introduces six isolated communities in India, Peru, Brazil, Israel, and Uganda that embrace Judaism despite enormous obstacles. Offering new perspectives, encouraging reexamination of relationships with tradition, and reminding us of the richness and diversity of Jewish life, the book also poses the ever-perplexing question of who, exactly, is a Jew.

Philip Roth: **American Pastoral**
(Fiction, 432 pp., 1997)

The first in Roth's trilogy of novels exploring the life of American Jews of his generation, *American Pastoral* paints a masterful portrait of the perfectly assimilated Seymour "the Swede" Levov, whose carefully constructed world falls apart when his daughter gets involved in radical politics.

Philip Roth: **Nemesis**
(Fiction, 304 pp., 2010)

Bucky Cantor is working as a vigorous young playground director when a polio outbreak mysteriously begins to ravage 1944 Newark. Faced with an opportunity to leave the city and take a job in a Catskills summer camp, Bucky is torn between personal safety and professional duty in this modern American morality tale.

Philip Roth: **The Plot Against America**
(Fiction, 416 pp., 2004)

Roth's stirring work of alternate history depicts the impact of Charles Lindbergh's defeat of Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940 Presidential election on a New Jersey Jewish family.

Moriel Rothman-Zecher: **Sadness Is a White Bird**
(Fiction, 288 pp., 2018)

A 19-year-old Israeli soldier, whose best friends are Palestinian twins, feels driven to the breaking point by conflicting loyalties. This passionate, poetic coming-of-age story brilliantly captures the intensity of feeling on both sides of the conflict.

Ariel Sabar: **My Father's Paradise: A Son's Search for His Jewish Past in Kurdish Iraq**
(Memoir, 325 pp., 2008)

Ariel Sabar's father, Yona, grew up in the northern Iraqi village of Zakho, a place so remote that the Kurdish Jews who lived there still spoke the ancient language of Aramaic. Ariel, a journalist who grew up in Los Angeles, explores his father's devotion to preserving the stories, folkways, and language of his past.

Mark Sarvas: **Memento Park**
(Fiction, 288 pp., 2018)

When a Hollywood character actor gets a call about a painting allegedly looted from his family by Nazis in 1944 Budapest, his life is thrown into personal, professional, and spiritual turmoil. Though the book asks many questions about family, identity, art, and history, a central unanswerable predicament lingers: How do we move forward when the past looms unreasonably large?

Moacyr Scliar: **The Centaur in the Garden**
(Fiction, 216 pp., Portuguese, 1980; English translation, 1984)

An outsider among outsiders, a Jewish centaur narrates his life's journey from his birth on a farm homesteaded by his Russian immigrant family in southern Brazil through his efforts to rid himself of the equine portion of his body and take his place in contemporary Brazilian society. This earthy tale was listed by the National Yiddish Book Center as one of the 100 greatest works of modern Jewish literature.

Meir Shalev: **The Blue Mountain**
(Fiction, 378 pp., Hebrew, 1988; English translation, 1991)

This imaginative novel transcends time and place as it depicts three generations of the inhabitants of a rural village in Israel, from the four immigrants pioneering a new life in a new land, to their grandson Baruch, who reflects on the past with nostalgia, curiosity, and ambivalence.

Meir Shalev: **The Loves of Judith**
(Fiction, 315 pp., Hebrew, 1994, English translation, 1999)

Also published as *Four Meals*, this rich and remarkable novel recounts how, over the course of four meals that take place across several decades, a boy named Zayde learns of his mother's relationships in a rural village in 1930s British Mandate Palestine with her three lovers, all of whom consider him their son.

Meir Shalev: **My Russian Grandmother and Her American Vacuum Cleaner**
(Memoir, 224 pp., Hebrew, 2009; English translation, 2011)

This humorous and tender memoir about the acclaimed Israeli author's grandmother and her obsession with cleanliness richly evokes the idealism and disappointments of the Eastern European Jews who came to Palestine in the 1920s.

Meir Shalev: **A Pigeon and a Boy**
(Fiction, 365 pp., Hebrew, 2006, English translation, 2007)

During Israel's 1948 War of Independence, a young homing pigeon handler sends off one last pigeon in his final moments, bearing an unusual gift to his girlfriend. Meanwhile, we also learn the contemporary story of a middle-aged tour guide who falls in love again with his childhood sweetheart and uncovers a secret connection to the bird handler.

Meir Shalev: **Two She-Bears**
(Fiction, 320 pp., Hebrew, 2013; English translation, 2016)

This unconventional literary thriller about two murders—one committed as an act of vengeance and the second as an act of retribution—takes place in a rural village in Israel. Spanning three generations in one family's life, this is a tale of love, betrayal, revenge, loss, brutality, and salvation.

B.A. Shapiro: **The Muralist**
(Fiction, 368 pp., 2015)

In 1940, an American painter working for the Works Progress Administration vanishes in New York City. Seventy years later, her great-niece, working at Christie's auction house, uncovers enigmatic paintings hidden behind works by famous Abstract Expressionist artists and questions whether they might hold answers to her aunt's disappearance.

Dani Shapiro: **Inheritance**
(Memoir, 272 pp., 2019)

Confronted with the stunning news that the father she grew up with was not her biological father, the acclaimed novelist and memoirist explores the intersections of family secrets, memory, history, biology and identity.

Dani Shapiro: **Signal Fires**
(Fiction, 240 pp., 2022)

Anguish erupts after three drunken teens make the fateful decision to drive. The ensuing crash propels a doctor to the scene from his adjacent home; his children and their friend are in the car. The crisis and its secrets suffuse the family's internal dynamics and their relationships with others. Decades later, long after his children have moved away, the father's late-night neighborhood encounters with a stargazing child establish an abiding bond and reveal intermingled fates across time and space.

Sholem Aleichem: **Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories**
(Short Stories, 309 pp., Yiddish, 1894-1914; English translation, 1987)

Faced with a household of daughters to marry off, pogroms, expulsions, and the erosion of the traditional ways of the shtetl, why shouldn't a poor dairyman complain? Tevye relates his woes in monologues peppered with wry humor, homespun philosophy, and his celebrated use and misuse of Jewish texts.

Noa Silver: **California Dreaming**
(Fiction, 312 pp., 2024)

Nourished from a young age by her literary mother's nostalgia for the 1960s Bay Area progressive lifestyle, Elena dreams of leaving New England to experience California idealism for herself. Right out of college, she enlists in Teach for America to bring great literature to Berkeley's disadvantaged children, but struggles to instill a love of poetry in her students. As Elena's disillusionment deepens, the Bay Area's start-up culture of the new millennium offers her an unexpected path forward.

Isaac Bashevis Singer: **Enemies, A Love Story**
(Fiction, 280 pp., Yiddish, 1966; English translation, 1972)

This unusual take on the love story tells the tale of a Holocaust survivor and his three wives in 1950s New York City, presented with humor and pathos in Singer's ironic style.

Isaac Bashevis Singer: **The Slave**
(Fiction, 311 pp., Yiddish, 1962; English translation, 1962)

Jacob, a pogrom survivor who has been sold as a slave to Polish peasants, lives a simple life in a remote village. Contrary to both Jewish tradition and secular law, he falls in love with the daughter of his Christian owner, and together they begin a new life in another shtetl. Set in 17th century Poland, this dark and passionate allegory is often considered Singer's most lyrical and well-constructed novel.

Israel Joshua Singer: **The Brothers Ashkenazi**
(Fiction, 426 pp., Yiddish, 1937; English translation, 1980)

In this epic novel, Singer sets twin brothers' bitter rivalry against the late 19th century development of Łódź, Poland, from a sleepy town into an industrial center. Family and community relationships are transformed by wealth, social divisions, and the politics of a rapidly changing world.

Dalia Sofer: **The Septembers of Shiraz**
(Fiction, 340 pp., 2007)

Just after the Iranian Revolution, Jewish gem trader Isaac Amin is falsely imprisoned for being a spy. His wife Farnaz struggles to keep from slipping into despair, while his young daughter Shirin tries to take matters into her own hands. Far away in Brooklyn, Isaac's son Parviz falls for the pious daughter of his Hasidic landlord despite not being religious himself. Sofer masterfully captures the small tensions and larger brutalities that sharply impact a family unable to conform.

Ruth Sohn: **Crossing Cairo**
(Memoir, 272 pp., 2013)

Rabbi Ruth Sohn explores the experience of living in Egypt with her husband and children after having been advised not to share the fact of their Jewish identity. Unexpected discoveries unfold as they seek to cross boundaries of language, culture, and religion to form friendships and find a home among Egyptians.

Alisa Solomon: **Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of Fiddler on the Roof**
(Nonfiction, 448 pp., 2013)

Theater critic and scholar Solomon details how and why the story of Tevye the milkman–the creation of Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem–succeeded as a blockbuster theatrical production and film, and moreover, became a cultural touchstone that transcends ethnic and national boundaries.

Anna Solomon: **The Book of V.**
(Fiction, 320 pp., 2020)

Three characters' stories in different time periods overlap and ultimately collide. Lily is a young wife and mother in contemporary Brooklyn, and Vee is the wife of an ambitious young senator in Washington, D.C., during the early 1970s. Their narratives are interspersed with an imaginative account of characters in the Book of Esther, illuminating how women's lives have and have not changed over thousands of years.

Anna Solomon: **Leaving Lucy Pear**
(Fiction, 336 pp., 2016)

This novel juxtaposes the lives of a little girl and her two mothers–the biological mother, a wealthy Jewish pianist who abandoned her child, and the adoptive mother, a dirt-poor Irish Catholic woman who took the baby in. Set on the New England coast in the 1920s, Solomon's book investigates class, freedom, gender, sexuality, and the meaning of family.

Art Spiegelman**: The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale**
(Graphic memoir, 295 pp., Vol I, 1986; Vol II, 1991)

This Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir, told via sequential art, is a haunting story-within-a-story of Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and his son Art, a comic book artist coming to terms with his aging father's history as he documents it for a biography. When telling his father's story, Spiegelman depicts Jewish characters as anthropomorphic mice and Nazis as anthropomorphic cats–hence the title.

Ilan Stavans, editor: **The Oxford Book of Jewish Stories**
(Short Stories, 493 pp., 1998)

Fifty-two stories from eighteen countries, originally written in ten languages, allow readers to explore the global reach of modern Jewish literature. A great way to discover new writers for future discussions.

Jennifer Steil: **Exile Music**
(Fiction, 432 pp., 2020)

A sheltered and refined 1930s Vienna childhood, suffused with music and the looming-but-unacknowledged threat of Nazi occupation, ends abruptly when Orly's family flees Europe to the mountains of Bolivia. Music is a constant refrain as the uprooted narrator relates her family's interludes of fear, grief, longing, and, ultimately, hope amidst the people, culture, and towering vistas of the Andes.

Abby Chava Stein: **Becoming Eve: My Journey from Ultra-Orthodox Rabbi to Transgender Woman**
(Memoir, 272 pp., 2019)

The coming-of-age memoir of a tenth-generation Hasidic Jew, descended from the Baal Shem Tov (the founder of Hasidism) and destined to become a rabbinic leader who, despite the consequences, embraces her identity as a woman.

Milton Steinberg: **As a Driven Leaf**
(Fiction, 480 pp., 1939)

This classic historical novel, written by an American rabbi, draws readers into the era of the great rabbis of the Talmud. At its center is the renegade sage Elisha ben Abuyah, whose doubts lead him to search for answers in the Greek and Roman world, with dramatic consequences.

Steve Stern: **The Frozen Rabbi**
(Fiction, 362 pp., 2010)

Beginning in 1999, when a teenager discovers Rabbi Eliezer ben Zephyr in his parents' freezer in suburban Memphis, Tennessee, this uproarious romp then jumps to 1899 to explain how the rabbi became encased in ice in the Jewish Pale. Through a series of surreal misadventures by a cast of comic and cosmic characters, this lovingly irreverent novel explores a century of the diaspora.

Amir Tibon: **The Gates of Gaza: A Story of Betrayal, Survival, and Hope in Israel's Borderlands**
(Nonfiction, 352 pp., 2024)

Early in the morning of October 7, 2023, Amir Tibon and his wife were awakened by mortar rounds exploding near their home in Kibbutz Nahal Oz, a progressive Israeli community less than a mile from Gaza City. Soon, they were holding their two young daughters in the family's reinforced safe room, urging them not to cry as gunfire echoed just outside the door. Some 45 miles north, Amir's parents jumped in their Jeep, armed only with a pistol. Tibon reveals his father's courageous quest to make his way to the kibbutz to save his family, as well as the stories of many other heroes. He honors the legacy of those who died to save others, and highlights some of the impossible decisions that lay before Israelis that day.

Chanan Tigay: **The Lost Book of Moses: The Hunt for the World's Oldest Bible**
(Nonfiction, 368 pp., 2016)

In 1883, Moses Wilhelm Shapira—archaeological treasure hunter, inveterate social climber, and denizen of Jerusalem's bustling marketplace—arrived unannounced in London, claiming to have discovered the world's oldest Bible scroll. Tigay, a journalist, follows every lead, no matter how unlikely, in his attempts to find the treasure and solve the riddle of the brilliant, doomed antiquities dealer accused of forging it.

Ayelet Tsabari: **The Art of Leaving**
(Memoir, 336 pp., 2019)

In this memoir, composed of sixteen personal essays, novelist Tsabari shares vivid memories of her childhood in Israel with her large family of Yemeni descent; travelling the world from New York to India; and seeking love, belonging, and an escape from grief following the early death of her father.

Ayelet Tsabari: **The Best Place on Earth: Stories**
(Short Stories, 272 pp., 2016)

These eleven stories, set between Israel and Canada, feature mothers and children, soldiers and bohemians, lovers and best friends, all searching for their place in the world. Tsabari's Mizrahi characters grapple with love, violence, faith, the slipperiness of identity, and the challenges of balancing old traditions with modern times.

Ayelet Tsabari: **Songs for the Brokenhearted**
(Fiction, 352 pp., 2024)

In 1950, Yemeni Jews Saida and Yaqub enter into a forbidden romantic relationship in an overcrowded immigrant camp in the newly created State of Israel. Nearly a half century later, Saida's adult daughter Zohara, now living in New York with little contact with her family, returns to Israel upon receiving word of her mother's death, and finds herself on an unexpected journey to learn hidden truths about the world she came from and the mother she is grieving.

Anya Ulinich: **Petropolis**
(Fiction, 324 pp., 2007)

Chubby, biracial teenager Sasha Goldberg continually disappoints her overbearing mother until she manages to escape the confines of her bleakly named Siberian town, Asbestos 2. She first lands as a mail-order bride in Phoenix, then ditches her husband and makes her way to suburban Chicago where a wealthy family adopts her as their pet. Her search for her father takes her to the mean streets of Brooklyn and back to Russia in this smart, darkly humorous satire about coming of age in the 20th century.

Yael van der Wouden: **The Safekeep**
(Fiction, 288 pp., 2024)

It's been fifteen years since World War II, and the rural Dutch province of Overijssel is quiet. Living alone in her late mother's country home, Isabel's life is led by routine and discipline. But all is upended when her brother Louis delivers his graceless new girlfriend, Eva, at Isabel's doorstep—as a guest, there to stay for the season. Eva is Isabel's antithesis: she sleeps late, wakes late, walks loudly through the house, and touches things she shouldn't. In response, Isabel develops a fury-fueled obsession, and when things start disappearing around the house, her suspicions spiral out of control. Her desperate desire for order transforms into infatuation—leading to a discovery that unravels all she has ever known. The war might not be well and truly over after all, and neither Eva—nor the house—are what they seem.

Sasha Vasilyuk: **Your Presence is Mandatory**
(Fiction, 336 pp., 2024)

Winner of the 2025 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature and a California Book Award, Vasilyuk's debut novel explores the enduring costs of secrecy and deception in the Soviet era. It centers on the life of Yefim Shulman, a Jewish Ukrainian soldier in Stalin's army. After the German army ambush his unit in 1941, Yefim must second-guess his faith in the Communist cause and "Mother Russia." Throughout the war and its aftermath, life-or-death circumstances force Yefim to deny his identity as a Jew and as a former prisoner of war, but the consequences of these choices haunt him throughout his life. The novel depicts how half-truths and untold stories became essential to survival in the USSR, and continue echoing into the twenty-first century.

Angel Wagenstein: **Isaac's Torah: Concerning the Life of Isaac Jacob Blumenfeld Through Two World Wars, Three Concentration Camps, and Five Motherlands**
(Fiction, 304 pp., Bulgarian, 2000; English translation, 2008)

Tragedy is overlaid with Jewish humor as an affable tailor survives war and nationalism in Central Europe between World War I and the death of Stalin. This darkly ironic novel, peppered with Yiddish jokes, fables from the Kolodetz shtetl, and the unorthodox comments of sometimes-atheist Rabbi Shmuel Ben-David, offers profound insights into life's absurdities.

Helene Wecker: **The Golem and the Jinni**
(Fiction, 496 pp., 2013)

An immigrant tale that combines elements of Jewish and Arab folk mythology, this inventive historical novel centers two supernatural creatures who arrive separately in New York in 1899. They work to create places for themselves in this new world until they meet, becoming friends and soulmates.

Helene Wecker: **The Hidden Palace**
(Fiction, 480 pp., 2021)

In this sequel to *The Golem and the Jinni,* set in New York City in the early years of the 20th century, the golem Chava Levy and the jinni Ahmad al-Hadid renew their relationship and confront unexpected new challenges in a rapidly changing human world.

Jennifer Weiner: **Mrs. Everything**
(Fiction, 496 pp., 2019)

From the 1950s to the present, sisters Jo and Bethie Kaufman struggle to find their places—and be true to themselves—in a rapidly-evolving America.

Isabel Wilkerson: **Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents**
(Nonfiction, 496 pp., 2020)

Linking the historical experiences of America, India, and Nazi Germany, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Wilkerson explores how American society has been shaped by a hidden caste system: a rigid hierarchy of human rankings.

Noa Yedlin: **Stockholm**
(Fiction, 384 pp., Hebrew 2016; English translation, 2023)

Tel Aviv professor Avishay Sar-Shalom is a prominent contender for the Nobel Prize in Economics, but a friend finds him dead a week before the award's announcement. His four closest friends conspire to conceal Avishay's corpse until the Prize's recipient is revealed, in the interest of seeing Avishay honored—except that each of the friends has a more selfish motivation. Yedlin explores mortality and the bonds of friendship with psychological insight and dark humor.

A.B. Yehoshua: **The Liberated Bride**
(Fiction, 568 pp., Hebrew, 2001; English translation, 2004)

Yehoshua focuses on the family and professional life of a Haifa professor of Near Eastern Studies to reveal a web of relationships linking characters from diverse sectors of Israeli society. Rich in detail and humor, the novel deftly explores the deep divides in a complex country, illuminating the struggles of Jews and Arabs, and husbands and wives, to live together in peace.

A.B. Yehoshua: **The Only Daughter**
(Fiction, 208 pp., Hebrew, 2021; English Translation, 2023)

Rachele is a spunky and curious schoolgirl living with her assimilated extended family, between Catholic and Jewish cultures, in northern Italy. When she is cast as the Madonna in the school play, questions of identity, bad blood between Jews and their neighbors, and family allegiance rattle Rachele's family and intrigue the girl. She is left largely on her own while her Jewish father and non-Jewish mother struggle with his cancer diagnosis and treatment. Rachele's surreptitious foray into a church adds to her provocative questions. While her father is alarmed but distracted, her doting paternal grandmother encourages her expanding awareness.

A.B. Yehoshua: **The Tunnel**
(Fiction, 336 pp., Hebrew, 2018; English translation, 2020)

This suspenseful and poignant story of a Jerusalem family coping with the sudden mental decline of their beloved husband and father–an engineer who they discover is involved in a secret military project– explores issues of identity, independence, and loss.

Anzia Yezierska: **Bread Givers**
(Fiction, 297 pp., 1925)

Bread Givers gives voice to the immigrant Jewish woman's struggle as, in unadorned prose, Yezierska graphically represents the harsh world of a young woman without resources or external support. We cheer, we sigh, and we shake our heads in disbelief as our heroine pushes the boundaries of culture, religion, and family to survive.

Sarit Yishai-Levi: **The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem**
(Fiction, 384 pp., Hebrew 2013; English translation, 2016)

Set against the Golden Age of Hollywood, the dark days of World War II, and the swinging '70s, Gabriella recounts the story of her mother, Luna, revealing shocking secrets, forbidden romances, and a family curse. This intergenerational saga, following unforgettable women as they forge their own paths through times of dramatic change, has been filmed for Israeli television.

Gabrielle Zevin: **Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow**
(Fiction, 416 pp., 2022)

A chance hospital encounter over a video game as kids sparks Sam Masur and Sadie Green's lifelong bond. Their friendship builds on an abiding intellectual intimacy, transcending distance, disability, self-doubt, conflicting loyalties, estrangement, and tragedy. Together, as brilliant game designers, they create perfect immersive electronic worlds, while imperfectly navigating the pitfalls of the real one. Their story highlights the redemptive possibilities in play, and above all, the need to love and be loved.

Steven J. Zipperstein: **Philip Roth: Stung By Life**
(Nonfiction, 368 pp., 2025))

In this literary biography from Yale's *Jewish Lives* series, Steven J. Zipperstein captures the complex life and work of Philip Roth (1933–2018), one of America's most celebrated Jewish writers.

Markus Zusak: **The Book Thief**
(Fiction, 560 pp., 2006)

In this classic novel, an orphaned girl who steals books even before she knows how to read them comes to live with a foster family who turn out to be hiding a Jew in their basement.

(10/28/2026)