



*From her poetry friends  
in blessed memory  
of our beloved*

***GRETTI HODAYA BAT ELIEZAR***

*May her sweet soul rest  
in eternal peace*

*We are so grateful  
that she came into our lives.*

*"The poet knows  
How inspiration unveils  
Truth asleep in nature  
As he taps the hidden  
Wellspring of mystery"*

*from "what the Archangel Ariel said" by Gretti*





GRETTI [in memoriam] *from Esther Lixenberg Bloch*

From the trams of Sofia  
To velvet galaxies and slivered moons  
You drew us in  
With a welcoming smile  
To spin in enchanted orbit.

Picasso and petals  
Azalea and fuchsia chimes  
Silvery Chopin mazurkas  
Angels embracing  
Amongst lace and china  
Revealed the motifs of your heart  
As shells unfolding on a shore  
Rain soaked and milky green  
Proffered their votive offerings.

Perfumed memories resonated  
Through the Bulgarian music of your voice  
A rich treasury of words  
Carved with glorious synergy of love  
and learning  
from nature's bounteous beauty.

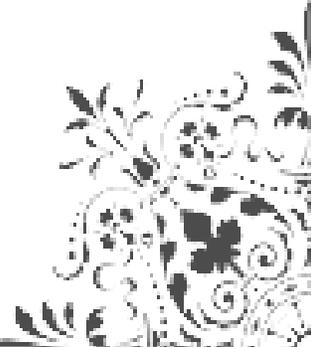
All converged on Jerusalem  
Where thirty six righteous men  
Under the Poinciana tree  
Must have gifted you  
The key to complex harmonies  
Charged with meaning.

How you opened worlds for us  
Worlds of art and wisdoms classical  
That waltzed and twirled  
Across the stellar continuum  
Of your thoughts.

How you navigated history  
Fused its vicissitudes  
with line and colour  
Never averting your eyes  
From the human condition  
Ever swinging the compass  
Back back to country and nation.

You warred with war  
Battled tragedies and loss  
with erudition  
Never doubting  
G-D-given womanhood

You spoke to prophets  
Strong lines of vehement love  
Emitting sparks  
That lit us all.  
And took joy  
In prising from our souls  
and sensibilities  
A new birthing  
Of odes and hymns.





## Tea with Gretti

*from Batsheva Wiesner - written some while  
ago after a visit to Gretti's home.*

"All I know about Bulgaria is from Elias Canetti,"  
I said. "You know, I used to think he was Italian."

Gretti laughed,  
leaned forward in her chair.

"My dear, let me tell you,  
Bulgaria was a paradise in his day,"

She sighed, leaned back in her chair.

"I journeyed there after communism fell.  
'What beautiful Bulgarian you speak,'  
they marvelled  
"Certainly, we all did.  
And then we all left.

"When we parted for Palestine  
they grabbed our grand apartment  
for the German ambassador.

"And my beautiful Bulgarian  
didn't help me, even when I went to the top -  
to the President, about father's factories.

"They had announced to everyone,  
'Come, reclaim your property,'  
but they didn't mean me."

Now in Gretti's Jerusalem flat,  
I am in Bulgaria:  
the rich colors, fine rugs,  
an embroidered linen cloth  
draped upon her coffee table,  
laden with vases of fragrant flowers.

*May her memory be for a blessing.*





## DATE AND CEDAR

*from Esther Cameron*

Gretti, the colors of the world and soul  
You've painted, first in pigments, then in words --  
The changing lights of summer, spring and fall,  
The scents of flowers and the calls of birds,  
The dream of Eden, history's bitter wake,  
The poignancies of love and loss and prayer--  
You have compounded these and more to make  
A choice incense, which through Earth's troubled air  
Rises, and surely is received on high  
As a sweet savor, pleading for creation,  
And many more such offerings of love  
May you yet bring, in reverent contemplation,  
Planted in our G-d's garden like a tree  
That brings both fruit and fragrance faithfully.





## For Gretti z'1

*from Felice Miryam Kahn Zisken*

Thankful  
for your profound  
encouragement

for the reminder always  
of how much is lost  
by not writing

our unique contribution  
to the specific story and  
the larger story

for the prayer  
in your beautiful  
thoughtful ways and words.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The soul's unending prayer  
strives to emerge from hiding  
into the open*

*to spread the vibrant energies  
of spirit and soul  
and the strengths of the body entire. . .*

*So that all of Torah and its wisdom  
are the ongoing revelation  
of the soul's hidden prayer.*

Rav Kook, *Pinkasei HaRaya*





## Gretti z'l

*from Hannah Moshe*

Glad you were recognized  
For your literary ability  
By the Chinese  
A full portrait  
On their magazine  
Amused you  
Yet well deserved  
For the words  
You wove around  
How you perceived  
A little bird  
Your upbringing  
And a myriad  
Other  
Otherwise mundane  
Images . . .

Ever present  
When others shared  
Their writings  
With suggestions  
Gentle yet astute  
To improve

Now  
While Elysian Fields  
Welcome you  
Your poems  
Echo here



## GRETTI IZAK z'l

from Hayim Abramson

Alas! a star has fallen  
an *eshet chayil* a woman of valor.  
Behind she leaves her light in the universe  
as she moves on upwards to the infinite.

She had the *chesed* kindness  
of a friend that was there, listening.  
Her honest look straight to the eyes  
supported and encouraged confidence.

A word or a phrase from her  
had much richness of meaning.  
Some of her words I framed,  
because they were precious  
coming from her.

*Shiurim* lessons and books were treasures  
that she cherished as she went and read.  
As she learned she grew in *emunah* faith,  
and with fear of Heaven truly a jewel.

The way of the world is to live and die  
and who with what and when God decides.  
We believe, accept and bless His ways;  
and thank Him for such a lovely soul.

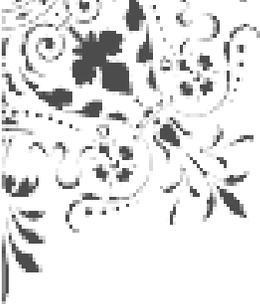
פרידה

נאבד הגוף הלך לו  
ונשאר הזיכרון של חיוכה  
ועוד מה שהנשמה הקרינה  
מילים מילים של ידידות.

מתינוק עד עת זקנה  
מתגעגעים לחומר האנושי  
שמשרת אנו בשליחותינו  
-כלי למצות ומעשים טובים.

שלשלת המשפחה הורחבה  
דור בא דור הולך  
ובהכרח תיגמר  
וה' עוזר לנו לתיקון העולם.

יש עולם הבא  
החומר הוא לבוש לנשמה הנצחית  
משם היצירה ולשם בחזרה.  
היגיעה הפרידה. ואוי! זה כואב.



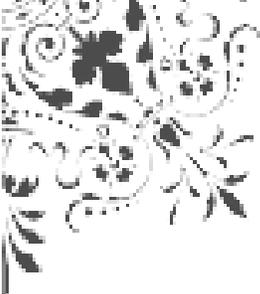
**An Istanbul Poem in the Negev**

*from Lami Halperin*

(re: *Colors of Paradise*, by Gretti Izak z'l)

The pool with blue eyes  
Calls to the eddying waters  
Promises color to white butterflies  
Paints birds-in-flight with an instant  
Azure spark.  
Their aqua tint melts into green trees.  
Gretti, this is your poem  
Platters of colors on a small Bosphorus  
The fleet of leaf boats harbors in corners  
Making shade dots on shimmering mirrors  
I see you repeatedly lifting off the seal of time  
To make commerce with the past  
With tesserae from a jumbled treasure horde  
And I must take my own dreams in  
From the parched fields, uprooted from glory  
Like a few dried kernels of grain  
With chaff in my pockets  
With the olive pits  
Derived from other harvest times.





## Our Gretti, z"l

*from Leah LJ Gottesman*

Despair was not her game  
nor was pretention, idealization,  
condescension, obfuscation, nor avoidance  
of the agony of loss and impending disaster  
to which she was no stranger...  
not for Gretti, a genteel dame,  
reigning alongside us,  
who kissed life smack on its mouth  
with no reserve  
for the stains it would leave on her lips,  
who stretched out her arms  
to embrace, with no restraint,  
the crush of imperfections  
that would mar her chest.

She took all in - in her elegant largesse -  
hosting, in equanimity,  
both dark and dawn.  
Both light and lack were sanctified  
with due respect and introspect  
and music to our souls.

Thank you, Gretti,  
for affirming all that life is and isn't.  
You always have an honored place with us -  
in loving kindness.





## **Your Body, Your Soul**

*For Gretti from Ruth Fogelman  
(written some time ago)*

Though flesh has shrunken  
from your arms, wrists, hands,  
your smile sparkles, your eyes dance,  
and your poetry flows.

Though your eyes are on the world beyond,  
your mind on the legacy you will leave behind,  
your spirit, alive, warm,  
with vibrant color, creates.

And though your body, a coat  
you will take off when you are home,  
you  
will live on.





## **Gretti and Ruth - Partners in Crime**

*from Ruth Stern*

With Gretti at my side  
We set off to Voices'  
To hear and be heard  
Reading poetry of our choices  
in Tomer Street  
Where Annmarie resides  
In Beit Hakerem.  
What could be simpler, we decide –  
As we drive happily along  
Just cross the main road and we're there.

BUT

To our despair  
We see a "No crossing" sign  
Before our eyes. Not daunted we  
Just turn right, this surely must bring us  
To Tomer Street.  
But NO, it turns and twists until we reach  
A DEAD END. So back we go in retreat  
'til Gretti says with strong conviction  
We have no choice, you must break the law  
And enter the bus route despite the restriction  
Or else we'll never enter Tomer Street ....

Oh the dilemma..... To do it or not to do it?  
That was the question!  
So, to mine own self at that moment  
I was far from true,  
But I did what I had to do.  
And.....  
The outcome is clear to all of you



**A Tribute to Gretti z'l**  
**to your wisdom to friendship and your many voices.**

*from Ruth Stern*

How good were those early Voices days.  
Gretti's prolific, original, poetic oeuvre never ceased to astonish and delight,  
And to deepen our insight into darkness and light.  
Now too late to see your smile again  
too late to hear again your supportive compassionate voice  
when life and loss caught up with me,  
When I missed another Voices meet.

I said I would return  
To relive the days we shared in poetry and friendship  
quoting each other and other voices too  
joyfully serious questioning our prosody with good-natured ironic repartee,  
listening to each other, alluding to the innuendoes,  
you, Gretti, in your quiet meticulous voice, meeting me half way,  
recognizing the cadence in our rhythmic patterns....  
you would say something like,  
'that softens the stress on accented syllables'  
in your modest and unassuming way.

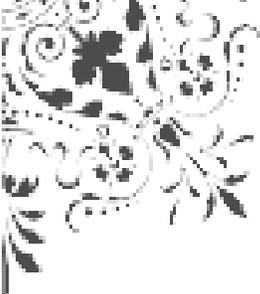
Despite the darkness, the horror, even foreboding and the loneliness,  
Gretti finds solace and reliance in nature, in the sea, in the stars...

In her poem, '*Creating a Presence*', (*Voices, 2007, P.23*) she wrote as if innocuously,  
'with simple truths, In the early light of the morning, keeping an eye  
on the weather, taking care of chores, like  
a fence between neighbours in need of repair .....'  
and watching the young Poinciana tree closely'  
which suggests a form of prayer .....for the future ... holds a store of darkness...  
'though the stars are monitoring a new species of man capable of smiles, until  
one sees the thousands of slaughtered bodies.....'  
'if the innocent rise, the stars will reject this new human species on earth'.

And in '*About the Sea*', (*Voices 2007, P.72*), Gretti claimed:

*Whatever I came to love is here  
rooted in the dance of the wind.....  
.... 'the sea keeps the earth in check and moderates my self-pity when I swim my  
present loneliness"*

Gretti has played a decisive role in creating the poetic excellence and original Israeli fiber of Voices as we know it today. It will remain as always within my mind and in your poetry, your metaphoric deceptive simplicities which never cease to jolt me into awareness. ...



**To my 'Sister' Gretti z'l** *from Avril Meallem*

*The following two pieces were written whilst I was sitting on Haifa beach on my way back from Nahariya, a few hours before arriving at Gretti's funeral. Only the week before had Gretti spoken to me of her strong desire to be by the sea—I could feel her presence around me.*

Gretti your physical body may no longer be with us  
but the memory of your smile  
that you were able to greet me with,  
however much you were suffering,  
will always remain with me, cherished in my heart.  
Your poems will continue to inspire all those  
who open the pages of your books,  
a true gift to the world.

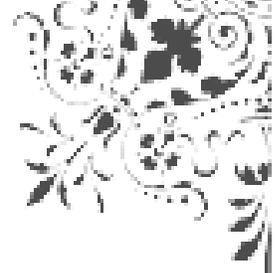
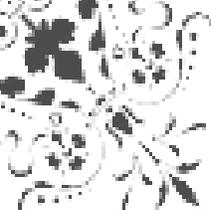
Dearest Gretti, my heart cries  
that I will no longer be able to hold your hand  
nor feel the embrace of our hugs,  
but I know you are now returning  
to your source on HaShem's wings.

I know that I have thanked you many times  
for the constant encouragement that you gave  
me regarding my own poetry writing,  
and I will be eternally thankful for this...

I met you around 16 years ago  
and felt a very special closeness -  
as if I had known you in previous lifetimes  
or in the world of souls.  
I treasure these years and especially  
when we mutually adopted each other as sisters;  
neither of us having a blood sister.

So dear, sweet sister, I pray that your soul  
will travel to its destination, carrying all the love  
that so many of us have for you...





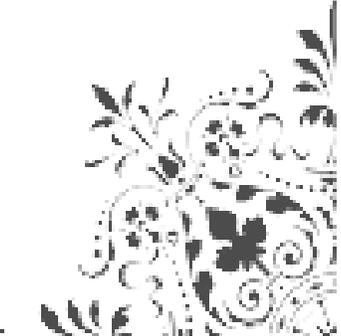
**To Gretti z'1** *from Avril Meallem*

Gretti your poems have inspired so many,  
your fine character a model for all.  
In times of your deepest suffering  
you took care of how you looked,  
your hair always combed,  
a little make up to hide your pain,  
earrings, a necklace, bracelets,  
all made it a joy to behold you.

What words can I write  
that can express my feelings today,  
a day after your soul  
left your physical body,  
that now awaits the final journey  
to its resting place in this sweet earth?

May your soul's passage  
be as sweet as your smile  
and your kind words spoken.  
May HaShem envelop you in His Light  
and bring you to a place  
of eternal peace and love.

Goodbye till we meet again...



## My Imagery 'Cave Journey' Experience

*(four days after Gretti z'l passed away)*

*by Avril Meallem*

Soaking in a hot bath and thinking of Gretti z'l, I visualised myself entering a cave and waited to see what would happen...

I became aware that I should take the path on the right and found myself climbing down a rope ladder.

Reaching a hard surface, I saw that I was in a long tunnel with a door in the distance.

I arrived to the end of the tunnel. There were doors everywhere!

Which one to choose?

They all turned out to be mirror reflections of just one door.

I opened this door and entered a vast banquet hall lit by elaborate, crystal chandeliers and filled with people, sitting at long tables that were covered with white table cloths.

There were no plates, cutlery, glasses, food or drinks which seemed rather weird, yet there was a feeling of great joy and love.

In the middle of the hall there was a grand piano that was playing music but the pianist wasn't touching the keys!

My parents and grandparents appeared but they seemed unaware of me.

I wondered if Gretti was here too but I couldn't see her.

Suddenly a brilliant white light filled the hall, obscuring everything else.

A powerful gust of wind lifted me up and whooshed me away.

I found myself sitting on a huge rock.

There was absolutely nothing else around, no earth, no sky, no trees, just nothingness...

Then I felt a presence behind me, giving me a hug. I guessed it was Gretti but wasn't sure. Her gold watch was put into my hand (*it was too big for her and I had always wondered how it didn't annoy her being so loose!*) so I knew that it really was Gretti.

She said that she can hug me, even though I can no longer hug her, as a human body cannot hug a spirit.

I told her that I can hear her speaking but that it didn't sound like her voice.

She said that it was because there are no actual speech sounds and that I just know what she is saying.

She told me that she is in a beautiful place and not to worry.

I asked her if I could see her and why she couldn't hug me from in front.

She said that I can't see her, but to know that she is all around me and that I am within her.

She continued saying that she will now be the one to comfort me with hugs as I had always done for her.

Also that she will be with me when I write from a deep place within myself.

Then she told me that it was time for her to leave to continue on her journey and that I should tell others about all this.

I asked her how I would get back and she said that I just will, and then disappeared.

My eyes filled with tears and then the rock was no longer there.

I was whooshed away backwards, and opened my eyes.

Then I started crying from the depth of my being, overcome both by the awe of the experience and the deep sadness of separation.