



Words in My Lovesick Blood: Poems by Haim Gouri

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Haim Gouri has been a major figure in Israeli literature since the War of Independence in 1948-1949. The poems collected in *Words in My Lovesick Blood*, in their original Hebrew and in English translation, introduce Gouri to English-speaking readers and reflect the range of Gouri's extraordinary achievement as a modernist poet from the 1940s to the 1990s.

In his work, Gouri documents the spirit of the Palmah generation, the generation that effectively established the State of Israel. His voice is not especially patriotic or heroic, but surpassingly humane, testimony to a lyrical mythic and sensual imagination, a complicated and striking Mediterranean sensibility, and a subdued awareness of the tragic facts with which the Jews and the Middle East have had to cope over a lengthy and intricate history. The Hebrew Bible and Greek mythology have a presence in his oeuvre, as does the Nazi Holocaust.

Influenced by such Hebrew poets as Yonatan Ratosh, Uri Zvi Greenberg, and Natan Alterman, French symbolist poets Jules Laforgue, Paul Verlaine, and Guillaume Apollinaire, and Russian poets Akhmatova, Pasternak, and Mandelstam, Gouri also reveals his interior life in his poems-his loves, regrets, doubts, and above all the charm in the magic of his poetic vision. In *Words in My Lovesick Blood*, readers will discover an eloquent and civilized means of experiencing the innumerable vicissitudes of Israeli existence.

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