

CIYCL International Yiddish-Into-English Poetry Translation Contest

By Miri Koral, CIYCL Director

The winner of the Fifth Annual Intl. Yiddish-Into-English Poetry Translation Contest is Dr. Michael Steinlauf, Assoc. Prof. of History and Director of the Holocaust Studies Program at Gratz College, Phila., PA, for his translation of Avrum Sutzkever's poem, "Lid Fun Togbukh" / "Poem From a Diary (1974)".

Honorable mentions go to last year's winner, Lena Watson of London, England, for her translation of "Di Balade Funem Blendenish Un Di Tsvey Brigantn" / "The Ballad of the Blinding Light and the Two Brigands" by Itzik Manger, and to Dr. Robert Freedman, for his translation of "Dos Lid Funem Tsigele" / "The Song of the Little Goat".

There were 20 entries from the U.S., England, France, Australia, Canada. Dr. Kathryn Hellerstein assisted

the judging. Dr. Hellerstein was the winner of the second annual CIYCL translation contest. The contest is co-sponsored by CIYCL and the IAYC. CIYCL Director, Miri Koral, announced the winner at the IAYC Conference in Millbrae, CA. The translation and original poem are on the CIYCL website, www.yiddishinstitute.org.

Avrum Sutzkever (1913-2010) was the greatest Yiddish poet of modern times. He is known for his resistance during the Nazi occupation of Vilna. Many of his works commemorate the destroyed Jerusalem of Lithuania (Vilna). His works are known for their musicality of language, with themes that celebrate nature and the human spirit, with probing ideas on philosophy, creativity, and spirituality. He lived most of his life in Israel and died in January of this year.

Poem From a Diary (1974)

By Avrom Sutzkever (1913-2010)

Translated by Michael Steinlauf

Who will last?
And what will last?
A breeze,
a blindman's blindness when he's passed,
sea-sign,
strand of foam,
a cloud caught up on its way home.

Who will last?
And what will last?
A single sound,
creation-grassed,
greening and unbound.
A fiddle rose stands tall.
Seven grasses of the grasses
will understand it all.

More than all the stars
north-strewn down to here,
a star will last
that falls into nothing but a tear.
In its jug a drop of wine stands true.
Who will last?
God will last.
Not enough for you?

ליד פון טאגבוך (1974)

פון אברהם סוצקעווער (1913-2010)

ווער וועט בלייבן, וואָס וועט בלייבן
בלייבן וועט אַ ווינט
בלייבן וועט די בלינדקייט פֿונעם בלינדן
וואָס פֿאַרשווינד
בלייבן וועט אַ סימן פֿונעם ים: אַ שנירל שוים
בלייבן וועט אַ וואָלקנדל פֿאַרטשעפעט אויף
אַ בוימ.

ווער וועט בלייבן, וואָס וועט בלייבן
בלייבן וועט אַ טראַף
בראשיתדיק אַרויסצוגראַזן ווידער זיין באַשאַף
בלייבן וועט אַ פֿידלרוז לכּבֿוד זיך אַליין
זיבן גראַזן פֿון די גראַזן וועלן זי פֿאַרשטיין.

מער פֿון אַלע שטערן אַזש פֿון צפֿון ביז אַהער
בלייבן וועט דער שטערן וואָס ער פֿאַלט אין
סאַמע טרער
שטענדיק וועט אַ טראַפּן וויין אויך בלייבן אין
זיין קרוג
ווער וועט בלייבן, גאָט וועט בלייבן
איז דיר ניט גענוג?