

Chapter 1 : Paris Review - Yehuda Amichai, The Art of Poetry No. 44

Amichai keenly evinces the poet's function as observer and social critic: "Out of three or four in a room / one is always standing at the window. / Forced to see the injustice among the thorns, / the fires on the hill."

During World War II he fought with the Palestinian brigade of the British army in the Middle East, and he served as a commando in the Haganah underground during the war. He also fought with the Israeli army in the and wars. Amichai has worked as an elementary school teacher and has taught writing at New York University, but he devotes most of his time to writing. His books of poems sell about fifteen thousand copies each, in a nation where only three million read Hebrew. Comparable sales in the United States would merit best-seller status. In addition to the poetry for which he is best known. Amichai has written novels, short stories, plays, essays, and reviews. All of the meetings took place in the early morning and were conducted in English, which Amichai speaks fluently in an accent that crosses German and Hebrew. Additional material was gleaned from correspondence exchanged during , and a final session took place in New York in March of , shortly after the Gulf War cease-fire. He is handsome and compactly built, with dark eyes and the presence of a former athlete and soldier. The recurrent awareness of the physical in his poetry appears in person; frequently gesturing with his body and eyes he answered questions openly and without hesitation. In my case, as an Israeli, I was still young enough, after World War II, to be actively involved in three additional wars. I really have the feeling that I am the result and very contents of the twentieth century. My father was a German Jew, very Orthodox, a strong believer, in the best sense of the word. He was born in a Jewish farmhouse in the south of Germany, in a village, Giebelstadt; there must have been twenty to thirty thousand farmhouses like the one he was born in all over the south at that time. They were also from the south, from a village that today would be about a two-hour drive a bit north from Giebelstadt. At the time, that was a great distance. My grandparents and my great-great-great-grandparents all were born in Germany, reaching back, I think, to the Middle Ages. My father was the youngest of a family of seven children. Only one of them remained a farmer, one of his brothers. But two thousand was quite a substantial Jewish community at that time. There was a Jewish hospital and a Jewish schoolâ€”a state school Jews could go to. I learned Hebrew in first grade, to read and write Hebrew as well as German, which may explain why I had no trouble with Hebrew later on. She lives in Israel. But I come from a large extended family. My familyâ€”the extended familyâ€”were all Orthodox. It was a very close-knit family which met for all sorts of occasionsâ€”weddings, bar mitzvahs. There was a strong, warm, very protected feeling among us. Also, my familyâ€”all the brothers and sisters of both my parents and their children, my cousinsâ€”moved to Palestine between and , all of them. Some of them were settled into Palestine before the Nazis really took power. My family was, at the time, one of the few Jewish families from central Europe in Palestine. No one was killed in the coming Holocaust. It was the Zionism of religious orthodoxy, a practical Zionismâ€”going to Palestine. For my parents, going to Palestine was typically romantic, motivated in part by their sense of Orthodoxy and in part by the longing to be in their own country. I had cousins who may have seen Zionism in utopian socialist terms, though my parents did not. We were called names. We had stones thrown at us. And, yes, this created real sorrow. We defended ourselves as well as we could. Funny thing, the common name we were called was Isaacâ€”the way Muslims are called Ali or Mohammed. They threw stones at us and shouted, Go to Palestine. Then in Palestine we were told to leave Palestineâ€”history juxtaposed can be very ironic. But I do remember in when the Nazis came into power the anti-Semitism had been religiously based. Then it became political and economic. I remember my parents telling me to keep away from the military parades, not to become mesmerized by the music and marching. The processions were very somber, very German in a way, with students, priests and nuns carrying banners and holy icons and figures. Onceâ€”I was nine or tenâ€”I was watching a Catholic procession because I liked its colorfulness and pageantry. Since I was Orthodox I was wearing a yarmulke. Suddenly, someone hit me in the face and shouted, You dirty little Jew, take your skullcap off! We were what you would call here upper middle classâ€”quite well-off. My father never attended universityâ€”he apprenticed as a merchant, as was done in those days. But he was educated. He was well-read and he enjoyed and appreciated music. He had

a great sense of humor. He was well liked and had many non-Jewish friends who later tried to talk him out of leaving Germany for Palestine. My mother, too, read a lot. There was a great deal of culture in our home. Music and poetry—Goethe, Schiller, Heine. My mother and grandmother used to read to me from German literature. I went to synagogue regularly. My first education was interpreting the Bible. But I also grew up with German folk songs and stories, which became as much a part of my imagination as the Bible stories. My sense of history came from these stories—I was fascinated with what you might call fairy-tale-shaped history. I made the German landscape, which was very beautiful to me—flowing rivers, mountains, forests, lakes—into a biblical landscape. The valley of sunshine into which we went on school excursions in my imagination became the valley in which David and Goliath fought. Even though there was anti-Semitism, the German landscape was idyllic to me. This was mixed in with the dream of Palestine. I existed in a realm of dream, in the realm of the romantic, in a romantic dream of moving from a place where we were a small group, sometimes victimized, to a Jewish Palestine that had ancient roots in the Bible. We were so strong in our beliefs and dreams and imaginations, we felt we could live with the others because we were so deeply different. I was a very religious child—I went to synagogue at least once, sometimes twice, a day. And I remember my religiousness as good—I think religion is good for children, especially educated children, because it allows for imagination, a whole imaginative world apart from the practical world. Want to keep reading?

Chapter 2 : Amichai Windows design

The Early Books of Yehuda Amichai collects for the first time in a single volume the three works -- Songs of Jerusalem and Myself, Poems and Time -- that established Amichai as Israel's greatest contemporary poet and one of the major poets of our time.

Yehuda Amichai Israeli poet, who also published short stories, novels, and plays. Amichai was among the first to compose poems in colloquial Israeli Hebrew. His language is gently ironic, sometimes passionate or straightforward, or even emotionally dry. If I forget thee, Jerusalem, Then let my right be forgotten. Let my right be forgotten, and my left remember. Let my left remember, and your right close And your mouth open near the gate. His ancestors had lived there in southern Germany since the Middle Ages. Amichai studied Hebrew from early childhood and received a religious education. After the Nazis came to power, his family emigrated to Palestine in , and settled finally in Jerusalem. In an early poem he confessed: Later, during the War of Independence, he fought as a commando with the Haganah underground, and took part in some of the toughest battles in the Negev. He was also in active duty in the army in and These experiences mark many of his poems. From January to April , he had a love affair with Ruth Z. Amichai had started to write poetry in His first collection, Akhshav uva-yamim ha-aherim, came out in It included such names as Nathan Zach b. Carmi, and Dan Pagis. His second novel, Mi yitneni malon , was about an Israeli poet living in New York. It was published while Amichai was a visiting poet at an American college. In and he was a visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and Dorot Visiting Fellowship , and a visiting poet at New York University Sometimes it follows the rhythms of biblical language. In the poem Amichai continues the title line with the words: Amichai died in Jerusalem on September 22, He was married twice: The Full Severity of Compassion: Serafin ; The Experienced Soul: Studies in Amichai, ed. Sheelot u-teshuvot, - Great Tranquillity: May be used for non-commercial purposes. The author must be mentioned. The text may not be altered in any way e. Click on the logo above for information.

Chapter 3 : The Early Books by Yehuda Amichai

The Early Books of Yehuda Amichai collects for the first time in a single volume the three works "Songs of Jerusalem and Myself, Poems and Time" that established Amichai as Israel's greatest contemporary poet and one of the major poets of our time.

His family immigrated to pre-state Israel in 1948. He studied literature and biblical studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and was poet in residence at numerous universities, including Berkeley, NYU and Yale. Among the many honors he received: He was nominated for the Nobel Prize on more than one occasion. Through his synthesis of the poetic with the everyday, Amichai effected a revolutionary change in both the subject matter and the language of poetry. Israel Prize Citation He is one of our great poets. Once one has heard his quiet, even tones, precise, distanced and passionate, one can never forget them. Times Literary Supplement Amichai was loved by his readers worldwide. One of the real treasures. Tel Aviv, Schocken, Poems English: Barcelona, Senor Hidalgo, Great Tranquillity: Questions and Answers English: Amsterdam, Meulenhoff, ; Spanish: Madrid, Catedra, English: Amsterdam, Meulenhoff, English: New York, Harper Perennial, German: New York, Sheep Meadow, Slovak: Shanghai, Shanghai Translation, Polish: Warsaw, Atut, Yehuda Amichai: A Life of Poetry, English:

Chapter 4 : Obituary: Yehuda Amichai | Books | The Guardian

Amichai's first volumes, published in the s, influenced a generation of poetsparticul This English translation of the popular Israeli poet's early work serves as a fine introduction to his oeuvre.

He was a member of the Palmach , the strike force of the Haganah , the defense force of the Jewish community in Mandate Palestine. Encouraged by one of his professors at Hebrew University, he published his first book of poetry, *Now and in Other Days*, in 1945. It was about a young Israeli who was born in Germany, and after World War II, and the war of Independence in Israel, he visits his hometown in Germany, recalls his childhood, trying to make sense of the world that created the Holocaust. He was a poet in residence at New York University in 1951. First to Tamar Horn, with whom he had one son, and then to Chana Sokolov; they had one son and one daughter. His two sons were Ron and David, and his daughter was Emmanuella. His work is characterized by gentle irony and original, often surprising imagery. Like many secular Israeli poets, he struggles with religious faith. His poems are full of references to God and the religious experience. So the prayers, the language of prayer itself became a kind of natural language for me. It comes very naturally. Subtle layers of meaning achieved using an ancient word rather than its modern synonym to impart a biblical connotation cannot always be conveyed. Amichai routinely conflates biographical details from different times into one poetic framework, and exploits drafts and poetic ideas that were recorded in different periods, for a poem that would be written years later". In her biography of Amichai, [19] literary critic Nili Scharf Gold writes that the idea for the name change, as well as the name "Amichai", came from his girlfriend, Ruth Herrmann, who moved to the United States and then married Eric Zielenziger. For five shillings I exchanged the exile name of my fathers for a proud Hebrew name that suited hers. That whore ran off to America and married a man, a spice dealer, pepper, cinnamon, and cardamom, leaving me with my new name and with the war. She claims in her book that Amichai had an argument with a childhood friend, Ruth Hanover, which led to her cycling home angrily. Ruth was caught in a traffic accident, as a result of which she had to have a leg amputated, and Gold claims that Amichai felt guilt and responsibility. Amichai occasionally referred to her in his poems as "Little Ruth". Days before, we argued a little because I easily gave up the leading part of Yehuda Maccabi in the school show and the son of the headmaster got it. She argued that I had to fight more and not to give up immediately". This knowledge goes with me all the time, not because of guilt. Did Amichai want to become a national poet? All the things that Gold thinks he was hiding were not in any contrast to the unique "nationality" embodied in his poetry. In this he is unique. He is probably the only canonic poet read by so many, also by people that do not belong to the Literary Community. In this matter he has no rivals. From this aspect, at least, he may be considered a national poet, a title that does not suite him from any other point of view. In 1955 he appeared at the Spoleto poetry festival with Ezra Pound , W. Auden , Pablo Neruda and others. In 1956 , he appeared at the London Poetry Festival. He was loved by his readers worldwide. It is not hard to see why. Most of all, they are, like the speaking persona in his Letter of Recommendation, full of love: One of the real treasures. Amichai received an Honor Citation from Assiut University , Egypt , and numerous honorary doctorates. Joris ,and "great Poems of the 20th Century" by Mark Strand. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize several times, but never won.

Chapter 5 : The Poetry of Yehuda Amichai by Yehuda Amichai

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Part of the adventure is not knowing how to get there; no one has ever been there before. Oh, you can take a path for a while but then you need to branch off in your own direction in order to realize your vision for the book. One needs to be prepared to try again to get where you want to go, to realize your inner vision. You may not even know where you want to go until you see it, until you arrive after a long, winding road. Paths are helpful; they enable us to go farther into the woods. But artists are trailblazers. And often I find that even though I might get lost or fail in one way, it often yields results in another, unexpected way. From the beginning, I had a certain vision for The Amichai Windows design. I wanted to do a separate folio for each poem – a folio that would open as a window, a triptych, with the Hebrew version of the poem to the right, the English translation on the left – and graphics filling the entire page, especially the central window panel. I wanted the reader to have an intimate experience, to be immersed in the poem; the purpose of the structure and images was to enhance and deepen the effect of the poems. I wanted to create connections to other events, people and places. Nonetheless, a lot of people suggested that an accordion book would be a perfect format. So, I tried it. I created all kinds of accordion structures with cut-outs and pop-ups. And it kept getting bigger and bigger. Eighteen is a lot of poems. I suppose that I could have made eighteen different, separate accordion books. Or grouped them together. But I felt as if the poems themselves were getting slighted. Suddenly, it was the structure of the book – not the words, the ideas, the emotions that were being evoked – which took precedence. To enable a reader to sit by the glow of a lamp and read each poem, pausing, perusing, looking out the window, rereading and letting the words penetrate. So, ultimately, returned to my idea of separate triptychs for each poem. Double window – a possible watermark for Amichai Windows design. As part of my effort, I thought it might be a good idea to use a watermark of a window in the paper itself. To make the watermark, I selected a few images and settled on one in particular – a photo that I had taken in Jerusalem of the window of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. I passed it by chance one day when I was out for a stroll in Jerusalem. Ben-Yehuda, who helped revivify the Hebrew language in the early 20th century, lived in a beautiful stone house in the Talpiot neighborhood of Jerusalem. But especially Amichai, an exemplary poet who uses words in a way that reveal one window within another. But the watermark class led me to it. And so it happened that a few years after taking the photo in Jerusalem, I sat in a sunlit studio in Silver Spring, MD, and traced the outline of the photo of the window from a xerox onto a magnetic-backed sheet. Subsequently, I affixed the magnetic sheet to the screen of the mould. A reader would have to tilt the paper at a certain angle in the light to even know that the watermark was there. But I loved the design that I had made out of the magnetic cutout. It felt like parchment to me; it was a blend of abaca and cotton linters. How I would eventually get it made is another story. For months, I had it stuck to our refrigerator at home just as a convenient way to store it. When I started thinking about printing the poems, I recalled the magnetic cutout.

Find helpful customer reviews and review ratings for The Early Books of Yehuda Amichai at blog.quintoapp.com Read honest and unbiased product reviews from our users.

He was a member of the Palmach , the strike force of the Haganah , the defense force of the Jewish community in Mandate Palestine. Encouraged by one of his professors at Hebrew University, he published his first book of poetry, *Now and in Other Days*, in 1945. It was about a young Israeli who was born in Germany, and after World War II, and the war of Independence in Israel, he visits his hometown in Germany, recalls his childhood, trying to make sense of the world that created the Holocaust. He was a poet in residence at New York University in 1950. This poem is inscribed on a wall in the Rabin Museum in Tel-Aviv. Amichai was married twice. First to Tamar Horn, with whom he had one son, and then to Chana Sokolov; they had one son and one daughter. His two sons were Ron and David, and his daughter was Emmanuella. His work is characterized by gentle irony and original, often surprising imagery. Like many secular Israeli poets, he struggles with religious faith. His poems are full of references to God and the religious experience. Language and poetic style[edit] In an interview published in the *American Poetry Review* , Amichai spoke about his command of Hebrew: So the prayers, the language of prayer itself became a kind of natural language for me It comes very naturally. Subtle layers of meaning achieved using an ancient word rather than its modern synonym to impart a biblical connotation cannot always be conveyed. There he happened to find an anthology of modern British poetry, and the works of Dylan Thomas, T. That book inspired his first thoughts about becoming a writer. Amichai routinely conflates biographical details from different times into one poetic framework, and exploits drafts and poetic ideas that were recorded in different periods, for a poem that would be written years later". In her biography of Amichai, [18] literary critic Nili Scharf Gold writes that the idea for the name change, as well as the name "Amichai", came from his girlfriend, Ruth Herrmann, who moved to the United States and then married Eric Zielenziger. For five shillings I exchanged the exile name of my fathers for a proud Hebrew name that suited hers. That whore ran off to America and married a man, a spice dealer, pepper, cinnamon, and cardamom, leaving me with my new name and with the war". She claims in her book that Amichai had an argument with a childhood friend, Ruth Hanover, which led to her cycling home angrily. Ruth was caught in a traffic accident, as a result of which she had to have a leg amputated, and Gold claims that Amichai felt guilt and responsibility. Amichai occasionally referred to her in his poems as "Little Ruth". Days before, we argued a little because I easily gave up the leading part of Yehuda Maccabi in the school show and the son of the headmaster got it. She argued that I had to fight more and not to give up immediately". This knowledge goes with me all the time, not because of guilt. Did Amichai want to become a national poet? All the things that Gold thinks he was hiding were not in any contrast to the unique "nationality" embodied in his poetry. In this he is unique. He is probably the only canonic poet read by so many, also by people that do not belong to the Literary Community. In this matter he has no rivals. From this aspect, at least, he may be considered a national poet, a title that does not suite him from any other point of view In he appeared at the Spoleto poetry festival with Ezra Pound , W. Auden , Pablo Neruda and others. In , he appeared at the London Poetry Festival. He was loved by his readers worldwide It is not hard to see why. Most of all, they are, like the speaking persona in his Letter of Recommendation, full of love: Oh, touch me, touch me, you good woman! One of the real treasures. He is one of the great joyful lamenters of all time, endlessly documenting his anguish, throbbing pains, mistaken dreams, shortages of faith, abundances of ecstatic loves, and humiliations. And, like everyone else, he wants everything both ways. In particular, he wants to be a lover and a loner, a guy in the street and an intellectual, believer and infidel, while insisting that all manifestations of war against the human spirit be mercilessly squashed. You are the poem you write, the poem you write is Once one has read his poems, one can never forget them- there can be so much life in sixteen lines. Yehuda Amichai is a master. It is an incomparable triumph. Be immediately assured that this does not mean devoid of humor, or without a rich sense of comedy.

Chapter 7 : Poem of the Week / Yehuda Amichai on the ups and downs of Jerusalem - Israeli Culture - Ha

The early books of yehuda amichai book depository, the early books of yehuda amichai collects for the first time in a single volume the three works songs of jerusalem and myself, poems and time that established amichai as israel's greatest.

Share via Email All his life, Yehuda Amichai resisted the appellation, "national poet of Israel"; now that he has died of cancer, aged 76, he cannot escape that tag. His idioms have seeped into everyday Israeli parlance; bereaved mothers recite his poems at the graves of war-dead sons; operas and rock songs use his lyrics. Collections of his Hebrew verse repeatedly topped bestseller lists. Nor was his appeal limited to Israel. Universities from Oxford to Asyut, in Egypt, feted Amichai with honours. Many of his 16 anthologies, and several novels, plays, short stories and essays were rendered into 33 other languages. The Chinese translator Pu Hao called him "close and true, my brother in spirit". Amichai dealt with weighty issues - God, death, loss, the fate of nations. Yet he did so with a comic eye for detail, elevating the commonplace to the plane of mythic metaphor. Sheets flapping in the midday Jerusalem breeze become flags of contending tribes; a girl opening a refrigerator door is illuminated in "the light of another world"; teenage conscripts sent to the battlefield peer out of coach windows like "faded postage stamps". During the second world war, while serving with the British army in north Africa, a ferocious sandstorm overturned a mobile library. Amichai salvaged an anthology of Auden and Eliot verse, and was instantly smitten. Auden later became a friend and mentor. So did Ted Hughes, who wrote: They changed their surname from Pfeuffer to Amichai - it means "My people lives" in Hebrew. In , Yehuda joined the Zionist Palmach regiment, and fought in the Negev desert two years later. It revolutionised Israeli poetry. Shunning the formalism of pre-state poets, Amichai introduced slang and prosaic modern terms to liberate Hebrew, "this weary language torn from its sleep in the Bible". His words elide seamlessly from biblical phraseology to 20th-century banality: Yet the metre of holy texts still rang in his ears and echoed in his writing. Sometimes, he railed against a "toothless" or "merciless" God, who had deserted mankind. Mostly, though, his poems are affectionately irreverent. One likens the weekly Torah recital to reading God bedtime stories, much as Scheherazade did in Nights. Amichai also respected medieval and early 20th-century Hebrew writers, like Leah Goldberg. He took her poems into battle with him in - just as soldiers later carried his verse in their kits during the war of with Egypt. During the days of the British mandate in Palestine, Amichai ferried Jewish refugees into Palestine, ran guns for the embryonic Israeli army, and later served in three wars. However, he was always a critical Zionist. One poem undermines the David v Goliath motif. In another deliberately shocking image, Amichai has Jews begging forgiveness outside an Arab shop on Yom Kippur. He longed for peace - not so much heavenly bliss, just normality and human affection. His love poems, invariably dedicated to his second wife, Hanna Sokolov, reveal a fascination with the world of women. Unlike secular intellectuals who preferred modern Tel Aviv, Amichai adored Jerusalem, "short and crouched among its hills", its air "filled with prayers and dreams, hard to breathe". A teacher at the Hebrew University, he lived within sight of the ancient city walls, and, at times, felt oppressed by the weight of its history - "even the dead are granted the right to vote". Still, there was room for hope. Amichai always remained approachable and down-to-earth, even after winning the Israel prize for literature in . He asserted the authenticity of the individual in a society where collectivism - both religious and secular - runs deep. Not that he lacked detractors. Some criticised him for retreading earlier ideas. Yet *Open Closed Open*, written in and translated into English earlier this year, is being hailed as his masterpiece. From it comes what could well be his epitaph. Now [the pieces] are all jumbled together. The game is calm and has no end, no winners, no losers, the hollow rules clang in the wind. And I am quiet. In my life and in my death.

Chapter 8 : Yehuda Amichai - Poet | Academy of American Poets

Selected Poems of Yehuda Amichai, translation from the original Hebrew by Gutmann, Harold Schimmel, and Ted Hughes, Penguin (London, England), , published as The Early Books of Yehuda Amichai, Sheep Meadow Press

(Riverdale, NY),

Chapter 9 : Yehuda Amichai - Wikipedia

Yehuda Amichai (), Israel's most renowned poet, was born to a religious family in Wurzburg, Germany, and was raised speaking both Hebrew and German. His family immigrated to pre-state Israel in