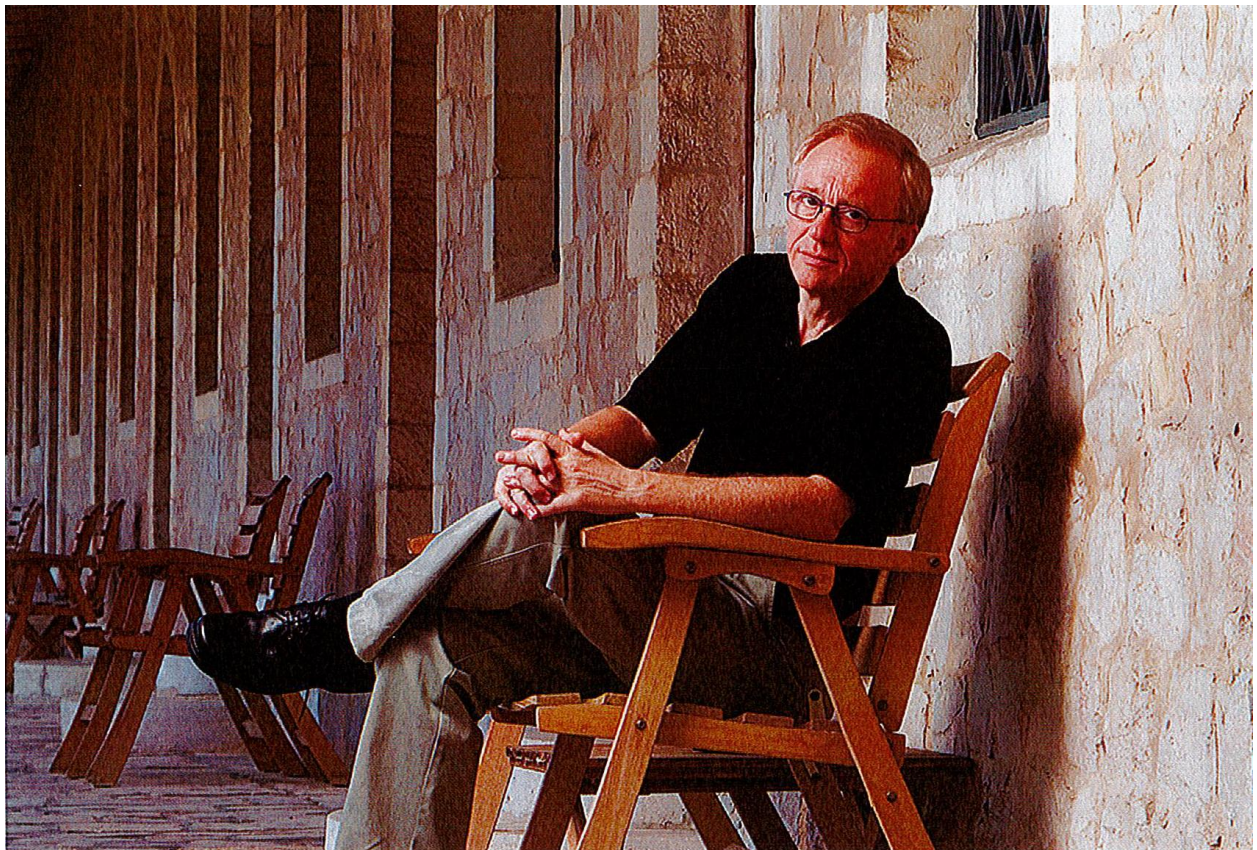


DAVID GROSSMAN

Hans Christian Andersen Author Award 2020

Nominated by IBBY Israel



A statement on the Grossman contribution to literature for children and young people.

David Grossman (born in Jerusalem, 1954) is a major figure in contemporary Hebrew literature. He writes for older and younger readers, in alternating order: Following every adult book, Grossman publishes a book for younger readers, followed by an adult book, etc.

In his literary and journalistic writing Grossman does not shy away from complicated and controversial issues. He fights for the human rights of people of all ages, genders, and ethnicities. He is active in social justice causes and in peace initiatives between Arabs and Jews.

In 1982 he published his first children's book, *Duel*, about a twelve-year-old boy who makes friends with an elderly man in a nursing home. His writing for children and young adults encompasses a wide range of topics. In his picture books, he focuses on aspects of children's daily life (*Uri's Special Language; A Brand-New Baby Brother*) or their rich and wonderful imaginations, which can generate all sorts of fears (*Itamar Walks on Walls; Itamar Meets a Rabbit, Itamar the Dream Hunter*), worries (*Don't Worry Ruti, Itamar the Dream Hunter*), or fantasies, sometimes involving imaginary friends (*Hadas' Friend*). In Grossman's picture books, the child's world contains an empathic adult, the father, who respects the child, listens to him lovingly, and is able to suggest an unusual solution to the difficulty confronting the child, which the child is in turn quick to accept (*the Itamar books; Who Wants a Piggy-Back?, Don't Worry Ruti, etc.*)

In his writing for young adults Grossman deals with complicated issues, including ones that were considered taboo in the young adult Hebrew

literature of their day. All of them highlight the importance of the human bond, friendship and love, especially in difficult situations: the friendship between a twelve-year-old boy and a lonely old man, a former immigrant from Germany, who lives in a nursing home, and looks back at his lost love and the missed opportunities in life (*Duel*); the story of the child of holocaust survivors who wages an imaginary war against the “Nazi animal” he imprisoned in the basement (*Momic*); the story of a teenager growing up without a mother, in a nonconformist family with dark family secrets (*The Zigzag Kid*); drug addiction, runaway youth, brotherhood and dysfunctional parents (*Someone to Run With*).

Grossman’s style in writing for children is dynamic, imaginative and communicative.

On the one hand, Grossman describes the typical childhood of an Israeli child, and on the other his writing is very personal, even autobiographical, using his own memories, his children's names (Uri, Rutie and Jonathan) and his daily home experiences with them. His younger son Uri, who figures in some of his stories, was killed in 2006 in the Second Lebanon War. The tragic loss of his son had a profound impact on Grossman’s writing for adults and children.

In his writing for children, the most significant change is the emergence of lyrical writing and the mother's perspective. In these books the reader watches the child's world through the mother’s love, compassion and hope (*Hug, The Sun Princess*). At the same time, Grossman reveals children's fears, difficulties, and the importance of home, family, father or

mother as protectors. But even they have limited abilities, and the world is exposed as a dangerous place that can not save the child.

In his books for children, Grossman has developed partnerships with several illustrators. A unique partnership is with the artist Michal Rovner, a collaboration that produced extraordinary, lyrical books for children, which speak to the adult world as well, and are unique in their artistic blend of language and visual art: *Hug* (which won an honorable mention from the IBBY in 2012 and was translated into seven languages: Italian, Dutch, German, French, Catalanian, Spanish, English) and *The Sun Princess* (2015), which features an extraordinary mother, who invites her daughter to join her in a brief journey: a celebration of the sun rising again at dawn, especially for them, the sun queen and the sun princess, and then – the sunset. These works offer the adult and child reader alike a sense of being enveloped in love, as a source of consolation and as a reason for living, despite all the sorrow.

Grossman's books for children have garnered many prestigious awards, have been set to music, have been adapted for the stage and for musical theater, and have been translated into various languages. Grossman's literature for children and young adults is outstandingly accepted, adapted and reconceived in all kinds of arts forms: *Itamar Walks on Walls* became one of the objects of an outstanding art exhibition at the Bloomfield Science Museum in Jerusalem; *Itamar Meets a Rabbit* was adapted into a children's musical drama by composer Yoni Rechter, and performed by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra; *The Zig Zag Kid* and *Someone to Run With* were made into films. The play *Riki's Kindergarden*

was performed by several theaters, and some books (*Momic; The Zig Zag Kid; Someone to Run With*) were adapted for the theater and short television movies.

Grossman's books are part of kindergarten and school reading lists in Israel.

Grossman's fiction, literary works for children, as well as his public writing, are the objects of enormous interest and appreciation of researchers all over the world.

David Grossman has won numerous awards and honors in Israel and worldwide, including: the German Book Trade Peace Prize (2010), the Man Booker International Prize (2017), the Israel Prize (2018), and the Understanding and Tolerance Prize from the Jewish Museum Berlin (2018).

We find that David Grossman's literary work and public activity is consistent in spirit and mind with the ideas and work of Jella Lepman and those that IBBY stand for, and recommend him as a nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing.

Prof. Ilana Elkad-Lehman

Levinsky College of Education, Tel-Aviv, Israel

DAVID GROSSMAN BIBLIOGRAPHY

And information on translations (English and other languages)

Picture Books and books for early childhood:

Itamar Walks On Walls (1986) – translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, Catalan, French

A Brand-New Baby Brother (1986)

Itamar Meets A Rabbit (1988) – translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, Catalan, French

The Itamar Letter (1988) – translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, Catalan, French

Itamar The Dream Hunter (1990) – translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, Catalan, French

Itamar And The Black Magic Hat (1992) – translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, Catalan, French

Uri's Special Language (1996) - translation: Catalan

Once You Were Two Monkeys (1996) – translations: German, Italian, Catalan

Don't Worry Ruthie (1999) - translations: Italian, Spanish, Catalan

Giraffe Bedtime (1999) – translations: Italian, German, Portuguese

Ruthie Will Sleep and Sleep (2004) - translation: Italian

Rachel's Secret Friend (2010)

Who Wants A Piggyback? (2011) - translations: Arabic

The Hug (2011) – translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, Spanish

Johnathan the effective detective (2012) – Translated to Japanese

The Sun Princess (2015) - translations: German, Italian, Dutch, Spanish

Berry Baby (2017) - translations: Italian

Middle Grade:

Duel (1982) - translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, French, Catalan, Spanish, Danish, Portuguese, Czech

Young Adult:

Riki's Kindergarten (play) – (1990) – Translation: Italian

The Zig Zag Kid (1994; English – 1998) - translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Spanish, French, Greek, Portuguese, Turkish, Romanian, Russian, Swedish, Hungarian, Chinese

Someone to Run With (2000) – translations: English, German, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Spanish: French: Russian, Swedish, Norwegian, Romanian, Czech, Bulgarian

Momic (2005) [second part of the novel: ***The Book of Intimate Grammar*** – adapted for young adults] – translations of the complete book: Italian, Dutch, English, French, Finnish, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish Spanish, Polish, Portuguese

DAVID GROSSMAN AWARDS

The Nelly Sachs Prize (Germany, 1991)

Histadrut Prize for Children's Literature (Israel, 1993)

Prix Eliette Von Karajan (Austria)

The Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation (UK, 1998)

Youth Book Prize, for Favorite Book by Young Readers (Vienna, 2002)

The Buxtehuder Bulle (Germany, 2002)

Sapir Prize (Israel, 2001)

Bialik Prize, (Israel, 2004)

Premio per la Pace e l'Azione Umanitaria (City of Rome, 2006)

Onorificenza della Stella Solidarity Italiana (Italy, 2007)

Premio Ischia – International Award for Journalism (Italy, 2007)

EMET Award 2007 (Israel)

Albatros Prize, awarded by the Gunter Grass Foundation, (Germany, 2009)

Frankfurt Peace Prize (Germany, 2010)

Prix Medicis Etranger (France, 2011)

Brenner Prize (Israel, 2012)

French Point Award, for most beloved book by readers and critics, (2013)

Fundazione Calcarì for Lifetime Achievement (Italy, 2014)

St. Louis Literary Award (USA, 2015).

Honorary Doctorate, The Hebrew University (Israel, 2017)

Man Booker International Prize (United Kingdom, 2017)

Israel Prize (Israel, 2018)

Tolerance Prize by Jewish museum in Berlin (Germany, 2018)

Grossman was also decorated as Chevalier de l'Ordre des Artes et des Lettres (France,1998) and received an Honorary Doctorate from Florence University (2008)

DAVID GROSSMAN TRANSLATION RIGHTS

PICTURE BOOKS:

ONCE YOU WERE TWO MONKEYS –

Czech Republic, Garamond; Germany, Hanser; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori; Spain, Pb Cruilla (Catalan)

RUTHIE WILL SLEEP AND SLEEEP –

China, Shanghai99; Germany, Hanser Verlag; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori

GIRAFFE BEDTIME –

Germany, Hanser Verlag; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori

DON'T WORRY RUTHIE –

Czech Republic, Garamond; Germany, Hanser Verlag; Israel, Am Oved

URI'S SPECIAL LANGUAGE –

Israel, HaKibbutz HaMeuchad; Italy, Mondadori

ITAMAR THE DREAM HUNTER –

China, Shanghai99; Czech Republic, Garamond; France, Editions du Seuil; Germany, Hanser; Holland, Ten Have; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori; Korea, Minumsa; Spain (Catalan) Cruilla; Spain, Grijalbo/Mondadori

ITAMAR AND THE BLACK MAGIC HAT –

China, Shanghai99; Czech Republic, Garamond; France, Editions du Seuil;
Germany, Hanser; Holland, Ten Have; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori;
Korea, Minumsa; Spain (Catalan) Cruilla; Spain, Grijalbo/Mondadori

ITAMAR WALKS ON WALLS –

China, Shanghai99; Czech Republic, Garamond; France, Editions du Seuil;
Germany, Hanser; Holland, Ten Have; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori;
Korea, Minumsa; Spain (Catalan) Cruilla; Spain, Grijalbo/Mondadori

A BRAND NEW BABY BROTHER –

China, Shanghai99; Czech Republic, Garamond; France, Editions du Seuil;
Germany, Hanser; Holland, Ten Have; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori;
Korea, Minumsa; Spain (Catalan) Cruilla; Spain, Grijalbo/Mondadori

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TAMAR MEETS A RABBIT –

China, Shanghai99; Czech Republic, Garamond; France, Editions du Seuil;
Germany, Hanser; Holland, Ten Have; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori;
Korea, Minumsa; Spain (Catalan) Cruilla; Spain, Grijalbo/Mondadori

THE ITAMAR LETTER –

China, Shanghai99; Czech Republic, Garamond; France, Editions du Seuil;
Germany, Hanser; Holland, Ten Have; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori;
Korea, Minumsa; Spain (Catalan) Cruilla; Spain, Grijalbo/Mondadori

** CD-ROM of The Itamar Stories/TIMMY produced by Compedia, Tel Aviv,
and distributed in the following countries: UK, News Multimedia; Germany,

Langenscheidt/Hexaglot; Sweden, Bonnier; France, E.M.M.E.; USA, First Information Group; Holland, Kluitman; Japan, Synforest**

WHO WANTS A PIGGYBACK? –

China, Shanghai99; Germany, Hanser; Israel, Am Oved

THE SUN PRINCESS –

Germany, Hanser Verlag; Holland, Cossee; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori; Spain, Sexto Piso

THE HUG –

Denmark, Vandkunsten; France, Steidl Verlag; Germany, Hanser Verlag; Holland, Cossee; Israel (Arabic), Am Oved; Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori; Spain, Sexto Piso; Spain (Catalan), La Cruilla; UK, Duckworth; USA, Overlook Press

BERRY BABY –

Israel, Am Oved; Italy, Mondadori

MIDDLE GRADE:

DUEL –

Brazil, Cia das Letras; Czech Republic, Albatros; Denmark, Rosinante & Co.; Denmark, Rosinante (reverted); France, Editions du Seuil; Germany, Carlsen; Holland, Cossee; Israel, Siman Kri'a/HaKibbutz HaMeuchad; Italy,

Mondadori; Russia, Text Publishers; Spain, Cruilla; Spain, Ediciones SM (Castillian); UK, Bloomsbury; USA, Bloomsbury,

YOUNG ADULT:

SOMEONE TO RUN WITH –

Brazil, Cia das Letras; Bulgaria, Altera Publishing House; China, Yilin Press; Czech Republic, Mlada Fronta; France, Editions de Seuil; Germany, Hanser; Greece, Scripta Publishers; Holland, Cossee; Israel, HaKibbutz HaMeuchad; Italy, Mondadori; Norway, Gyldendal; Poland, WAB; Portugal, Don Quixote; Romania, Editura Niculescu; Russia, Phantom Publishers; Russia, Rozovity Giraffe; Spain, Random House Mondadori (Lumen); Sweden, Bonnier; UK, Bloomsbury; Ukraine, Folio; USA, Farrar, Straus & Giroux

THE ZIG ZAG KID –

Brazil, Companhia das Letras; China, Yilin Press; Denmark, Forlaget Vandkunsten; France, Editions du Seuil; Germany, Hanser, Pb Fischer Taschenbuchverlag; Greece, Kastanitois Editions; Holland, Cossee, Pb, Rainbow; Hungary, Cartaphilus; Israel, HaSifria HaHadasha/HaKibbutz HaMeuchad; Italy, Mondadori; Rumania, Univers; Russia, Text Publishers; Spain, Tusquets; Sweden, Bonnier Alba (reverted); Turkey, Dost; UK, Bloomsbury; USA, Farrar, Straus, Giroux

Dramatic Rights: Bos Bros Film-TV Productions BV

Theater Rights: Stichting Theater Initiatieven en Producties (STIP) Holland; Zeven/Inne Gorris, Belgium

The Israeli David Grossman (1954) is very much a writer of all trades. He wrote several novels, but mind you two epic works, *See Under: Love*, a touching, great book about death, *Falling out of Time* and recently also the tragicomic 'stand-up novel' *A horse Walks into a Bar*. Still this year, an anthology with essays about living and writing in times of war will be published.

If you felt the need, you could class the recently published first Dutch translation of David Grossman's 'Duel' (1982) as a young adult book. The narrator is a 28-year-old man telling the story of what befell him as an 'amateur detective' when he was twelve years old. It is set in Israel of the 1960s and the introvert main character is called David.

Most notable and beautiful, the voice of the twelve-year-old resounds in the narrative. The text is remarkably clear, exhibiting the amazement of a teenager, but also the slight irony of a grown-up. A grown-up, who looks back on his early teenage year with a certain sense of tenderness and nostalgia. And at the same time it bespeaks the moment when he became storyteller, a writer.

He is lying under the bed of the elderly mister Heinrich Rosenthal, originally from Heidelberg, who emigrated to Palestine just before World War II. Immediately an engaging observation. David's mother responded with 'Yes, of course' when he told her that as voluntary work for school he chose to spend time with an elderly man.

"And you, who don't know her yet, need to know that this is actually the short version of the following sentence: 'Yes, sure, instead of finding friends your own age, instead of playing football or doing any other sports, instead of for once leaving his books and his rabbit be, instead of all of this, he chooses a seventy-year-old friend, and I know for sure that he only does it to annoy me'"

The twenty-eight-year-old narrator – yes, the same age as David Grossman when he wrote the young adult novel, has a lot to say about the treatment of the 'oldies'. This he tells the reader, with the additional comment that he will touch upon this subject further, on occasion. But in the meantime, and that is the joke of the story, between the lines he says it anyhow. Addressing the reader is in this case functional. It gives *Duel* the character of a children's book, but actually it's not. Under the bed, David becomes witness of an unseen character challenging Rosenthal to a duel. Even though he is afraid, he still wants to help mister Rosenthal to survive the duel.

Grossman mentions a whole lot of issues in passing. How times have changed. Living and writing, everything has to do with tempo. Keeping up with the times or not. The duel as such is about a woman with whom both rivals had amorous relations, decades ago. Grossman knows how to keep the reader's attention by playfully delaying the true nature of the duel.

A mysterious suitcase, cover-up stories and a little poetry, since the woman, who later became a famous painter, gave each of her lovers a drawing. One received a drawing of her eyes, because he could see right into her innermost being, and the other a drawing of her mouth, because she gave him kisses. And the young writer-to-be comes up with an original solution to the conflict. A piece of theatre. A bright novel, for all ages.