

Introduction to *Necessary Voices – A Collection of Short Fiction*

In this collection of short stories by psychoanalyst, writer and poet Merle Molofsky we are treated to a collection of characters all searching for their personal meaning or, in some cases, their survival. The stories range over different time periods and different settings. Fleeing from the ghettos of Eastern Europe and from the endemic anti-semiticism that surrounded them, Molofsky joins us with her characters as we both yearn to see the tall Lady in New York Harbor. Each narration tells a vibrant tale...most poignantly in how a young girl survives an abortion when society had turned its eyes away in denial of this all too human situation. In *Lazarus* as well as *Reader, I Married Him*, Molofsky explores how one learns to negotiate love and identity, even when one is perhaps just a bit too young and alone to negotiate such life tasks.

Molofsky's range of interest is broad; she goes beyond the everyday life experiences that are the backdrop of most of her stories. For example, in *Danila* she treats us to viewing what it might be like to view our experiences through the lens of timelessness and absence of clear boundaries. Her masterful play between subject and object, on the mystery of before and now, on the singular and the plural... is not only informative but an adventure to read. In *Street Songs* she paints the excitement as well as the everydayness of neighborhood living...with its prejudices and confinements; all of which we have come to accept under the rubric of society's rules. Molofsky goes from such a graphic description of the violence of street life in one tale to

another in which she invites the reader into the internal personal meanderings of an unhappy and distracted housewife – so subtly that the reader merges with the character as if an unknown part of oneself has been awakened. Calling on our capacity for cross-identification, we are invited to dream along with the protagonist - a magical place - which dreaming deepens who we are. If one lets it. Molofsky calls this work *What Are Patterns For?*

These tales, written over a period of thirty or so years, reveal a more than probing and informed mind. They reveal a writer who loves and cherishes the human situation - with all our absurdities as well as our triumphs. Molofsky is an insightful writer; she informs and deepens our sensibilities so that we come to know more about life and about ourselves. One cannot ask more from a writer. Molofsky gives us no less.

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