

METAMORPHOSES

YARDENNE GREENSPAN

REVIEW: EREZ BITTON, *YOU WHO CROSS MY PATH*, translated from the Hebrew by Tsipi Keller. BOA Editions, Ltd. Rochester, NY, 2015. ISBN 978-1-938160-87-5; E-book 1-978-1-938160-88-2

As Eli Hirsch points out in his clear, concise, and riveting introduction to *You Who Cross My Path*, Israeli poet Erez Bitton is in the business of bridging gaps: First, the gap between muted Mizrahi culture and writing, hidden away in peripheral and developing towns, and the Ashkenazi axiom of what is considered “true Israeli.” Second, the gap between the shadow world of the blind and the mythology of eye sight or spiritual sight. Now heralded as the father of Mizrahi poetry, Bitton’s breakthrough voice was recognized rather late in his life, when he won this year’s Israel Prize in Literature.

This victory is part of an overarching renaissance of Mizrahi-Israeli voices in recent years; a renaissance which includes such writers and poets as Ronit Matalon, Adi Keisar, and Dudu Boosy, to name just a few. I often speak of being Israeli as a continual process of waking up, a blurriness growing clearer. For many young Ashkenazi Israelis like me, part of this awakening has involved realizing the pervasiveness of the common narrative—Europe, pogroms, the Holocaust, the kibbutz—and the fact that it does not apply to everyone in our country. There is another part of Israel that has been forced to take the backstage and pretend that our story is their story, though they came from other parts of the world—from Northern Africa, central Asia, the Middle East—and in spite of the fact that they have always had to fight to prove that they belong in Israel just as much as everyone else.

Erez Bitton’s poetry is illuminating in more ways than one. Through his meditations on sightlessness, he delivers the gift of sight. He builds bridges between all we think we know and all we cannot see. Having lost his eyesight as a boy when a stray hand grenade found in a field by his house exploded in his face, Bitton shows the way in which the invisibility of the world to the eyes of the blind in turns renders the blind invisible to the world in poems such as *You Who Cross My Path*:

You
who cross my path
and do not greet me
know that to me you do not exist
and therefore

when you come my way
 say hello to me
 and each one of you
 will be my friend

Undoubtedly, invisibility expands to become the overarching theme of many of Bitton's subjects. Throughout many of the poems he conveys the unseen, forgotten nature of both his neighborhood and community in the small, decrepit city of Lod, and the oblivion of Mizrahi heritage and culture. His poems are filled with creatures and places, both anonymous and well-known, that only he seems capable of seeing clearly: from the seeing-eye dog giving up his wild tendencies for the benefit of the blind, to the people buried in the Lod cemetery and a famous Moroccan singer who used to perform for the king only to immigrate to Israel and waste away in low-income housing.

Indeed the simplicity and directness with which he describes this landscape is heartbreaking. With few words he conveys an entire cosmos of hurt. Such small breathtaking moments include this, from *The Poem of the Cane*: And when they leave me/down the winding street/only I remain/a child afraid of the cane; or this, from *Not to See Granada*: I say to you:/this is how I miss out on your beauty/I live beside it as if beside a rumor/and you miss out on your beauty/and you miss out on living your own life/beside me; or this, from *Voices*: You who transformed stale air/into the breath of mountains/into the scents of distant gardens/still remain unsolved/and we are unsolved.

However, as Hirsch points out in his introduction, Bitton is not a "Homer-like seer." Rather than find spiritual significance or mythological powers in his blindness, Bitton simply writes "the poetry of the blind, faithful to his life experience and contending with a loss that cannot be denied." His outlook is compassionate, but also, at times, bleak. To Erez Bitton, the world is a hard place that is simultaneously sweet and filled with good intentions gone awry.

My particular reading experience was colored not only by my identity as an Israeli, an Ashkenazi Jew, and a person who lives mostly among the seeing, but also as a translator, mostly of fiction, who occasionally takes on a poetry translation project with more than a little dread. Reading the original Hebrew side by side with the English, I was able to assess the choices made by translator Tsipi Keller and compare them to what I believe I would have done in her place. While Keller makes some brilliant choices of words and sounds—"the sweeping charge of the hunt," "the pudence of ashes," "skinny noodles spiced with pepper"—there were

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several poems in which she elected to forego rhyming for the sake of precise word choice, and in which I feel that I might have done the opposite, or where I felt that she picked longer or more complex translations that, in my eyes, distracted from the burning simplicity of the original poetry (for instance, when she writes “I don’t tell him that one can discern his crossed eyes even in his voice,” where I would have stayed closer to the Hebrew, which makes the synesthetic statement “I don’t tell him that one can see his crossed eyes even in his voice.”)

It is nevertheless undeniable that Keller has achieved an enormous feat in translating this comprehensive collection, presenting Bitton’s trajectory through several books of poems, and recreating the painful, yet hopeful voice of a man forced to feel like a foreigner in his land by preserving some of the original Hebrew and Arabic within the translation. One decision of hers that I particularly admire is the removal of translations of Arabic words from within the body of the poem (where they appear in Hebrew) to footnotes at the bottom of the page, where they are no longer able to distract from the tantalizing power of the poet feeling and thinking them. In publishing this selection of poems, BOA Editions has created a full, aggressively passionate introduction to the poetry of Erez Bitton.

PDF | The present paper analyzes the various approaches to translating the Bible into English. The differences concern denominational traditions, | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate.Â also the language of The New Testament. The archaic Hebrew language from the Semitic family was similar to and derived. from other ancient Afro-Asiatic and Semitic languages: Chaldean, also called Babylonian, and Phoenician. Aramaic resulted from the mingling of many foreign elements with Hebrew.Â 179). The Bible contains from twenty-two to eighty-one books, depending on the accepted. version. The Hebrew Scriptures only consist of what Christians call The Old Testament Erez Bitton, Tsipi Keller (Goodreads Author) (Translation), Eli Hirsch (Introduction). 4.57 Â Rating details. Â 7 ratings Â 2 reviews.Â The 2015 recipient of the Israel Prize, Erez Bitton was born in 1942 to Moroccan parents in Oran, Algeria, and emigrated to Israel in 1948. Blinded by a stray hand grenade in Lod, he spent his childhood in Jerusalem's School for the Blind. He is considered the founding father of Mizrahi Israeli poetry in Israelâ€”the first poet to take on the conflict between North African immigrants and the Ashkenazi society, and the first to use Judeo-Arabic dialect in his poetry. ...more.Â Paperback, 200 pages. Published November 10th 2015 by BOA Editions Ltd. More Details ISBN. 1938160878 (ISBN13: 9781938160875). Other Editions (1). Tsipi Keller was born in Prague, raised in Israel, and has been living in the U.S. since 1974. The author of nine books, she is the recipient of several literary awards, including National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellowships, New York Foundation for the Arts fiction grants, and an Armand G. Erpf award from Columbia University.Â In addition to Erez Bitton's You Who Cross My Path (BOA Editions), her selected volume of Raquel Chalfi's poems, Reality Crumbs, will be published in 2015 (SUNY Press). Eli Hirsch is a poet, editor, and literary critic. Born in Petach Tikva in 1962, he published his first poems in 1979, and holds a graduate degree in Philosophy from Tel Aviv University.Â ISBN-10 : 1938160878. Dimensions : 5.9 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches. Find thousands of books to read online and download free eBooks. Discover and read free books by indie authors as well as tons of classic books. Browse categories to find your favorite literature genres: Romance, Fantasy, Thriller, Short Stories, Young Adult and Childrenâ€™s Booksâ€| There are eBooks for everyone. Free eBooks (BookRix only). eBooks for Sale. Popular categories: Fantasy Romance Thriller Fiction Science Fiction Juvenile Fiction ...more. This edition takes on a more global perspective with many new authors offering fresh outlooks on each topic. Clinical features of rabies in humans and animals are discussed as well as basic science aspects, molecular biology, pathology, and pathogenesis of this disease. Current methods used in defining geographic origins and animal species infected in wildlife are presented, along with diagnostic methods for identifying the strain of virus based on its genomic sequence and antigenic structure.Â Rabies is the most current and comprehensive account of one of the oldest diseases known that remains a significant public health threat despite the efforts of many who have endeavored to control it in wildlife and domestic animals.