BALAGAN

HOPE / EXHALE

JUNE 2026, ISSUE NO. 4

A Magazine of Poetry,
Art, and Perspective

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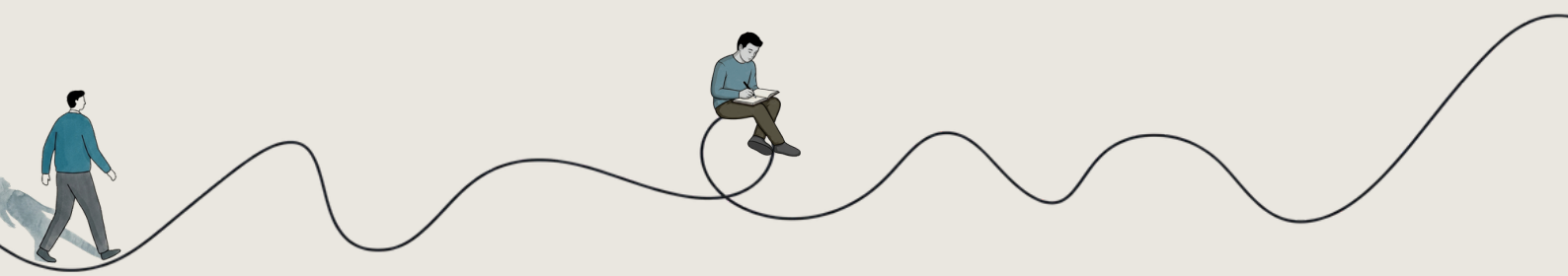

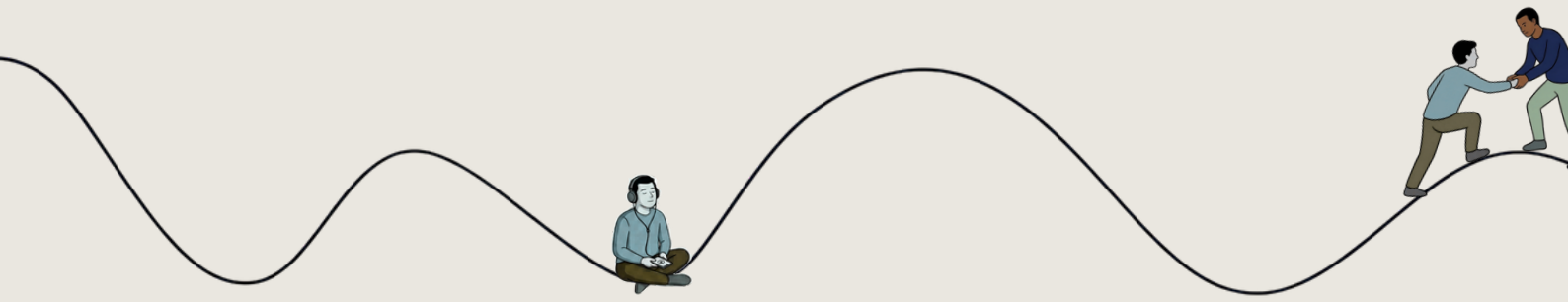

*A **Writing on the Wall** publication – giving voice to the complex and layered realities of Israel today.*

Editors' Note

When we chose the theme *Hope*, it was not because we believed things were suddenly getting better. It was not optimism, nor wishful thinking. Hope, at least for us, has become less a feeling than a practice – a form of exhausted persistence.

In these pages, Rotem Codish writes about what it means when a spouse leaves for reserve duty – and what happens when he returns altered. Bill turns to Rembrandt's Samson, exploring the strange persistence of hope long after certainty has disappeared. Ronit finds an unexpected moment of human refuge at a suffocating networking event. Marina Maximilian gives voice to a country grieving, yet still hopeful.

The pieces in this issue resist easy comfort. They are anxious, sharp, grieving, conflicted. Yet each reflects hope not as optimism or reassurance, but as our determination to continue forward.

Perhaps this, too, is a form of hope. The act of writing. The act of reading. The possibility of sharing moments of humanity with people we may never meet, and finding ourselves a little less alone in the process.

Exhale with us.

Bill and Ronit

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BALAGAN *is a quarterly literary magazine – through poetry, art, and storytelling, we offer fresh perspectives on identity, culture and the stories that connect them.*

*A **Writing on the Wall** publication – giving voice to the complex and layered realities of Israel today.*
***Writing on the Wall** is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.*


Take what
you need
a miracle
help
trust
a nap
hope
a hug
time
clarity
sasa_elebea

On Two **Fronts**

Rotem Codish

Peleg and I met in 2017 – eight years before October 7th, while both traveling separately in Sri Lanka after our military service. It was love at first sight – and we haven't been apart since that day. When we returned to Israel, we moved in together immediately, knowing this was 'it.'

Our relationship was always simple and natural; we were best friends, always talking about everything without fear, drama, or fights. After five years together, we were married. Peleg is an agronomist by profession and always did reserve duty, but I never gave it much thought. He would return home afterwards, and everything would continue as usual.

October 7th and the First Tour

Then came October 7th. Peleg was called up immediately that morning. I remember sitting and watching the news in tears while he packed his bag, unable to believe what was happening. He was focused on the mission, and I was falling apart on the sofa. I remember saying goodbye and that hug of 'there's a chance we might never meet again.' He left, and I remained home alone, completely paralyzed.

Peleg entered Gaza for what his commanding officers called an 'unspecified duration.' They took his phone, cutting him off from all outside communication. During that first stint in Gaza, which lasted almost four months, I would receive a message or a call about once every two weeks from him saying, 'everything is fine.' My reply was always, 'I'm fine, don't worry about me.' I didn't want to become another burden or one of his worries; he had enough.


Iran threat
Hizballa threat
Hamas threat
Government thret
BIBI thre
133 Hos- TAG- ES
Guidelines for ~~F~~ Protection
NO SCHOOLS
NO GATHERING
BOMB SHELTER
ALERTS
Peleg's last seen
Flashing NEWS!!
CHILL PILL
PIZZA
ICE CREAM
083/100

The Return and 'The 100 Days Project'

When Peleg returned after those first four months of reserve duty in Gaza, I was sure it was all over and that we could finally be like everyone else again. At first, it felt like just another 'after' (the short 'leave' to which I was accustomed). I pampered him, gave him all my time. But eventually, I had to return to my life, work, and tasks, and I did not have time to be with him as I had been. I didn't know – and nothing could have prepared me – that not only had the war not ended, but a completely new war was about to begin inside our home.

In the meantime, I did return to myself. I started my '100 Days Project' which turned into the book *On Two Fronts*. Every day, I would illustrate one scene from our relationship, documenting our return to routine. Soon after, I started receiving comments from women and couples I had never met. They wrote of their similar experiences. I realized I had helped a community form – new friendships with reserve soldiers' wives facing the situations similar to what I described. Many think that when soldiers return from the front, everything is 'over,' but what they don't understand is that there is no return to the lives we once had.

The Stranger in the House

As I continued with the project, I showed Peleg the daily illustration – images that expressed things I did not always know how to explain in words. He would look at a drawing and, with genuine surprise, ask: 'Is this *really* how you see me?'

Sometimes an illustration sparked an argument, a small fight. When the project began gaining exposure, Peleg was startled, upset. He said it was not right for everyone to see what was happening inside our home. I showed him the flood of messages from other couples. I explained that people don't see 'Rotem and Peleg's lives' in the drawings, they see *themselves*. We are simply two people telling the story shared by every reservist and their partner in the country.

But something was different. He was empty, tired, quiet, and sad. No matter how I tried to cheer him up, he lacked energy. I was disappointed and deeply hurt; it felt like he was rejecting me. He just wanted to be home, alone. I, having been stuck at home for so long, just wanted to get out.


056/100
Are you mad at me? Did I do something? You seem distant

The easy communication we once shared vanished. I'd grown used to the silence and my own routine; now Peleg is back, but we are both strangers to the people we used to be. It's terrible to admit, but life was simpler when he wasn't home. I'd mastered the whiplash of this reality – crying, and then laughing over drinks with a friend. While the reservists were at the front, we were here, living through the messy contradiction of moving forward.

Peleg and I talked about the surreal life on the front. He said it wasn't normal to cry over fallen friends and then go enjoy a drink at a bar as if nothing happened. He didn't know how to handle the conflicting emotions of being in a Tel Aviv restaurant while his friends were in battle.

'It's easier to be there, fighting, knowing you're doing something important; I prefer it.' That sentence stung. How could he want to leave me alone again? We became strangers in the same house. One moment he was angry, the next I was; both of us were drained and without the strength to bridge the gap.

More Reserve Duty and Loss

Then, another reserve call-up. There had been days I actually hoped for it, just to have quiet and be 'me' again. But once he put on the uniform, I fell apart. All the anger vanished, replaced by one thought: 'What if he doesn't come back this time?' I felt guilty for ever wishing he would go back.

One day, I received a short message from him: 'I'm fine. Tell everyone *I'm fine*.' This message, of course, hinted at the opposite. I later learned his team was attacked by a suicide drone on the Lebanon border. Two of his closest friends from their recruitment, Dan Kamhaji and Nachman Natan Hertz, were killed instantly. Peleg was there. At that moment, I realized everything we had been through until then was just the 'promo.'

The Path to Healing

By October 2025, two years after the start of the war, Peleg had completed five stints, 355 days of reserve duty. Half the time he was physically gone; the other half, when he was home, he wasn't really. After the disaster on the Lebanon border, he entered intensive mental rehabilitation – regular psychological treatments and hyperbaric chamber therapy. I saw how it helped him; the destructive silence became a healing one. But I was again left to carry the household alone.


03:47
084/100

Eventually, I realized I also needed time to process. We each started therapy. He spoke of what he saw and of his survivor's guilt; I spoke of my loneliness, resentment, and the fear of losing our relationship forever. Only after we worked through our own pain could we begin to heal together. Therapy became a bridge, giving us a new language.

A New Beginning

We finally moved to a *moshav*, which had always been Peleg's dream. The move wasn't a magic cure – at first, we just felt the same heavy atmosphere in a new house. But slowly, Peleg began to sleep through the night, and I became more patient.

The real, deep change came when I got pregnant. Suddenly, there was something greater than our pain. Being a father was Peleg's greatest dream. It gave us something positive and tangible upon which to focus. Peleg, who was mired in sadness just a month prior, now wakes up with a smile. Before, joy felt like a betrayal to his fallen friends or the hostages, but we realized that joy is the right of those who choose life despite everything.

We are not the same couple that met in Sri Lanka eight and a half years ago. The war took much from us, but it has allowed us to choose each other every day anew.

On Two Fronts is currently available for purchase in independent bookstores in Tel Aviv, or for self-pickup from Moshav Sede Moshe.

For bulk orders, collaboration, or special institutional purchasing for organizations, please contact Rotem directly at Rotem.codish@gmail.com / 0547223897

The **Tulips**

May 2020

Natania Rosenfeld

We lay in bed late
while the rain rained down

your cheek in my palm
my hand on your hip

You said The poor tulips
I said The tulips are strong

they can hold water like
they hold the sun

Today under the gray sky
I saw them intact mostly

in their ranks before houses
close to the street the petals

had flopped wide like drunks
next to porches in shadow

the cups were tight almost
closed small forts against

marauders when the sun returns
light will pry them open

Tigerlillia Terribilis.

A Reflection on **Human Presence**

Dana Amir

In her poem 'Kindness,' the Arab American poet Naomi Shihab Nye writes:

> *Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,*
> *You must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.*
> *You must wake up with sorrow.*
> *You must speak to it till your voice*
> *catches the thread of all sorrows…*

I find myself thinking about how she understands sorrow as a condition, as the ground from which kindness can emerge, or human gentleness that connects the various forms of humanity – not only because there is no humanity without sorrow, but also because sorrow never belongs solely to one version of the human. It is a sorrow that holds the world's shores in common, and the tides that run between them.

The capacity to emerge from catastrophic situations resembles the ability to pull oneself out from under the rubble. It is bound up with the possibility of imagining, in the mind's eye, a path of rescue, a hand extended from the other side precisely when everything around us urges surrender. It is the power to step beyond the actual toward the possible. This power not only allows us to endure reality; it keeps reality from becoming destiny.

One of the most striking examples of this power I found in an interview with a sixteen-year-old boy who was kidnapped to Gaza and held, together with his thirteen-year-old sister, in isolation for fifty days. Upon his return from captivity, he discovered that his parents had been murdered and that he had no home to which to return. Yet he said that when he and his sister were handed over to the Red Cross, he felt sorrow for the Gazan civilians. 'I feel sorry for them because they're staying here,' he said to his sister, 'and we're going home.'

These words embody not only the human values of this boy, and of the home in which he grew up; they express his capacity to imagine, even at the very heart of the worst imaginable personal disaster, a world in which one person's sorrow does not erase another's, just as the act of rescuing one does not diminish the obligation to rescue another.

The American psychoanalyst Dori Laub has argued that one of the hallmarks of the traumatic state is that it leaves the survivor without an 'addressee' to whom they can turn – neither outside themselves nor within. The loss of these sustaining internal and external human connections can unleash forces of despair and withdrawal that further weaken a survivor's ability to trust, connect, and find meaning in the world. The only possible repair of this state, Laub claims, lies in a renewed creation of human presence capable of granting an experience of containment and meaning to what is unbearable.

Yet human presence is not only a matter of another who is willing to stand up for us. It is no less bound up with our own willingness to stand up for others situated on all sides of the event, on all sides of sorrow. Whenever we succeed in providing a human refuge for another's pain, we restore an image of a world we wish to live in. We restore the horizon that reality repeatedly confiscates while installing in its place a false horizon, one masquerading as the embodiment of a future when in fact it is nothing but a compulsive, destructive repetition of the past.

In recent days I received a video showing the Iranian national women's soccer team refusing to sing the regime's anthem during the opening match of the Asian Cup. The camera lingers on two of them: first, a young player standing among her teammates, wearing a hijab, her dark eyes looking straight ahead, toward the crowd and beyond it. For a moment, when the refusal becomes an accomplished fact, she smiles a small smile of victory that seems directed inward, toward herself. But right after, the camera moves to the face of the coach watching from the sidelines, smiling through tears of pride.

Something in the connection between the young woman's forward gaze and that of the older coach – who represents a generation that did not know the possibility of refusal, yet succeeded in raising young women who refuse, who *dream* – suggests that the seeds of resistance to actual reality, the insistence on the freedom to imagine a possible reality, are passed from generation to generation.

With these lines, Shihab Nye ends her poem:

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

Human presence is our companion not only in zones of fracture and catastrophe. No less than it paves our path out of all kinds of dead ends, it also enables us to appreciate the simple gestures that would otherwise be taken for granted. Each time we acquiesce to destruction, we collaborate in its becoming part of a transparent routine. Much has been written about the banality of evil and about how it draws its power precisely from this capacity to disguise itself as the call of the hour, as mission, as habit. Far too little has been written, if at all, about the way in which the banality of evil also renders kindness banal – transparent, invisible.

The power of human lyricism is the power to refuse the forces of destruction. I believe in this power, in the capacity to create a community that knows how to refuse and knows how to dream – a community that does not relinquish, even when buried deep under the rubble of the present, the right to orient itself toward kindness, toward a horizon and a future.

Murodjon Temirov

Exhale: On Making Music After the Unthinkable

Marina Maximilian

We arrived in Israel in late 1990 – straight into a war.

My family had immigrated from the Soviet Union just before its collapse, in that narrow window when you were permitted to leave with one hundred dollars per person and nothing else. Pensions, savings, citizenship – all of it stayed behind. We were a couple in our thirties, grandparents in their sixties, and two small children. We moved into a temporary apartment in Ramat Gan. Within weeks, the Gulf War broke out.

The idea of it sounds terrifying. But what we encountered first wasn't fear – it was *Israelis*. Strangers knocked on our door every day – before we knew a word of Hebrew. They helped us find gas masks, tape the windows, navigate the bureaucracy, find schools for the children. They offered help for which we had not yet thought to ask. We felt we had arrived among angels.

I grew up in a rough neighborhood – one of the only Russian-speaking families on the block, across from a market full of kippa-wearing locals. Middle Eastern music poured out of it, thick with life, while my mother and I played classical music inside and I sang opera. We were different in every way, and loved it anyway – the traditions, the colors, the smells, the accents, and underneath all of it, something that felt like family.

My parents taught me to look for where people meet. So when I found myself living through a war as a mother, I knew what I had to do – hold that space, and keep the war outside it.

My last album, *Empty in Space*, was composed after October 7.

At first, music had no place. Nothing held. The cruelty of what happened left me without words. And at the same time, I was hiding it from my daughters, trying to keep their world intact while burning inside.

Iddo Markus

One of the things I was hiding: Laor Avrahamov was gone. Laor was the son of my treasured friend David Avrahamov – 'DJ Dervish' – with whom I've shared a musical project for fifteen years. Dervish is a courageous inspiration: he poured his grief into music, creating spaces where people allow themselves to dance, release, pray, cry, and rejoice.

The first song I wrote was 'Waiting for a Miracle.' It opens with a daily repertoire of things that do me good – something I've developed over the years to pull myself back into myself. After a few months, something shifted. Out of a need to create a world I could stand to be in, I returned to art – to books, to music. Every insight that let me breathe, even for a moment, I turned into a song.

In crisis, things fall away.

Working on this album, and later on the set of Danny Abeckaser's film about October 7th, I felt the same thing as an actor. I stopped caring how I looked on camera, whether I was good or beautiful. I stayed with myself. There are places only grief can take you, unreachable from a comfortable or protected state.

I stopped caring how I looked on camera, whether I was good or beautiful. I stayed with myself. There are places only grief can take you, unreachable from a comfortable or protected state.

I made this album out of a need to heal – not to write a hit, not to sustain a career. I needed to find something that could hold me.

My husband produced the album, and working together became part of the recovery. It reminded us that healing is not always solitary. Sometimes it is built in partnership, in family, in choosing goodness again and again.

If something heals me, it can heal others.

We have been moving through the same fears, the same uncertainties, the same hopes. We went through this together. We might come out of it together.

Pain brings me closer to myself. It strips away what doesn't matter. Certain things simply lose their weight.

Empty in Space is dedicated to the memory of Laor. One of its songs is built from words his parents wrote after his death. I shaped them into 'We Know Nothing.'

During this war I have had the privilege of singing for people in the most extreme moments of their lives – and of witnessing what music can actually do.

At funerals. In rehabilitation wards. At memorial services.
I watched a wounded soldier come out of a five-month coma as the songs he loved were played – right there, *in front of me*.

I sang to children who had lost limbs and watched them stand up and dance.

I sang to mothers and fathers who allowed themselves, for a moment, to cry. To feel. To be held. When something in the music opens, I forget the pain. Time disappears. And when I sing for bereaved families, I see it happen for them too – that same disappearance, that same moment of release.

I believe in the goodness of people.

Some things are not ours to control. What remains is how we meet one another – with kindness, respect, a smile, a direct look, even when we disagree. Like the people who knocked on our door when we first arrived. Like the people I meet every day now.

Our diversity is not our weakness. It is our strength.

The more space we give to goodness, the better our chance of making it through this – a dark period that I hope demands a reordering of what we thought we knew.

The goodness of the human heart is my God. My compass and my way, taking me into the hospital rooms, the funerals, the places from which I would rather turn away.

Right now, I feel full of hope. It is fragile. But I choose to keep it close and move with it, gently.

Every day, with every breath.


Dafna Barzilay

First Person **Plural**

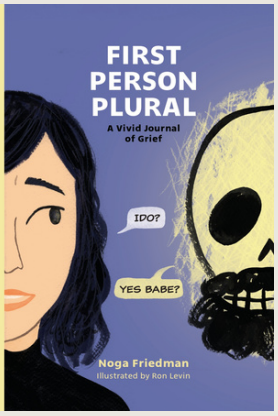
Noga Friedman

Despair, I've learned, is socially unacceptable, even forbidden, in desperate times. This much is clear. The dominant narratives in both the media and social media might begin with catastrophic descriptions of the situation we are in, but they almost invariably end with a 'however,' suggesting that not all hope is lost.

Despair is a difficult, an almost overwhelming, emotion. It is a drive-through feeling on the way to hope. Yet at this moment, it is the feeling most available to me, and I need to stop and park here for a moment.

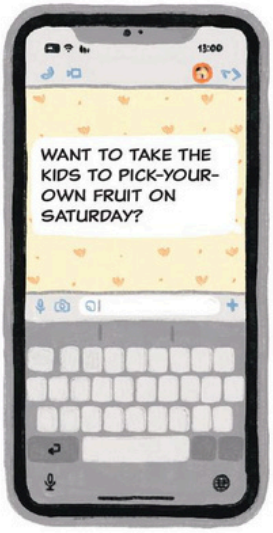
In the end, the intractability of the current government and the magnitude of the conflict itself does not allow us to imagine a different future. From here there are three possibilities: the first is radical hope, the capacity to imagine a different future even with little evidence that such a future is possible. The second is to cling to small hopes – a beautiful day, a moment of love, not too many missiles. And the third possibility, the one that is taboo, is to live with despair. Given my disposition, my life, despair is the most accessible emotion for me right now, the most available given my social and communal position. But then I see my child crying for his father who is gone, and I cannot stop myself from promising him that in the end it will be good. That is stronger than me.

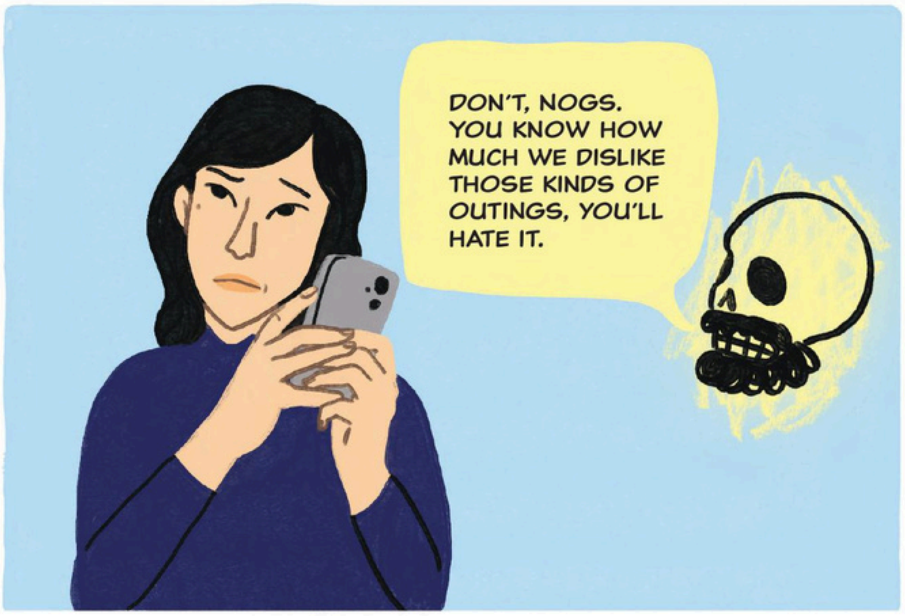
Noga Friedman is a sociologist, writer, and musician. Creator and subject of the 2025 documentary, *Nothing is Wrong*, Friedman released her debut album, '*With You / Without You*,' this year. She is also the author of the memoir *Days of Ruin*, as well as the graphic novel *First Person Plural* – written after her husband Ido was killed on October 7th, and who appears throughout as a bearded skull. The novel consists of their ongoing arguments through life and death: about grief, guilt, what it means to go on, what it means to ask for something from someone who is no longer there.



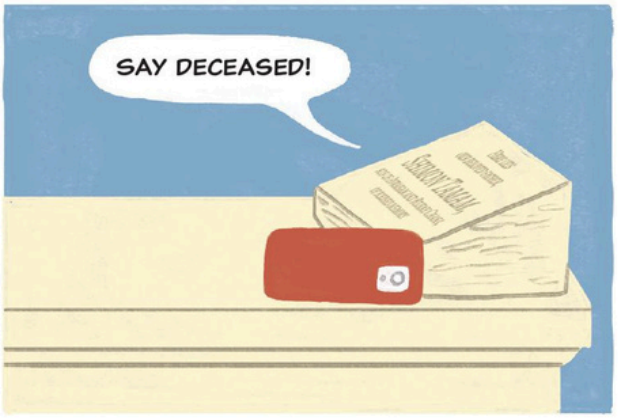
First Person Plural
by Noga Friedman
Illustrated by Ron Levin
Yuka Publishing House

Pick-Your-Own





A Gravy Visit



Passing

Dustin Flint

We have come to your domain.

Of your own free will but with purpose, to know the story of your premature exit.

Your apartment is dark, all the shades drawn in. We pull them back to let the yellows of the sun in. Shining light on your shadowed life behind the gray double-locked doors.

The green bowl full of tater tots tells me your last meal untouched. Your list on white paper for alcohol of 'both kinds' tells me you went to bed full of yellow beer and brown liquor.

New Balance shoes set beside your bed, still attached to your prosthetic leg as if you were about to go for a stroll. The bright white and gray tell me these shoes did little walking.

From your worn black chair in the corner, my eyes focus on a wooden carving on the shelf, a peg-leg and a black eyepatch. Is it you?

Standing at the helm of your gold-encrusted white-sailed ship, you take the fog and storm clouds head-on, determined, if necessary, to go down with the ship. Maybe your black eyepatch blurred your vision. Maybe, in your singular battle, you forgot your shipmates, the crew that rode the ship into the salty deep blue of tears to fight the white sharks without you.

We tell stories of the past like you're the hero of old to make us laugh and dry our eyes. We talk with the funeral home director in his black suit and Canadian accent about your wishes, though no burial at sea is on offer. He says I can't see you because your colors have changed. I picture you ashen gray in a black body bag and worry if you're taken care of.

You rode home with me, you in your black box, me in my dark blue truck and we talked. You enjoyed your son's cozy white house and are now carried in silver by a loving daughter.

It is fall now, we find a spot for you to rest next to the tree. Maybe the brown leaves match the used Dodge Colt you loved so much – the one big enough for us all to go swimming together. Maybe the red leaves match the fire in your eyes when you met our mothers and created us all. Maybe the orange and yellows will feel like sun on your face and warm you. Maybe someday you can let us know if you like it.

Tick–Tock: The Hope of the Hopeless

William Kolbrener

In the Samson story in Judges, the would-be savior of Israel, betrayed by his people, lies captive to the Philistines, bound and blinded, as the poet John Milton writes, 'eyeless in Gaza.'

In Rembrandt's vision – one of his four paintings of the life of the hero – Samson is pinned to the ground, immobilized beneath the armored weight of the Philistines.

To the left, a soldier's sword, thrust between Samson's legs, makes literal the symbolic castration, unmanned by the soldiers. Above him, Delilah stands composed, illuminated, serene, the severed locks of Samson's strength gathered in her hand. The dark drapery behind her flares outward, and for a moment she resembles an angel. Her shears hover, but the blinding has already occurred, Samson pinned from every side, chained, shorn, penetrated.

Delilah as angel, bearing a strange likeness to the heavenly intercessor in Rembrandt's *akeidah*, his binding of Isaac, announces the end of Samson's self-promoted candidacy as deliverer. This *too* is a moment of divine presence.

Samson, according to the ancient rabbis, is not the only one laboring under messianic delusions. In the midrash – storytelling as commentary – the patriarch Jacob, sees Samson's anointment at birth as nazir (one consecrated to God, through

abstaining from wine, leaving his hair uncut), as prelude to his messianic role.

But Jacob should have known better: though Samson's unnamed mother is from the tribe of Judah (from which the messiah is destined to come), his hapless father Manoah is from the tribe of Dan. No matter Samson's self-delusions, and Jacob's assent to them, Samson has the wrong tribe on his resume.

The patriarch envisions the theater, the Temple of Dagon, in which Samson is forced to 'play,' like a carnival clown for the jeering Philistines. The hero grabs hold of the two massive pillars, bringing the Temple down on himself and Philistines. Caught in an avalanche of stone, Samson lies dead among the Philistines, the covenantal promise he was meant to embody buried with him in the rubble.

With the epiphany of his misplaced faith, the patriarch halts and cries out:
'For Your salvation, God, I hope.' *Li'shu'aticha, kiviti...*

Samson's end is final, his own, yet Jacob continues to hope – the Hebrew word *kiviti* holds past and future together, both 'I have hoped' and 'I continue to hope.' The King James translators, sensitive to the ambiguity of tenses, choose 'wait,' stressing the continuity between past, present, and future. However impossible salvation may appear, Jacob refuses to stop hoping.

The sound that a clock makes: tick-tock, the beginning and end that gives the shape to cosmic history: the 'tick' of Genesis's 'In the beginning,' and the 'tock' of the messianic age. Samson mistakenly thinks that he has come, as deliverer, to announce the 'tock.' But it turns out he is just part of the story. But Jacob's hope remains, his faith in what Shakespeare's Lear calls the 'promised end,' ever distant, yet ever present. Jacob wants *mashiach* now, but he must wait. Hope sustains the end through the seemingly interminable interval, the time between the tick and the tock.

For Jacob *everything* depends on hope – *ha-kol b'kivui*. The death of Jewish martyrs is included in hope; generations of suffering as well. Death means something; our suffering is not for nothing. We do not claim to understand, but in the hope for the future we make the present – the interval between the tick and the tock – bearable.

Without hope the past is only a place of nostalgia, creating an empty present, leading into a future of meaningless repetition: 'tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.' But Jacob's hope tends toward a promised future, the tock, however delayed, that reaches backward to give meaning and direction to the present, even when the present feels hopeless.

Hope, then, is not the all-too-easy affirmation, as it is for bad politicians and religious readers, their cynicism masquerading as certainty, that we have reached the end. Not the role Samson wanted, but his story is a warning against the premature assertion that we have already arrived. Jacob's hope is not a political stance, but an orientation. Even when hopeless, when redemption is delayed, he hopes.

In his vision, Jacob sees Samson's body, lost under the ruins and corpses, his family despairing of giving him a proper burial. So Jacob prays, a kindness, that propels history forward. Samson is buried in the tomb of his father Manoah; Jewish history continues. Jacob's prayer is a mourner's *kaddish* for Samson, a protest of hope in the face of nihilism.

The messiah is dead. Long live the messiah.

The Jewish optimism of hopelessness – ***kiviti*** – the hope that remains after all hope is lost.

Tick…

Yael Ofir

On **Brand**

Aliza Licht

As a fashion industry veteran and former publicist, nearly every decision passed through the same question: was it 'on brand?' Every decision we made in luxury fashion was measured against brand filters and reinforced by strict brand guardrails. Then, when social media came on the scene, I began applying those same strategies to my online presence. So much so that I became a 'personal-branding expert' and wrote my second book, *On Brand*. I knew exactly what it meant.

That is, until October 7th.

Less than two weeks earlier, on September 26th, the grassroots 'End Jew Hatred' had messaged me, asking if I would make a video about why I believe it's important to fight antisemitism. My first thought was to check my neat little content pillars for social media. Fashion? No. Career advice? Nope. I politely declined and said it would be better to do it when I could 'tie it to something.' What I was really thinking was that it wasn't 'on brand' for me.

On the morning of October 7th, they wrote me again, and asked me to speak about the attacks in Israel. As the granddaughter of four Holocaust survivors, I felt I had no choice. How (ironically) convenient that I now had something to which to 'tie it.' I made my first video about the atrocities in Israel, and it went viral.

What happened next stunned me. I could not stop making videos, could not stop talking about what was unfolding. I became obsessed with the news – but more than that, completely uninterested in everything I had done before. I stopped promoting *On Brand*, which had come out only a few months earlier. I abandoned my career-advice podcast. I abandoned all my usual social media content. It became Israel and the news, 100% of the time, seven days a week, all day long.

The anti-Israel narrative shifted into high gear quickly, and I found myself focused on dispelling lies and propaganda, defending Israel as it tried to defend itself. I got deeper and deeper into this quagmire of content, going viral daily while receiving nearly as much hate in return. Still, I didn't stop.

As time passed, I began to realize that the fashion industry I had held so dear, along with many of my professional relationships, were slipping away. People were picking sides, and I wasn't on theirs.

But I didn't recognize myself either. I questioned everything. Who is making you do this 24/7? Why are you carrying the torch and trying to show others a path through the dark? You don't have to. This is destroying everything you built before. I gave myself countless reasons to stop. I didn't listen to a single one of them.

I kept thinking: what would my grandparents, who survived the concentration camps, expect me to do? What should I do for my children? The answer was easy. Being a Jewish activist wasn't previously 'on brand' for me, but all I had to do was shift my guardrails. And so I did.

My filter widened, and suddenly I was speaking not only about Israel and antisemitism, but geopolitics, political accountability, global threats, and civic integrity. I was leaning in so hard that I needed a way to make sense of it, so I put my branding hat back on and called the series 'The Daily Salad,' my curated commentary on global affairs.

Headlines were the ingredients, mixed with my analysis of the anti-Israel framing in the mainstream media. I became a dot-connector, searching for the hidden context beneath the headlines. I found myself becoming political – something I wrote in *On Brand* that I was *not*. Now, that felt like a lie. But what did not change was my guiding focus and force – the survival of the Jewish people and Israel. 'What starts with the Jews never ends with the Jews' was the message I kept pressing upon my community.

The answer was easy. Being a Jewish activist wasn't previously 'on brand' for me, but all I had to do was shift my guardrails. And so I did.

The 180° shift from who I was to who I had become happened fast and hard; I lost business, friends, and even mentors. At the same time, I found incredible new ones for the community I helped to create. But even more importantly, I experienced something like an epiphany: I stopped caring about the personal cost of standing up loudly. I no longer needed to be liked. As my grandparents would have understood, I became determined instead to do what is right.

And for the first time since October 7, 2023, I exhaled.

Naama Yiron

Like Wind **From the Sea**

Randi Skurka

Fields of golden wheat, red peppers plump
Cover earth burrows
Under rocket rain
Balloons of fire drift
Scorching

Words like flames whisper, pelt
Drip like poison, twisted
Cultivated, festering
Unravel
Protected

Blindness breached
Tides revolve
Thawing stagnation
Mending ravaged tapestries
Rendering them clean

The Bell and **The Siren**

Ronit Eitan

A long table. A wrinkled white tablecloth. Trendy eyeglasses. A smile.

7:30. Early morning. Central Tel Aviv.

I'm a visitor.

An interloper.

I registered a day before, paid my fee – my name is not on the list. A minor inconvenience. I click on the email, tilt my phone screen, a form of validation. 'What would you like it to say on your name tag?' he asks.

I begin listing my credentials.

'Content creator,' he decides – not me.

I sip my strong coffee, the flimsy paper cup barely containing the liquid, warming my fingertips. I step into the room. It is very bright – the kind of brightness found in operating theaters.

No clocks. Recycled air. Constant visibility.

Immediately, I am approached. Their eyes scan my tag – my job title becomes my name.

The woman dismisses me, moving on to the next person entering.

The young man stays.

'Hi, how are you? Content creator? Nice.'

'Yes.' I straighten, then deliberately relax my posture – you're comfortable here, my body is meant to project.

'I'm a chartered surveyor,' he says. Easy smile.

I smile back. I've never spoken to one. 'What is it they do? They come into your house, inspect the property, and give an estimate. That's it, right?' I say none of this.

'Is there an art to what you do?' I do say. 'Can you manipulate the numbers? Do you get interesting cases – something not cut and dry?'

What am I doing? This poor guy. So condescending – as if sitting at my computer at home, writing, wrestling with blank pages that judge me, is the essence of life.

A woman approaches him. Thank God.

'We need more chairs,' she says. He nods and leaves.

I scan the room. The long rectangular tables are arranged in a U-shape.

White chairs. A large screen. Plastic flowers in plastic vases. You can only sit where a visitor card is placed.

I place my bag on a seat.

'It's taken,' I hear from the left. I don't look up. Too many unfamiliar faces. It takes time to bring them into focus.

Eyes down, I move my bag. I take out my computer. Notes. Impressions. Thoughts.

'Good morning, everyone,' I hear. Every person in the room takes a seat, an automatic response.

'I'm not just the MC,' she continues after a calculated pause, 'but also a member.' It reminds me of commercials for toupées.

'Is there an art to what you do?' I do say. 'Can you manipulate the numbers? Do you get interesting cases – something not cut and dry?' What am I doing? This poor guy.

She is young, comfortable with the attention. Hair slicked back. Skirt a bit too tight.

'We each get thirty seconds to introduce ourselves.' She points to a woman seated beside her. 'I'm an interior designer.' She smiles.

'And I'm a physical therapist,' the other woman replies as she stands.

They've done this before – like a vaudeville act.

'I control the bell.' The physical therapist taps it – a silver, half-round restaurant bell.

Ping.

I straighten.

I'm attuned to this shrill sound from my time in the service industry. Back then, I longed to be on the other side – a paying customer, not the paid servant – part of the machine that manufactures a good time. But even though my bartending days are over, that ring still chases me to every restaurant, bar, café.

Certain sounds are forever programmed in us. Like a siren.

Emerging out of the white noise, it sounds at a traffic light, while we wait not so patiently for the red light to change. In between bites at home, in the pause between ideas, while tucking in our children, willing them to relax – because we are not.

Always lurking. Our ears are trained to pick up the shift – that elongated tune that starts off as a hiss, until the final up and down, up and down melody. Our national anthem.

The bell and the siren.

There is no returning to silence once you've heard the first siren, the first ring of a bell.

Ping.

A practiced laugh from the crowd follows.

I type on my computer 'bell vs. siren' while looking for the designated bomb shelter sign, the red arrow printed on it calming me.

One by one, they stand. Some walk to the center, rehearsed confidence in their steps. Others remain at their seats. Chairs scrape back. Hands clutching printed notes. A woman in the corner throws comments. Sometimes she draws a laugh; mostly she doesn't.

They introduce themselves, their job titles – a weekly ritual.

For us, the visitors, potential customers.

For them, the steady reduction of a life's occupation into a pitch. Adjusted, refined, optimized. Life reduced to a line. What's in a vocation?

A lawyer hands out mock eviction notices as a scare tactic.

Ping.

A beautician advocates permanent makeup – her promise is to save time. I'm insulted yet forced to acknowledge the logic. I spent ten minutes this morning on mascara alone. *Ping*.

An AI specialist plays a generated video showing his creativity. Isn't the purpose of AI to eliminate the need for an AI specialist?

Ping.


Inbal Gery

An accountant reminds us that most people have no pension. I'm a freelancer – it depresses me.

Ping.

Monitored personal stories. Fears. Intimidation. Converted into money transactions.

Ping.

My turn.

I'm sweating.

Why did I wear this stupid sweater?

I introduce myself, repeat my qualifications. What do I offer? I tell stories.

Do they find me lacking? I sneer inwardly. This cult – here purely for job opportunities. Where is the art? The raw interior?

Yet you're the one struggling. Burdened. They do this actively. Strategically. Money. They make money. I like money.

Ping.

'Don't forget to also schedule one-on-one meetings,' the MC says into the microphone after the last person introduces themselves.

Thirty people plus four different rotating visitors. Two hours here in this auditorium – coffee meetings outside in the real world on top of that – to get to know each other's occupations better. This is full-time, not a hobby.

The divorce lawyer beside me murmurs remarks to her partner – a mortgage consultant. I read it on his card. That's what the popular boy becomes. They snicker, yet participate.

I study their faces. I imagine drama, love, friction. None of it belongs here.

They sustain themselves – each is assigned a role.

A sex therapist sits on the welcome committee. A social media manager organizes the snacks. A man who owns a printing company vets newcomers.

A number appears in bold on the screen.

'This is how much we've made – *since September*,' the MC declares.

'We,' she addresses them.

'Us,' not you yet, is implied to us.

'Don't be passive. Go to your WhatsApp. See who you haven't contacted. Ask them: 'Do you need a lawyer? I have one. A sex therapist? A coach? I have one for you.'

This is not a suggestion. It will be tallied by the end of the session.

She lists their occupations again and what they still need – mostly manual labor. A plumber. A gardener. An electrician. High-value commodities in a high-tech world.

A plastic trophy is passed around the room.

Each person holds cards – one for each referral they made this week.

One by one they announce the name, the shekel amounts they earned, and their referrals while dropping the cards into the mouth of the trophy.

The bell is gone. Now they clap.

And clap.

Even for those who only scheduled one coffee meeting. They don't discriminate.

The trophy skips me.

For two hours, I measure my worth by the money I can generate.

The sex therapist's husband stands up and proudly reports that her income has quadrupled because of the group.

I feel a sudden hunger for money. Because then I will be content. Relaxed. Secure.

Or maybe this is what happens when life outside is saturated with threat – bombs, Iran, the collapse of us as a state and as a body.

This fluorescent-lit space is where nothing leaks in.

Where money becomes a rope – a way out of what waits beyond the room.

Lena Revenko

Sacrificial **Pieces**

Danila Botha

I was always barefoot in my Bubbe's kitchen where it was always at least ten degrees warmer than outside, the air so delightfully heavy I felt like I could reach out and hold it in my palms.

I loved the way the dough felt, the way it stretched, like thin elastic between my fingers. It made me feel like a duck with webbing, and when it had risen for an hour, I loved coming back and watching it double in size, then helping my grandmother to punch it back down. I could hit it as hard as I wanted to, using the full weight of my little fists.

My hands fit into hers and sometimes she'd hold them, oil and flour coating the insides of my palms like water and downy feathers.

The kitchen smelled like chicken and frying potatoes, like onions and spinach and soft grease and carrots, like caramelizing sugar and just a little bit of yeast.

My Bubbe's hands were strong with soft skin, tie-dyed with ribbons of indigo. She would paint her nails the bright hot pink of Bazooka bubble gum, but only after the challah we'd been working on had gone into the oven.

When we kneaded dough, our nails were the soft beige of litchi flesh.

Every week after I asked, she painted mine, with top and bottom coat too, and held a little electric fan up to them after to help them dry faster.

Until I was four or five, I stood on a step ladder to reach the counter, her hands hanging loosely over mine, teaching me. My bare feet slid on the white plastic step-stool, until I came up with a solution; I took a little extra dough and put it under each heal, felt the soft sticky squelch of warmth stopping me from falling. When she discovered what I'd done, she laughed and laughed, her voice filling the enormous space until she took me to wash my feet, then lent me a pair of scratchy grey wool socks.

They also did the trick.

'The dough has the potential,' she used to say, 'to be shaped into anything. Look how big it can grow. Look how much it can stretch.'

When she finished braiding hers, and teaching me how to braid mine, she'd pull a hunk off the end, take a half for herself, and give the other half to me. I'd roll it between my fingers as she said the blessing on the sacrificial piece. And rather than burn it when we cooked the challahs, she'd put these sacrificial pieces – the *hafrashot* – into a giant Ziploc bag and stuff it into the back of the freezer. Once a year, before Passover, we'd burn the *hafrashot* of the previous year in one satisfying go.

And rather than burn it when we cooked the challahs, she'd put these sacrificial pieces – into a giant Ziploc bag and stuff it into the back of the freezer.

I was never into any of the ceremonial pre-Passover stuff. I never loved searching the house for leftover bread products from the year, collecting or burning them, but I loved our ritual. When I was twelve, she told me to think of all the *hafrashot* as past regrets, things I wanted to erase and as we watched them burn, she whispered, 'see, now they're gone, *Mamaleh*.'

I never knew for sure what she regretted. There were photos of her and my grandfather in their youth, when he looked tall and fair and athletic, playing squash and tennis, and she had dark hair, pouty candy-apple red lips and fitted swing-dresses in pastel shades. It was a long way from the man in loose button-down shirts with pens staining his pockets, and the full-figured woman in loose, muted linen dresses and a shiny golden wig, who were friendly if distant from each other, who my mother said often used to argue, but who I mostly saw sitting in companionable silence.

My mother told me that when she was little, there'd been a fourth daughter, a daughter born with severe developmental delays. They never knew why – if it was medication she took that they later found out wasn't safe, or the natural birth itself, made necessary by three previous Caesarians. Maybe it was the oxygen Hadassah lost at birth. They did so many tests, but the word doctors kept using was 'random.' She was two years before she could sit on her own, three or four before she could speak or walk around. Did my Bubbe regret moving her to a children's home when she was seven and only visiting her once a week on a Sunday? Did she blame herself when a fire broke out, more randomness, an act of arson everyone said, and all the kids, including Hadassah, were gone?

If we talked about distress, it was always mine. I brought her the dramas of adolescence: two best friends who stopped getting along and forced me to choose, a boy I liked but could not speak to,

a failed test that ended with me cutting and pasting her signature onto my paper and then acting surprised when the school caught me.

After she died, when I was twenty-seven, I pulled the half-full bag of *hafrashot* from the back of her freezer and stuffed into the back of mine where it lay untouched for years.

When Warren left on his last business trip, I pulled them out, along with the single piece of our white-chocolate wedding cake, carefully wrapped in tin foil as if we'd been waiting one day to savour it together.

I thought about the night we got married, at my Bubbe's synagogue, the way my mother and Bubbe and I danced and swirled and sweated, the way my Bubbe pulled me close and whispered, may your heart always be filled with this love, may it stretch and expand just like dough.

Before he asked me to marry him, Warren bought me a watch because it drove him crazy that I was always late for everything. For our second anniversary, he got me a gym membership, because I'd been complaining that I'd gained weight.

I had so many regrets, more than the number of freckles that dotted Warren's carefully shaven neck. I'd always been too comfortable with deception. When my school caught me forging my Bubbe's signature, I was irritated that I'd been caught, that I'd have to explain myself to my parents, who were in the middle of finally getting divorced.

'Go for stability,' my mom always said. 'Go for the guy you know will always be there.'

'He's a good one,' my father told me, immediately after meeting him. 'Hang on to that guy.'

When Warren started travelling for work, I assumed he was cheating. There was William, who was my department head, a poet with two PhDs with whom I had unexpectedly intense debates. A Buddhist, with a long-time partner, William did not believe in strict monogamy. I wasn't sure if it was real attraction or curiosity, but there was enough friction, hot and cold mixed signals, to occupy my mind while my body tried to enjoy myself. I tried to open up to him once, and he told me I was all over-the-place, too unfocused to know what I wanted.

After that, I told him not to lecture me about *tantra*, I told him that the way our bodies were moving was its own kind of meditation, and he liked that, I think. All the yoga made him limber and he was as cold as he always was after, which was the way I wanted it, satisfaction with no lingering after-thoughts.

But I did wonder if all relationships could be distilled to such simplicity.

I thought about another colleague, Natalie, who everyone loved. She could be warm and friendly, but also with the same tone, devastatingly cutting.

We were both nominated for excellence in teaching awards, but she won, acted shocked even though everyone had told her she was a shoo-in. We both applied for the same tenure-track job, and she got it even though I'd been in the job for a few years longer than she had. But as she pointed out, not everyone can get something more permanent. Some people spend their whole careers adjuncting, and there's no shame in that. I heard her words every time I considered applying for another job, or every time I did but failed to get beyond a first interview.

I thought about my Bubbe and the way we used to bake. I still had her Ziploc bag in the back of my freezer. I thought about everything; my inertia, the depths of my dissatisfaction.

I went to the grocery store on my way home from work, picked up a dozen eggs, dry yeast and flour, white sugar and canola oil, as if I did it every week.

The recipe came back to me like muscle memory. I knew I'd be bringing loaves of bread into the staff room tomorrow, that this was just about sacrificial pieces.

I looked for paper and found an extra copy of one of my course syllabi. I tore off ten tiny scraps, and I wrote down everything I wished I could take back: marrying Warren, staying with him, getting involved with William, letting myself get crushed by Natalie instead of believing that I deserved what I'd worked for as much as she did.

I searched the house for a lighter and eventually found a small box of matches and an ancient bag of tea lights. I knew my Bubbe would be sad to know I hadn't lit Shabbat candles in years.

I added it to the list, along with so many things I hadn't done or said or even thought enough about to wish for.

After the bread was baked, I gathered the discarded pieces in the sink, the old, semi-frozen ones, the new ones that were still hot to the touch. I thought about the things my Bubbe might have regretted, and I wondered if it helped her, if it was enough to only do this once a year.

I folded each piece of paper as tiny as I could and I folded them into the dough, then I watched them burn. When my fire alarm went off, I turned on both faucets.

It was a small thing, but as smoke filled my kitchen, I felt a kind of relief I had not known in years. I could almost hear my Bubbe's laugh, almost feel her soft hand on my shoulders as I exhaled.


Elisa Albert

Doula

Elisa Albert

'There's this family in Pardes Chana,' my cousin tells me. 'The eldest daughter was killed at Nova. The eldest son is in the reserves; he's in Gaza now. The father is also in reserves and going back and forth to Lebanon. There are three younger children still at home with the mother. One of the younger kids has mental and behavioral challenges. The mother can't cope. She is my friend's sister-in-law's friend. We've been organizing people to go stay with the family; help out around the house; support the kids and the mother however they need. And they need. A lot.'

'Why are you telling me this?

'Because there's nobody scheduled the next few nights. It's a little bit of a crisis. Nobody can do it. And I'm warning you: it's a real shit show.'

'You want me to do it?' I am currently managing a very busy schedule of hanging out on the beach, getting coffee with friends, and exploring south Tel Aviv on foot. War trauma best kept contained to Saturday night protests and Instagram.

'*Nu*, you're a doula, aren't you? So go be a doula.'

'I'm a birth and postpartum doula.'

'You think it's any different? Just go and help the mother. Go listen to her and be her friend and feed everyone and clean up a little bit and help her rest and do whatever there is to do, whatever they need you to do. Take care of the younger kids. Just go and be there. You don't even have to make the food, just pick it up and bring it.'

'They want a perfect stranger staying in their house?' – I say, still trying to get out of it.

'They want not to be eaten alive by pain. They want not to be abandoned to their own private hell. That's what they want. She needs somebody else in the house. Another adult. They just need not to be left alone. You understand. Nu? So you're a doula! So *go doula*.'

'For a couple nights?'

'For a couple nights. You sleep in the *mamad*. There's a cot. It's awful.'

'I mean… Okay?'

I arrive three hours later to a house that is a mess like no mess I ever saw.

There is no rhyme or reason. There is stuff everywhere, none of it belongs anywhere, nothing is anywhere you might want it to be. An explosion of stuff, everywhere.

The mom is my age. I never actually catch her name, which is weird, but it doesn't matter, because we barely need language. Her English is bad and my Hebrew is worse. We communicate in looks and gestures.

The younger kids are in their beds, zoned-out on tablets. They don't look me in the eye the whole time I'm there.

There's a dog and two cats and everything smells. The dog desperately needs exercise and entertainment, so I walk him a lot, even get one of the kids to come along once.

There's food scattered all around the kitchen, some of it looks to have been sitting out on counters for days. There are house flies and fruit flies.

I organize a bookcase – 'Ikea,' she tells me proudly, but won't let me throw anything out.

'I love Ikea,' I say, in Hebrew, and this is our longest conversation.

I clean and tidy. She doesn't acknowledge me much, but mutters vaguely in my direction.

The kids have meltdowns like clockwork. They act much younger than they are, scream *IMA!* with terrifying regularity, whining and crying and slamming around.

I walk the dog and set the table and wipe the table down and do the dishes and load the dishwasher and unload the dishwasher and clean the dishwasher and run the dishwasher and put away the clean dishes but first clean the cabinets and drawers. She watches me, circling me, muttering her strange monologue, and I pretend like I am listening to her. I nod occasionally, and meet her gaze whenever I can, which isn't often, as her eyes are so wild and fleeting.

I do the laundry, and sweep up, and make piles, and when she's not looking I throw things away, as much as I can.

The cot in the *mamad* is actually kind of peaceful. When I shut the door I can't hear any of the screaming *IMA*s, nor the barking dog, nor the half-insane muttering, nothing at all. And there's no light, so I sleep dreamlessly and deep and late, wake feeling more rested than I have in months. I like being marginal, invisible, irrelevant.

What am I doing here, I wonder, my feet cold on the floor tiles first thing in the morning? The cot in the *mamad* turns out to have been the bed of the eldest daughter, the one who died at Nova. I somehow only realize this before sleep on the second night.

After that, I do not sleep so well.

Nagori

Solape Adetutu Adeyemi

Evening settles over the compound like a warm blanket. The orange light from the setting sun slides across cracked cement, touching the hibiscus bush you planted by the gate. The flowers lean toward the last of the day, soft red against the fading sky. I hear the call to prayer from the distant mosque, a long, low sound that seems to stretch the hour. The air smells of wood smoke and roasted corn from the roadside. Children are still playing ten-ten, their laughter running like water along the dusty street.

You are not here. Still, I feel you everywhere. The old wooden chair where you used to sit creaks when the wind moves. Your napkin hangs behind the door, catching a bit of breeze, almost like breath. I carry a small piece of your voice inside me, the way a river keeps the shape of a stone long after it has rolled away.

People say life goes on. It does. The neighbours fry *akara*, the radio plays a highlife song, the night market glows with lamps. But there is a thin layer of yesterday resting on all these things. This is *nagori* – the aftertaste of a season that has ended. It is not sharp. It is slow, like the soft hum left after a drumbeat.

I sit on the veranda and let the dark come. The stars rise over the mango tree, patient and far. I remember your stories, the way you laughed, the way you called my name when I was small. The memories do not leave; they stay like the smell of rain on dry soil. They are gentle and heavy at the same time. I breathe them in because they are all I have, and because they tell me you were here, and some part of you still is.

Artists' **Corner**

We asked two of our artists about creating within a crisis, their individual process, and are they hopeful?

Lena Revenko – Cover Artist

'Third Man Factor'

In times of crisis, I find myself creating less and less – especially when the world contracts and I'm confined to home. There are moments when work like mine feels pointless, even unnecessary. But as soon as the smallest exhale becomes possible, something shifts. The desire to act returns, and with it, hope and a sense of meaning. I begin to remember who I am and what I wanted to say through my paintings. I try to hold on to that feeling tightly, because once I do, things start to move – ideas surface, plans for exhibitions, collaborations, new projects. That's when I understand that the work was never really separate from survival; it's part of how I find my way back to myself. Hope is something real, something you can lean on in order to keep breathing, and keep creating.

Elad Mualem

'Birds of Freedom' – page 49

For me, creating art during a crisis is a way of finding quiet within noise. In 'Freedom,' the birds move around the figure, creating a sense of peace and balance that can be difficult to hold onto in daily life. Even when the world feels fractured, art gives me the space to paint beauty and make room for connection. I remain hopeful. As an artist and a father, I see illustrating dreams as part of that hope – a way of keeping light and possibility alive.


Elad Mualem

www.writingonthewall.io

OPEN CALL

Our next issue

LOVE

LOVE filtered through experience,
longing, memory, expression,
distance, grief, desire,
and devastation.

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE?

We are looking for essays, fiction,
poetry, photographs, visual art,
and hybrid work that explore
LOVE and its consequences.

Up to 1000 words

Deadline August 1

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Email info@writingonthewall.io

Tamar Zolberg

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Hope/Exhale Playlist
In Four Acts

I.

- Independence Day – *Elliott Smith*
- Bending Hectic – *The Smile*
- Ain't No Sunshine – *Noga Friedman*
- God Give Me Strength – *Elvis Costello & Burt Bacharach*

II.

- Bridge Over Troubled Water – *Simon & Garfunkel*
- Redemption Song – *Bob Marley*
- הלוואי *(I Hope)* – *Peer Tasi*
- שוב קמה בלילה *(Getting Up Again At Night)* – *Nunu*

III.

- What a Wonderful World – *Louis Armstrong*
- מונסון (Monsoon) – *Berry Sakharof*
- Stairway to Heaven – *Led Zeppelin*
- Heal the World – *Michael Jackson*

IV.

- Ain't No Mountain High Enough – *Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell*
- חזקים ביחד (Stronger Together) – *Marina Maximilian*
- Michelle – *Noam Betton*
- שוב לצאת (Stepping Out Again) – *Alma Gov*

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Karen Reiffman

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Murodjon Temirov born in 1989, is a young Uzbek painter and educator, depicting inner beauty.

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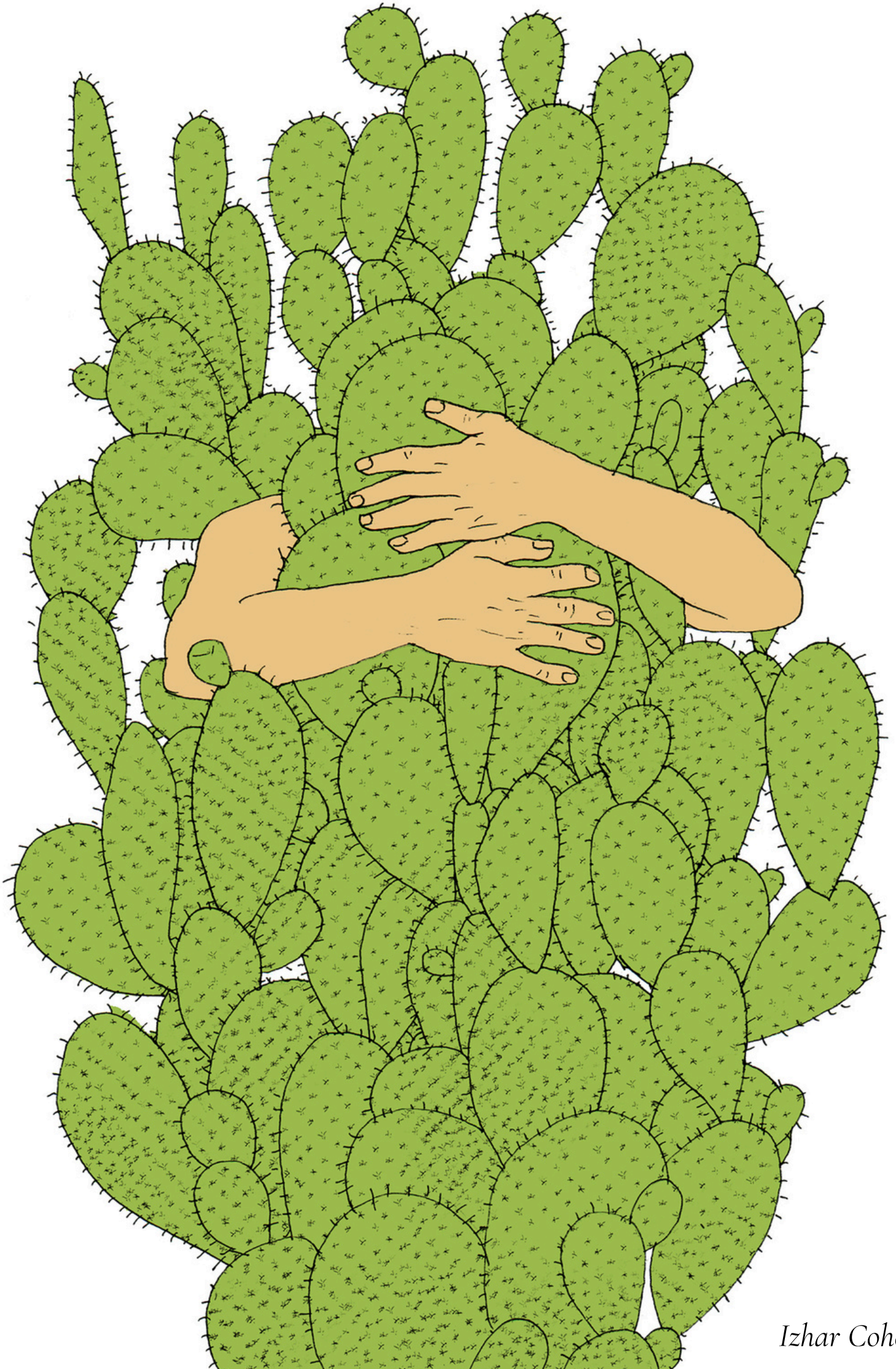

Izhar Cohen