

An Evening to Celebrate *In the Absence* (Turning Point Books)
by Dara Barnat
Tel Aviv University
January 4th, 2017

Program

Opening Remarks: Milette Shamir, Department of English and American Studies

Karen Alkalay-Gut
Sabine Huynh
Sarah Wetzel
Gili Haimovich
Rivka Rass
Dara Barnat

Reader Biographies

Karen Alkalay-Gut (host) has retired from teaching poetry at Tel Aviv University, but not from poetry itself. A play constructed from her book of poems, “The Love of Clothes and Nakedness” is now in rehearsal, the third disk of “Panic Ensemble” with her lyrics will be released in May, her ninth book of poetry in Hebrew, “Ways to Love,” will be released in January, she’s lost track of how many books in English and Italian translation have been published. Of her latest book due out this week, “Hanging Around the House,” Marjorie Perloff has written “What a pleasure to hang around the house—or rather the kitchen—with Karen Alkalay-Gut, who knows what it is, not just to eat an egg but to be one!”

Dara Barnat is the author of two poetry collections, *In the Absence* (2016) and *Headwind Migration* (a chapbook, 2009). Her poetry and translations appear in *The Cortland Review*, *diode*, *Poet Lore*, *Lilith*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and elsewhere. Poems have been translated into Hebrew by Gili Haimovich (*Shvo*, *Makaf*) and French by Sabine Huynh (*Recours au Poème*). Her essays appear in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, and elsewhere. Dara holds a Ph.D. from Tel Aviv University, where she is Writing Director in the Department of English and American Studies. Her work can be found at darabarnat.com.

Gili Haimovich is an international poet and translator who writes in both Hebrew and English. She has six volumes of poetry in Hebrew, including her most recent, *Landing Lights* (Iton 77 Publishing House), which received a grant from Acum, as did her previous book. She also received a grant nominating her as an outstanding artist by the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption on 2015. Her poetry in English is featured in her chapbook, *Living on a Blank Page* (Blue Angel Press, 2008) and in numerous journals and anthologies, such as *Poetry International*, *International Poetry Review*, *Poem*, *LRC – Literary Review of Canada*, *Asymptote*, *Drain Magazine*, *Blue Lyra*, *Circumference*, *TOK1: Writing the New Toronto and Mediterranean Poetry*, as well as main Israeli journals and anthologies such *The Most Beautiful Poems in Hebrew* (Yedioth Ahronot Books, 2013). Her poems have been translated into several languages including English (translated by Dara), French, Chinese, Bengali, and Romanian. Her work as a translator includes Dara’s poems, as well as Fiona Sampson, Michael Dickel, and Hebrew poets Nurit Zarchi and Yehezkel Nafshi.

Sabine Huynh was born in Vietnam, grew up in France and has lived in England, the United States, Canada and Israel. She holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she taught from 2002 until 2008, and did Postdoctoral research in Sociolinguistics at the University of Ottawa (2008-9). Published books include an academic book, a novel, a short story collection, an essay, a diary, poetry collections, artist's books, a Francophone women's poetry anthology (all published in France). She reviews poetry books for French literary and poetry journals. She has translated eight books, seven of them being poetry. She is currently translating, into French, poetry collections by Anne Sexton and Carla Harryman, while trying to teach, to raise a young child, and to work on her next novel, her next short stories collection and her next poetry collection. Wish her luck and a happy new year!

Rivka Rass divides her time between New York and Tel Aviv. She teaches English at Pace University in New York, and creative writing workshops in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Her books – prose, poetry and nonfiction, including *The Mountain, From Moscow to Jerusalem*, and *The Writer Within* – were published in Israel, USA, Spain, Switzerland and Holland. Her articles, reviews and interviews on the arts, literature and theater were published in magazines in Israel, Norway, Holland and USA. She won the Prime Minister prize for literature in 2001 and the ACUM prize for manuscripts submitted anonymously in 1995 and 2009. Her one-person exhibition, *Book-Sculptures* was shown in New York, Tel Aviv and Amsterdam.

Sarah Wetzel is the author of *River Electric with Light*, which won the AROHO Poetry Publication Prize and was published by Red Hen Press in 2015, and *Bathsheba Transatlantic*, which won the Philip Levine Prize for Poetry and was published in 2010. Sarah holds an engineering degree from Georgia Institute of Technology and a MBA from the University of California, Berkeley. More importantly for her poetry, Sarah completed a MFA in Creative Writing at Bennington College in January 2009. Sarah currently teaches creative writing and poetry at The American University of Rome, Italy. She spends a lot of time on planes, however, dividing time between Manhattan, Rome, and Tel Aviv. She is finalizing her third book of poetry as well as working on a collection of short stories. Not surprisingly much of that work seems to be happening on said planes.