

AUTUMN 2011

NON-FICTION

**THE ALEPPO CODEX:  
A True Story of Obsession,  
Faith and the Ruthless Pursuit  
of an Ancient Bible**

**Matti Friedman**

USA: Algonquin Books

Germany: Herder Verlag

Israel: KZBD

MAY 2012

*"The Aleppo Codex could be read as a thriller. It could also be read as a history of the Jewish people, or as a meditation on history and myth... This great book comes closer to containing everything than any book I've read in a long, long time."*

*Jonathan Safran Foer*

Matti Friedman's book is an account of his investigation into the remarkable story of one of the world's most precious manuscripts: **The Aleppo Codex**, the most perfect copy of the Hebrew Bible.

Written a millennium ago by a scribe at the Sea of Galilee, the codex was stolen by the Crusaders, ransomed by Jews and spirited from Jerusalem to Egypt, where it was studied by the great Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides. In the fourteenth century, it was brought to the Syrian trading city of Aleppo, where it was concealed in an ancient synagogue for six hundred years. In November, 1947, when the United Nations voted to create the state of Israel, a mob of Syrian rioters burned the synagogue, and the codex seemed to have vanished.

Based on extensive documentary evidence, most of it never before published, as well as hundreds of hours of interviews, this extraordinary book uncovers the true story of what happened to the codex. Torn from its hiding place, the manuscript was thrown into the turbulence of the twentieth-century Middle East, smuggled across borders, lied about and fought over.

**The Aleppo Codex** follows the trail from Aleppo to Jerusalem and then to London and New York, through a dramatic trial, two thefts, and a murder. The cast includes Mossad agents, antiquities dealers and collectors, rabbis, and scholars with something to hide. Friedman, an AP correspondent, tells the fascinating story of how the codex came back to its current home in Jerusalem, and unravels an enduring mystery surrounding the codex – the disappearance of some two hundred of its priceless pages – and brings the investigation to an unexpected conclusion.

**Matti Friedman** is a correspondent with The Associated Press. He has reported from Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Egypt, the former Soviet republic of Georgia, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere, and currently covers religion and archaeology in Israel and the Palestinian territories. He was born in Toronto and lives in Jerusalem.

**THE UNMAKING OF ISRAEL**

**Gershom Gorenberg**

USA: HarperCollins

A penetrating and provocative argument that the balance of power in Israel has shifted toward extremism.

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In **The Unmaking of Israel**, noted historian and political analyst Gershom Gorenberg contends that by settling the territories it occupied in the Six-Day War, and by linking state, settlement and synagogue, Israel has crippled its democracy and eroded the rule of law.

Based on meticulous research, which included access to previously classified documents, **The Unmaking of Israel** is a thoughtful, powerful and deeply personal critique and a call for the creation of a new civil Israeli identity that can be shared by Jews and Arabs alike.

*“This is a passionate plea for the future of Israel as a Jewish and democratic country. A gifted and well-informed writer, Gorenberg offers a fresh and hopeful view of how Israel could be itself again. A large number of Israelis share Gorenberg’s views, but their voices are rarely heard abroad, which is why this book will fascinate every true friend of Israel.”*

Tom Segev, author of *1967* and *One Palestine Complete*

*“Remarkably insightful . . . A groundbreaking revision that deserves to reframe the entire debate . . . It soars.”*  
Jonathan Tepperman, *The New York Times Book Review*

*“Gershom Gorenberg has given us a meticulously researched, dispassionate and highly readable history of how Israel slipped into the settlement of occupied lands. The Accidental Empire is an invaluable guide to one of the Middle East’s most complex issues and will puncture illusions on all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”*  
Jackson Diehl, *The Washington Post*

Post

*“From the author of the path-breaking book, The Accidental Empire, about Israel’s disastrous settlement policy, comes this cri de coeur that not only discusses how it all went wrong but what can be done about it. It is a book that is sure to have a strong impact on future developments in Israel and the region.”*  
Raja Shehadeh, Palestinian intellectual and author of *Strangers in the House*, *Palestinian Walks* and *A Rift in Time: Travels with my Ottoman Uncle*

**Gershom Gorenberg** is one of the leading writers on Israel and a noted commentator on the Middle East. He is the author of *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967–1977*; *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*; and the coauthor of a 1996 biography of Yitzhak Rabin, *Shalom Friend*, which won the National Jewish Book Award. His appearances have included *Fresh Air*, *Nightline*, *60 Minutes*, *Dateline*, CNN and BBC. Gorenberg has written for the *Atlantic*, the *New York Times Magazine*, the *New York Review of Books*, *Foreign Policy*, and *Ha’aretz*.

The author lives in Jerusalem with his wife, and their three children.

**BERNIE AND ELLIS**  
**Ellis Cohen-Pareira & Shula Bitran**  
Israel: HaKibbutz-HaMeuhad  
Holland: Balans  
English translation sample available

Scheveningen, Holland, December, 1945: Ellis Cohen-Paraira, a young Dutch Jewish woman who has survived the war, is putting on her wedding dress. She is about to marry a soldier from Palestine. A package arrives for her in the mail. Inside is the diary of Bernie Spier. Bernie was her love, the passion of her life in Europe, but he has not emerged from the war, and his fate is unknown. Now, suddenly, in a way he is back with her, just as she is miraculously starting a new life. For decades, Ellis keeps the diary, unread. Finally, urged by her husband and children, she opens Bernie’s diary, as well as her own from the same time, and she begins to recover her past and to put two worlds together.

Bernie wrote in his diary about desperately moving from place to place, and about the round-ups of Jews, and about his exquisite love for Ellis. She wrote about being hidden in a farmhouse, and about her longing to be reunited with him. Bernie knew that sometimes they were near to each other, but Ellis only learned this many years later. By October 1942, the Nazis were closing in, and Bernie fled the area with his family. Before he left, he entrusted his diary to a woman who smuggled it to a member of the underground, who managed to get it to Ellis.

Years later, Ellis and her daughter Shula, now living in Israel, set about unraveling the mystery of what happened to Bernie. They travel to Holland, and there they realize that Bernie left clues embedded in his diary. They learn that Bernie's final escape was to a house on a canal in Amsterdam. In the end, Bernie and his family were betrayed, for a bounty of eight guilders per Jew. They were sent to Auschwitz, where all of them were murdered, save one. In a breathtaking turn of events, some of the crucial details of what happened to Bernie and his family were recently discovered by Ellis and Shula.

The narrative of Ellis and Shula's search is interwoven with Bernie and Ellis's diaries. Together, they produce a true, and truly extraordinary, story of love and loss, tragedy and joy. Perhaps not since *The Diary of Ann Frank* have we seen the likes of this.

The documentary film based on the diaries is premiering internationally in autumn 2011.

## FICTION

### FALLING OUT OF TIME

**David Grossman**

Israel: HaKibutz HaMeuchad New Library

Italy: Mondadori

Germany: Hanser Verlag

Holland: Cossee

Spain: Lumen

Spain (Catalan): Ediciones 62

Norway: Agora

185 pages

*"I learned that there are some situations where the only freedom left us is to describe ... describe with the right words the fate that hits us. Sometimes, that can also be a way to escape being a victim."*

David Grossman on receiving the 2010 Frankfurt Peace Prize

*"Falling Out of Time is a precise literary investigation into the mourning of parents, an echoing cry of bereavement, whose power lies, paradoxically, in an abundant use of restraint and distancing ... without even a smidgen of sentimentality. Grossman has succeeded in creating a disturbing, heartbreaking vision of mourning."*

Maya Sela, Ha'aretz

**David Grossman** is the author of *To the End of the Land* and other works of fiction and non-fiction. His work has been translated into 30 languages.

### TAMING THE FIRE

**Iris Le'al**

Israel: KZBD

300 pages

English translation sample available

A wintry weekend in the lives of two couples begins with dinner preparations and ends with the outbreak of fire. Liza Sher, a movie editor, and Eddie Feit, her curator boyfriend, have invited Eddie's colleague Arkadi and his wife Anya to dinner at their new house. A pleasant evening in the country turns into a fraught twenty-four hours during which the foundations of friendship, the fragility of love, and the inability to escape the past are all revealed.

Between smuggling art from Russia and selling it in London; between Morocco and a poor Tel Aviv neighborhood, this gripping novel scrutinizes notions of gender, class and national identity. With a mixture of pain and irony, love and hope, the stories and fates of four people unfold and enmesh against the background of a turbulent Israeli society during the Second Intifada, exposing the impact of immigration and Western materialism. Leal's vibrant prose, biting wit and deep compassion place **Taming the Fire** at the forefront of contemporary Israeli literature.

**Iris Leal** has published four novels and is currently writing a play for the Cameri Theater. She is the chair of the writing department at the Camera Obscura School of Art and writes for the *Ha'aretz* book review. Leal has won several major literary awards, including the **Prime Minister's Prize** and the **Bernstein Prize**; she has twice been nominated for the **Sapir Prize**, the Israeli equivalent of the Booker Prize. Published in 2008 to rave reviews, the newspaper Maariv selected *Taming the Fire* as one of the best books of 2008 and one of the finest novels of the decade.

*"Taming the Fire reminds me why I'm a book critic. There are few new novels which provide the critic the rare experience of work that isn't work, business that is pure pleasure due to the quality of the writing. A literary work in which almost every sentence is loaded with originality, its lines accumulating into a richness creating the satisfying illusion of capturing reality...the same illusion that is superb realistic fiction."*

Arik Glasner, Maariv

*"So rare in its literary quality, honest and brave....a display of literary fiction that is written with tremendous talent, with exceptional preciseness, with x-ray eyes and a laser tongue which cuts through the rotting flesh of the new Israeliness."*

Shoham Smith, Ha'aretz Book Review

## **IF I FORGET THEE**

**Anat Talshir**

Israel: KZBD

Full English translation available

In Jerusalem, in the final days of the British Mandate for Palestine, a man and a woman meet on a grandstand overlooking a parade marking the anniversary of the inauguration of King George VI. Leila Cassuto, a young Jewish woman from an impoverished family, and Elias Riani, an Arab tea merchant with a distinguished pedigree, begin a love affair. But soon war breaks out and Leila and Elias find themselves on opposite sides of a divided city that will be reunited only nineteen years later. Can their love survive the painful and turbulent years of separation and change?

The only party to the secret of their great love is Nomi, the young daughter of Leila's friend Margo. Nomi walks through life unnoticed but noticing everyone and everything around her, and she becomes the depository for the lovers' letters of longing, and the person to whom Elias turns with his life's final request.

*If I Forget Thee* is an impeccably written love story set against the bitter conflict over Jerusalem. This poignant novel, with its vivid historical context, resonates long after the last page.

*"Talshir's obvious love for her characters ... is compelling. Well felt and meticulously written. It is a novel about the Jerusalem Talshir grew up in [and] the inability to love wholly, to live peacefully, in a city whose wholeness is never complete."* Tal Marmelstein, Israel Today

*"Talshir narrates skillfully, creating believable and touching characters... The book sweeps the reader to a far gone time, to its sounds and its smells.... One of the ten things to pass winter with."*

Michal Fleisher, Kalkalist

**Anat Talshir** is one of Israel's most acclaimed investigative journalists. She has also produced several documentaries, including an award-winning series about the Israeli Jewish underground. Talshir has received the prestigious Sokolov Award (2002) for her investigative report linking military training procedures with higher cancer rates among soldiers. She has also hosted a television show on current affairs and has taught creative writing. Talshir is working on her second novel.

## WHEN WE DANCED ON WATER

**Evan Fallenberg**  
USA: HarperCollins

At eighty-five, Teo Levin has had a full life, first as a dancer with the Royal Danish Ballet, later as a student of Balanchine and then, for more than fifty years, as head of the Tel Aviv Ballet and the choreographer of spare, prize-winning ballets that are hailed as some of the finest of the twentieth century. But when Vivi, a young waitress at the Tel Aviv café he frequents, enters his life, both of them are changed dramatically. Their relationships to art and to life shift, and their separate experiences and suppressed memories from Warsaw, Copenhagen, Berlin and Tel Aviv resurface with a vengeance. Other major characters include Pincho, Vivi's gay flatmate who comes from a family of religious settlers; her Dead Sea-to-Berlin boyfriend Martin; her mother Leah, a feisty Holocaust survivor from Hungary; Nelly, Teo's pale and silent Polish housekeeper, and Freddy, an aristocrat and art dealer whose complex obsessions change the course of Teo's life.

*"Impressive, and a significant and innovative thing in itself: an Israeli novel written in English."*

Cynthia Ozick

*"Fallenberg's precise prose moves fluidly between the delicate and the bold, much like the aging dancer whose story he tells with such elegance. ... His spare style sneaks up on the reader, enhancing the emotionality inherent in his subject."*

Publishers Weekly

**Evan Fallenberg** is a native of Cleveland, Ohio, a graduate of Georgetown University and the MFA program in creative writing at Vermont College. He has lived in Israel since 1985, where he writes, translates and teaches. His first novel, *Light Fell* (Soho Press, 2008), won the **American Library Association's Barbara Gittings Stonewall Book Award for Literature** and the **Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction**, was shortlisted for the **National Jewish Book Award** in fiction, the **Lambda Literary Award** for Debut Fiction, and the **Samuel Goldberg Foundation Prize** for Jewish Fiction by Emerging Writers, and was selected as a Great Debut of 2008 by Rocky Mountain News (Denver). Fallenberg's recent translations include Ron Leshem's *Beaufort*, Batya Gur's *Murder in Jerusalem*, Alon Hilu's *Death of a Monk* and *The House of Rajani*, and Meir Shalev's *A Pigeon and a Boy*, winner of the 2007 National Jewish Book Award for fiction and a finalist for the **PEN Translation Prize**. Fallenberg is fiction director for the MA program in creative writing at Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv and an instructor in the low-residency MFA program at City University of Hong Kong. He heads his own Studio for Writers and is the recipient of a MacDowell Colony fellowship.

## RECENT SALES

Biran, Shraga: **Opportunism: How to Change the World – One Idea at a Time**

USA: Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Grossman, David: **Until The End of The Land** (Fiction)

USA: Knopf Publishing; Canada: McLelland & Stewart; UK: Jonathan Cape; Italy: Mondadori; Germany: Hanser Verlag; France: Editions du Seuil; Portugal: Dom Quixote; Brazil: Cia das Letras; Holland: Cossee; Spain: Random House Mondadori (Lumen); Spain (Catalan): Ediciones 62; China: Shanghai 99; Greece: Kastaniotis; Serbia: Arhipelag Publishing; Finland: Otava; Sweden: Albert Bonniers; Denmark: Forlaget Vandkunsten; Norway: Agora Publishing; Slovakia: Artforum; Czech Republic: Mlada Fronta; Poland: Swiat Ksiazki; Russia: Corpus; Albania: Botiment Dudaj; Korea: Sapiens Co.; Hungary: Scolar Kiado; Turkey: Siren; Romania: Polirom

Hilu, Alon: **The House of Rajani** (Fiction)

UK: Harvill; France: Editions du Seuil; Holland: Ambo/Anthos; Germany: Beck Verlag; Italy: Einaudi; Portugal: Quidnovi

Yoel Hoffmann: **Curriculum Vitae** (Fiction)  
USA: New Directions; France: Galaade; Israel: Keter

Sayed Kashua: **Second Person Singular**  
USA: Grove; UK: Chatto & Windus; France: Editions de L'Olivier; Germany: Berlin Verlag; Italy: Neri Pozza; Holland: Ambo/Anthos; Taiwan: Crown Publishers; China: Horizon; Israel: Keter

Leshem, Ron: **The Underground Bazaar**  
Germany: Rowohlt; France: Editions du Seuil; Italy: l'Ancora del Mediterraneo; Israel: KZBD

Pinkus, Yirmi: **Professor Fabrikant's Historical Cabaret** (Fiction)  
Italy: l'Ancora del Mediterraneo; France: Grasset

Rees, Matt: **Mozart's Last Aria**  
USA: HarperCollins; UK: Corvus; Germany: Beck Verlag; Indonesia: Tiga Serangkai Publishing; Czech Republic: Daranus; Korea: Human & Books

Rees, Matt: **Caravaggio on Fire** (Fiction)  
UK: Corvus

Segev, Tom: **Simon Wiesenthal: A Biography** (Non-Fiction)  
USA: Doubleday; UK: Jonathan Cape; Germany: Siedler Verlag; Holland: Balans; France: Liana Levi; Denmark: Forlaget Vandkunsten; Poland: Swiat Ksiazki; Czech Republic: Paseka; Portugal: Materia Prima; Slovakia: Alpha Publishers

Shalev, Meir: **In the Beginning** (Non-Fiction)  
USA: Doubleday; Switzerland: Diogenes; Holland: Ambo/Anthos; Russia: Inostrannaya Literatura

Shalev, Meir: **My Russian Grandmother and Her American Vacuum Cleaner** (Fiction)  
USA: Pantheon/Schocken Books; Switzerland: Diogenes; Italy: Feltrinelli; France: Gallimard; Russia: Text Publishers; Holland: Ambo/Anthos, Czech Republic: Garamond; Slovakia: Slovart; Poland: Muza; Russia: Text Publishers; Ukraine: Folio Publishers; Korea: Sigong Sa

Shilo, Sara: **The Falafel King is Dead** (Fiction)  
UK: Portobello; Germany: DTV Verlag; Italy: Giuntina; Holland: Signatuur; Russia: Text Publishers; Poland: Czarne Publishers

Sikseck, Ayman: **To Jaffa**  
Israel: Yediot Ahronot

**The Jewish Wardrobe** – From the Collections of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (Art)  
5 Continents Editions

Zakovitch, Yair & Shinan, Avigdor: **When Women Seduced the Gods** (Non-Fiction)  
USA: Jewish Publication Society