

# Landscapes of Israel

Shalom Orzach and Rabbi Avi Orlow

P'Shat

**Here-** Leah Goldberg May 29, 1911- January 15, 1970 was a prolific Hebrew-language writer. Goldberg was born to a Jewish Lithuanian family from Kaunas. **the cuckoo** The cuckoo is a kind of bird. A majority of them are arboreal. They exist all over the world and some of them are migratory in nature. **cape**



**of snow-** She is referencing

the European snow covered trees of her youth. **these pines-** In 1935 Goldberg made Aliyah and settled in Tel Aviv later moving to Jerusalem. There are many pines in Israel particularly Jerusalem. **Once upon a time-** In retelling Goldberg is reconstructing the story of her "whole childhood" to have been from Europe, but now she is reawakened "here" in Israel. **snow-space**

**homeland-** Goldberg who was born in Kalingrad, raised in Kaunas, received a PhD from the Universities of Berlin and Bonn in Semitic languages, history and pedagogy. She grew up all over Europe. **green ice-** Perhaps the mixture of the green pine needles and ice. At the river's edge her identity mixes. The line between Goldberg's European and Israeli identities melt away. **poem's grammar-** Even though Goldberg was fluent and literate in various

European languages, she wrote her published works and personal notes in Hebrew. **foreign place-** In the Torah when Moshe is reconnecting with his family after the exodus from Egypt he pauses to give the reason behind the naming of his son. There is says, "*Ki ger hayisi b'erezt nochria*", Gershom was got his name because Moshe was a stranger in a strange land. Always caught between his native Egypt and the land of Israel, Moshe never does find his way home. Goldberg is evoking a yearning for being at home in one's own language. **migrating birds-** like the cuckoo bird. **between earth and sky-** when in flight the bird is in between two spaces just as she as an immigrant to Israel from Europe was in between two places. **Heartache-** like Moshe, Goldberg is hurt by having "two homelands" and none at the same time. **Landscapes-**It is not clear if this a literal or figurative landscape.

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D'rash

**the cuckoo** – Cuckoos are one of the few birds whose name in English and Latin comes from the call made by males on the lookout for a mate. It's a bird defined by its call. Also, Cuckoos are known for laying its eggs in other birds' nests. Shakespeare refers to them as hated for their compromise of the marital home (Love's Labor's Lost Spring V, ii). The cuckoo may represent the success of not having a home of one's own, a skill and identity that Goldberg hopes to lose.

**אורן, לאה גולדברג**

**כאן לא אשמע את קול**

**הקוקיה**

**כאן לא יחבוש העץ מצנפת**

**שלג**

**אבל בצל האורנים האלה**

**כל ילדותי שקמה לתחיה**

**צלצול המחטים: היה היה**

**אקרא מולדת למרחב**

**השלג**

**לקרח ירקרק כובל הפלג**

**ללשון השיר בארץ נוכריה**

**אולי רק ציפורי-מסע**

**יודעות**

**כשהן תלויות בין ארץ**

**ושמיים**

**את זה הכאב של שתי**

**המולדות**

**אתכם אני נשתלתי פעמיים**

**אתכם אני צמחתי, אורנים**

**ושורשיי בשני נופים שונים**

**migrating birds-** With exemplary knowledge of seven languages, Goldberg also translated numerous foreign literary works into Modern Hebrew from Russian, Lithuanian, German, Italian, French, and English. Of particular note is her magnum opus of translation of Tolstoy's epic novel War and Peace. As a translator Goldberg herself was like a migratory bird. **Landscapes-** Goldberg is talking about literal landscapes but also means figurative landscapes. This is interesting compared to [Hanah Szenes poem known as Eli Eli](#). Szenes's poem seems to be universal in tone, but under its original title *Halicha L'Ceaseria*, it literally describes Szenes's walk to *Ceaseria* from the *Kibbutz Sdot Yam* where she lived, this was her landscape. Similarly Goldberg's landscape echoes Rachel's poetry regarding her new home by the Kinneret. Rachel' wrote, "Over there, on the seashore, a low-topped palm tree stands, disheveled like a mischievous infant." In 1919 Rachel wrote, "The Kinneret is not simply a landscape, not just a part of nature; the fate of a people is contained in its name. Our past peeks out of it to watch us with thousands

of eyes; with thousands of mouths it communicates with our hearts." In all three cases, Goldberg, Szenes, and Rachel, these foreign born poetesses evoke a timeless landscape of Israel to invite the people of Israel to return to or feel at home in their land in a timely way.

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