

## JR LONG READ

THE JR LONG READ HAS BEEN SPONSORED BY ANGELA GLUCK IN MEMORY OF HER DAUGHTER ESTER

The sight of refugees queuing on the borders of Ukraine and of smoke rising from the rubble of Ukrainian cities is heart breaking. It makes the underlying threads of the Passover story – freedom, exile and oppression – more prescient than ever this year. To connect with these themes, we have asked writers, poets, artists and photographers to choose a part of the Passover story or an element from the haggadah that resonates with them and interpret it in any way they want to create our own, unique JR Haggadah



# THE JR HAGGADAH

**O**ur haggadah project is inspired by a young woman, Ester Gluck, who died in 2006 at the age of 24. This April, she would have marked her 40th birthday. Compassionate and creative, Ester was committed to helping refugees and people seeking asylum. She spent two summers in Ghana on behalf of the Jewish social justice charity Tzedek and volunteered for organisations including the Refugee Council and the London Detainee Support Group (LDSD), that helps asylum seekers in detention. In particular, she cared about the needs of young refugees.

After her death, her mother, Angela, set up the charity The Separated Child Foundation to offer support to unaccompanied children who arrive in the UK as refugees. The foundation provides each child on arrival to the UK with a pack containing toiletries, underwear, warm clothing and other essentials, along with a special sleep pack. The charity also organises educational, social and cultural programmes, homework support and excursions for young refugees.

Join us, together with our artists and writers, in celebrating Ester's life and illuminating the causes she felt passionate about.

See: [separatedchild.org](http://separatedchild.org). We'll be celebrating the JR Haggadah alongside the publication of the New Venice Haggadah, with Professor Marc Michael Epstein on 11 April. see p63.

## EIGHT DAYS BY DAVID BREUER-WEIL



"Just as the pandemic struck in 2020, I started using a distinctive medium combining pencil and gold leaf, to plumb the depths of our current lives. These detailed drawings were partly inspired by medieval manuscripts, as well as haggadah themes. A series of these drawings, including *Coviad* (2021), was displayed in an online show for London's Ben Uri gallery ([benuri.org.uk](http://benuri.org.uk)). Eight Days followed, inspired by Genesis and partly referencing the Sarajevo Haggadah, one of the earliest extant illuminated Sephardi haggadahs.

The Sarajevo Haggadah was created in around 1350 in Barcelona and is now in the National Museum in Sarajevo. It includes profoundly mystical near abstract images of the Creation, light separated from darkness and planets bursting with life. Eight Days is a series of eight spherical forms, with inner and outer worlds, where I celebrate the miracle of Creation: of light, water, air, the cosmos, foliage, evolving mammals and humanity, whilst exploring the aesthetics of scientific elements including protons, string theory and quantum mechanics. The series also includes representations of festivals, including Passover."

**DAVID BREUER-WEIL** is a painter and sculptor. He studied at Central Saint Martins under Henry Moore's assistant Shelley Fausset and at Clare College, Cambridge. David is known for his shows of vast painted canvases – the Projects – and his works have been installed in public spaces across London and around the world. In 2018 a new work, *Flight*, was installed at Marble Arch and in 2019, his *Visitor 2* was exhibited at the Abdülmecid Efendi Pavilion, Istanbul, to coincide with the Istanbul Biennial. His most recent publication is *David Breuer-Weil Golden Drawings (Gli Ori, 2021)*, which was completed during 2021 as David was recovering from Covid.





## A REFUGEE'S DREAM BY GIDEON SUMMERFIELD



“When I travelled to Calais, France, in June 2017 I met people living in the unofficial refugee camps there to hear their stories and create artwork based on their experiences. My work for JR, *A Refugee's Dream* (2022), is a monoprint of an imagined scene described to me by one of the refugees I met: Mohammed Asif, who was only 16 years old and from Syria. He was all alone and told me he wished his family was with him. He said that back home in Syria there were no plants, trees or any beauty left. So when I asked him what his dream for the future was, he described a place of ‘paradise’ and this is what I created.

The work is in monotone because I wanted viewers to visualise the colour, using their imagination. For refugees, their dreams may never be fulfilled.”

**GIDEON SUMMERFIELD** is a young British artist who specialises in portraits and reportage illustration, with a particular focus on survivors of war. He was shortlisted in the Self-Portrait Prize Exhibition 2021. His recent projects include *D-Day 75*, featuring portraits of veterans, and *The Legacy of Survival*, for which he met Holocaust survivors and drew their portraits.

## TEN PLAGUES BY SOPHIE HERXHEIMER



“My ten plagues (on the following pages) are based on the list of plagues from *A Taste of Refuge*, the haggadah especially created by the Separated Child Foundation. It was read as part of a supper held in the spirit of Passover in 2019 for some of the children helped by the organisation and the charity workers. With my piece, I wanted to avoid figuration, and offer a hand-made, typographical painted page. I believe in the power of paint, texture and colour to touch and allow pause and meditation. The hand and eye are doors to our hearts, and this piece comes to you as unprocessed by machine or other cleaning/neatening processes as possible. Reader, I painted it. I know we are saturated with photographs of despair, news footage of people taking impossible journeys, alongside the many other subjects jostling for our attention, including our very own sadnesses. So, although this red colour does not make a calm space, I hope the hand-made ‘Ds’ give a rhythm and that the drawn and stamped letters and stains, the lumpy little stitches, give the visceral sense of living: living and responding, singing and sewing, and being a creative, imaginative human being, however tough and relentless the circumstances. I hope it reminds us that we are all joined by blood, we are all on the road and that our conjoined sufferings and journeys are part of an eternal continuum.”

**SOPHIE HERXHEIMER** has held residencies for The Museum of Liverpool and Transport for London among other organisations. Her work has been shown at her local allotments, at Tate Modern and on a mural along the Margate sea-front. Her poetry collection *Velkom to Inklandt* (Short Books, 2017) was a Sunday Times book of the year and *60 Lovers to Make and Do* (Henningham Family Press, 2019) was a TLS book of the year. Her new collection is a deck of 78 prophetic cards called *INDEX* (zimZalla, 2021).

GIDEON SUMMERFIELD: TOM BERRY



## Last Days of Rome by Sasha Dugdale for Elyse

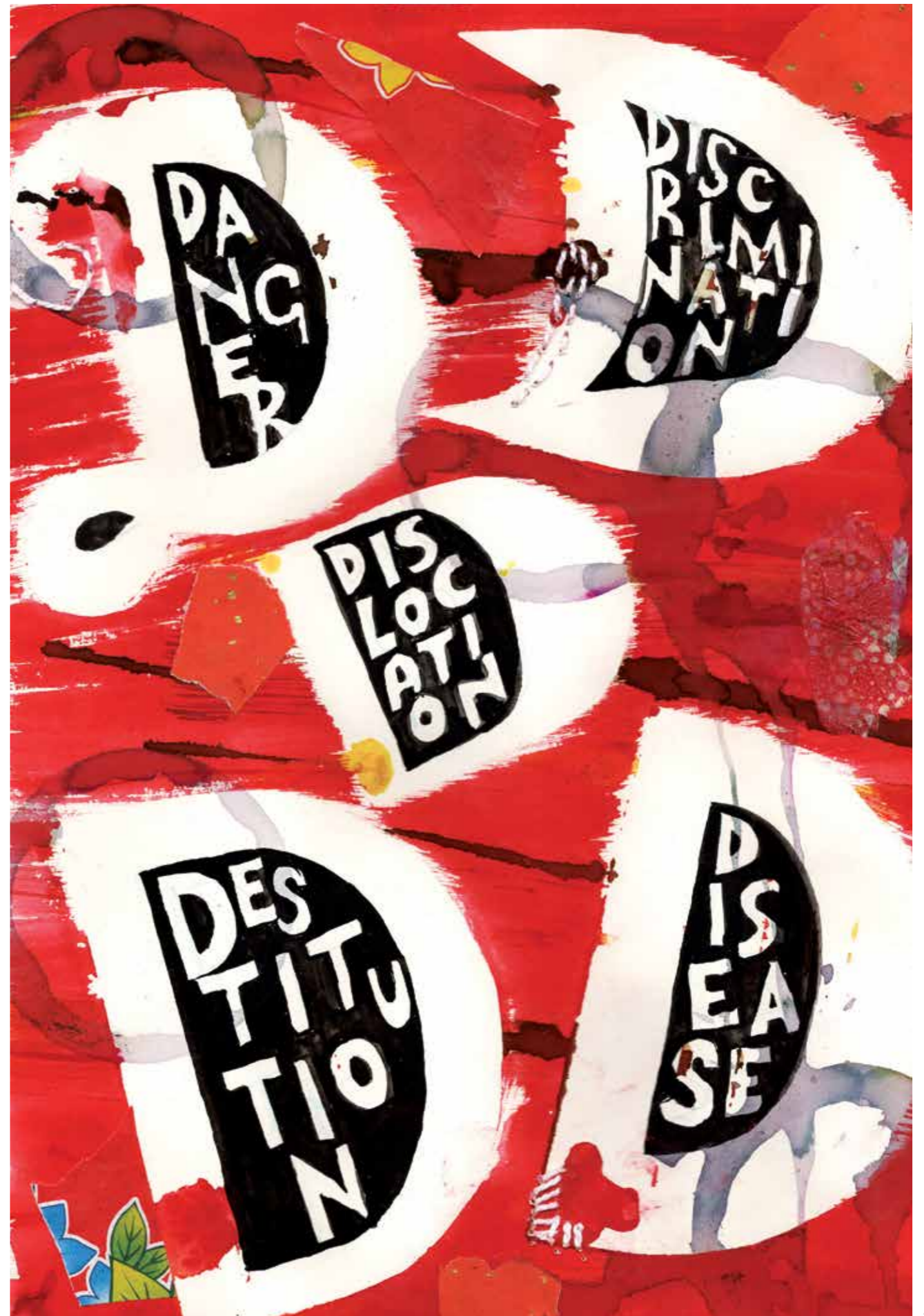
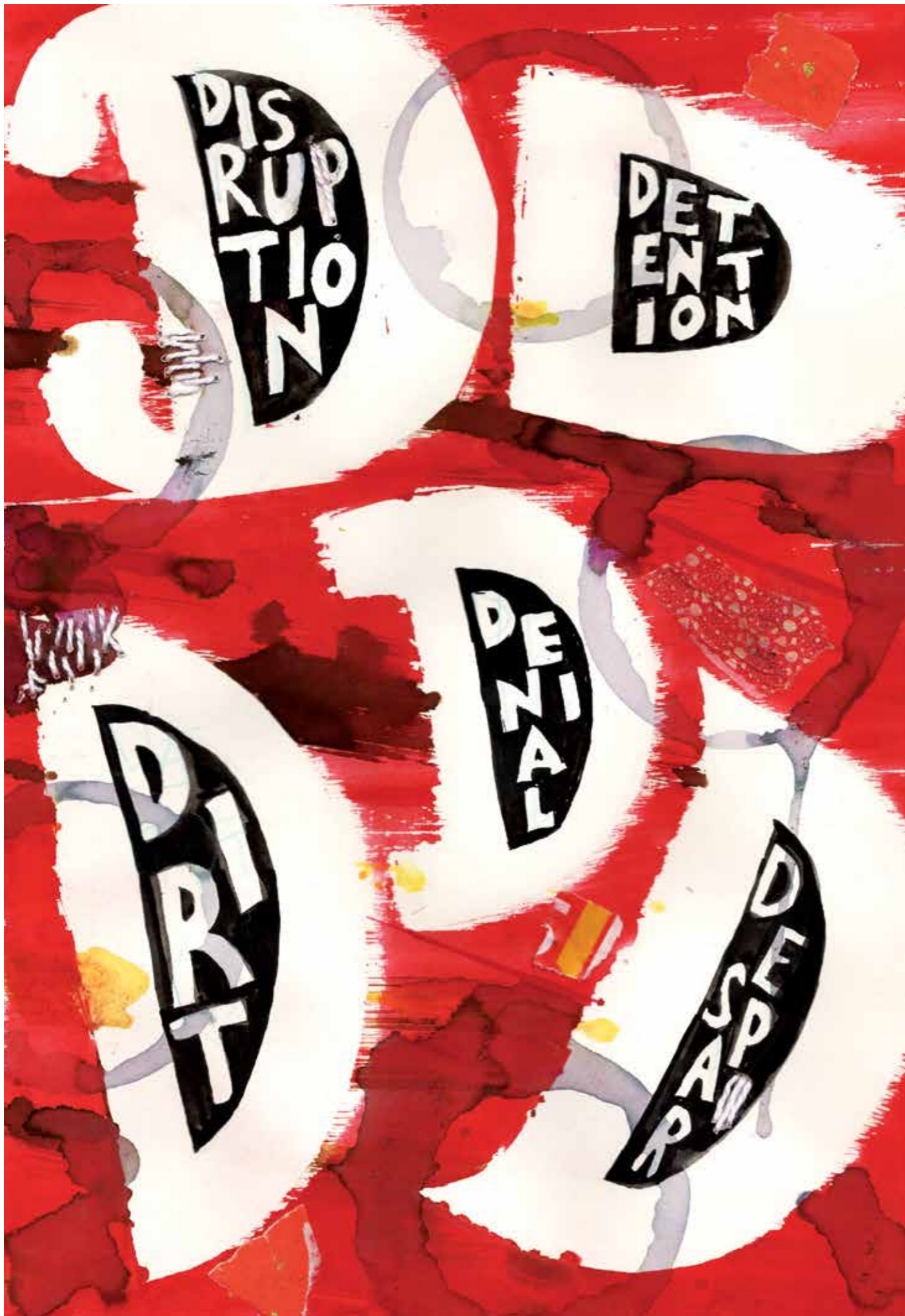
First the Rosenreichs and then the Lempels  
And then the road looked empty no one weeded  
The asters and the dahlias came up still  
Like the last fires of Summer, but the houses rotted  
No one could be found to take on the farms  
Water dripped from a pump, old barrel hoops  
The yellowing sales notices and the litter  
Of abandonment: fat hen, broken troughs.  
The women worked on, took in sewing,  
Cooked meals, smacked children, lay down  
Every night like empty tubes, crimped at the ends,  
Their mouths the O of anguish through which  
Spurred the last of their life's ointment.  
Their men gone, a letter now and then  
On cheap paper, folded and folded like a meditation  
Written by someone else, a few promises  
The hideous urgency of pay checks  
The taut-stretched gauze of love.  
Fidelity did not obsess them, they had calloused hands  
And life's sparse joys appeared on a tablecloth  
One evening in the week, and they oversaw them.



“This poem is taken from a sequence about emigration from the Pale of Settlement to America in the early 20th century. For many, the cost of moving a family to another continent was prohibitive, and so the menfolk were sent ahead to find accommodation and work. Often families were apart for years, with the women left to survive on little money and no communication with their spouses. When money finally arrived for passage the women had to pack up their homes alone and take their children on a long and unpleasant journey to an unknown country. Sometimes their husbands barely recognised these exhausted, worn survivors when they arrived; sometimes they had found new wives or lovers in the new world. For me women are the victims and heroes of the emigration story.”

**SASHA DUGDALE** is a poet, playwright and translator, Sasha has published five collections of poems, most recently *Deformations* in 2020. She won the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem in 2016 and in 2017 she was awarded a Cholmondeley Prize for Poetry. In 2021 she was longlisted for the International Booker Prize for her translation of Maria Stepanova's novel *In Memory of Memory*. She is former editor of *Modern Poetry in Translation*.









## Not much is certain but prints on the bank by Maia Elsner

a bird's brief pause  
before flight –  
who can know  
the colour of its  
wings or what it  
witnessed. What  
remains is rarely  
enough. Here,  
remnants of a bridge,  
brick traces  
of an attempt to cross.  
Water wrestles  
with the frost –  
heaves towards  
the hardened night.  
Already the willows  
have surrendered their  
fight. What it takes  
to thaw the bank.  
At the border  
of ice, ripple answers ripple:  
soon they  
trickle an escape. What  
is certain: the water  
remembers the scent  
of rain untainted  
by ash, laughter  
amid the purple  
reeds, talk of late-  
night escapades, of  
bicycle rides, of birds,  
of fruit. Before  
the bullets, before  
the murderous sky.



"I wrote this poem after spending time with a painting by my grandfather, called Out of the Source, Alive, the Waterfall, which celebrates the vitality by which water rejuvenates everything around it. My grandfather lost all his family in the Holocaust, and lived in a forest for the length of the war, before arriving in Paris as a refugee in 1948, and then in London in 1958. I wanted to explore the idea of water through the eyes of a migrant escaping invading armies, but also as witness to what has been lived, keeping memory alive."

MAIA ELSNER was born in London and has Mexican and Polish heritage. Her debut collection, *overrun by wild boars* (flipped eye, 2021), explores the dislocation of communities, objects and histories through migration and the legacies of colonisation. Most recently she has been involved in a film collaboration with Latin American artists across the diaspora, and in a poetry-postcard project exploring the refugee experience.



## ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BERRY



Tom's work is rooted in drawing and encompasses painting, illustration and printmaking. He has made sculptures for Transport for London and worked with the Hackney, Royal Maritime and Jewish museums in London. You can see examples of his work here: [tomberryart.co.uk](http://tomberryart.co.uk)

DON MEDDY, TOM BERRY

## Questions by Michael Rosen

Hey you!  
Why are you telling those stories of escape, flight and capture?

I decided long ago  
that it's my job to tell stories.

You haven't answered the question.  
And while I'm about it, I'll ask another one:  
Why do your stories tell of destruction and death?

Because that's what happened.

But you don't tell stories about everything that happens.  
You didn't tell a story about the cinnamon balls you ate  
yesterday.

Sometimes I do tell stories about cinnamon balls,  
but life is not all cinnamon balls.

True but you still haven't said why you tell these other stories?

I ask myself that question  
and sometimes I begin to doubt myself  
because there are times when telling those stories  
makes me unhappy.  
I don't like to think of people as close to me as  
great uncles and aunts  
being arrested, deported and killed  
because they were Jews.

Their crime was that they were Jewish.  
I ask myself what sort of crime is that?  
One uncle was arrested in the middle of the night  
by four French police.  
One uncle and aunt  
seized by Nazis  
in a place where they had found refuge.

It was a time of lists.  
Everything was done legally.  
Only the people on the lists  
were the ones who were arrested...



Is that it?

No, there's more.  
The point is  
they were trying to remove Jews from history.  
There was supposed to be no trace,  
no stories left.  
I can't bring the uncles and aunts back  
but I can tell the story.  
It means that at least they've failed  
to kill the stories.  
I started out telling stories about cinnamon balls  
(well, chocolate cake, actually)  
and I was sorry that I couldn't find out the stories  
about my great uncles and aunts.  
They didn't deserve to be lost from history.  
And now people can think about  
what sort of government and what sort of officials  
try to make people lost from history.  
Then, little by little I found out.  
I found the lists, the commands, the deportations,  
the convoys, the numbers.  
I tell these things.  
I've done my job.

Are you looking to be congratulated?  
No.



"My poem is about the duty to 'tell the story' I've taken it on myself to be the researcher and teller of the story of what happened to my family in France in the Holocaust and I ask myself the question: why do I tell this story? The story has flight and capture but also an escape..."

MICHAEL ROSEN is a writer, broadcaster, academic and award-winning poet. He was appointed the Children's Laureate from 2007-9. *Many Different Kinds of Love* (Ebury), a collection of his poems and the coronavirus diaries of his nurses was published in 2021. His latest book, *Michael Rosen's Sticky McStickstick, The Friend Who Helped Me Walk Again* (Walker Books, 2021) is out now.





## STEPPING FROM SHADE INTO SUNSHINE

**Don Meddy's stunning photographs capture the hard daily routine as well as the vibrant Jewish communal life of Moshe and Hannah and their family in Naseniye, eastern Uganda, in the lead up to this year's Passover celebrations. Meddy's images also illustrate how life on their farm has been dramatically transformed through a project run by the charity World Jewish Relief.**

The village of Naseniye is almost a five-hour drive from Uganda's capital Kampala. Surrounded by mountains and waterfalls, it's located in a region that tourists visit for the scenic hiking trails. But it is also home to some of the Abayudaya, Uganda's African-born Jews.

In this predominantly Christian and Muslim country, Uganda's century-old Jewish community stands at about 2,000 members. That number has grown and shrunk since its beginnings in the early 20th century, when a local chieftain named Semei Kakungulu began to study the tenets of Judaism. Kakungulu was visited by missionaries preaching Christianity, but broke away from those teachings to observe the customs of the five books of Moses. He encouraged his followers to raise Jewish children and circumcise their boys. Today, many of the Abayudaya proudly identify themselves as descendants of Kakungulu. The Abayudaya are spread over the region, with the largest group in Nabugoye where there is a synagogue and a Jewish primary and high school.

Here, Hannah and Moshe, who are based in the smaller Naseniye community, tell us about life in this remote but beautiful corner of Africa.

### Soul mates

Forty-five year-old Moshe and Hannah met at school and connected over their love of music. However, both dropped out before completing their studies, as they could not afford to pay their school fees. They have been married for 18 years and have five children, aged between four and 17.

**HANNAH:** "I was sorry to leave school early; I felt like my life was over".

**MOSHE:** "We relied on subsistence farming, which is very challenging. We planted millet and maize. It was hard work, and just about fed the family without providing us with any income. Even then, we didn't always have enough food for the whole family."

### A new farming project

Some community members introduced Moshe and Hannah to World Jewish Relief's TransFARMing project, which operates in partnership with a local NGO Jewish Response Uganda. The project offers agricultural and business training and mentorship, and helps people to generate an income through farming.

**HANNAH:** "Before Moshe and I joined the TransFARMing project, our children went to a government school where the education was free, but the standard was poor. Apart from a decent education, our children missed out on good meals, healthcare and clothing. We couldn't provide for our Shabbat meals. We hoped life would change."



### Green peppers and progress

**MOSHE:** "At first the new farming programme was hard but I realised that if you change your approach to farming, simple shifts can result in making good money. On the programme, we were taught how to farm using the best techniques, and which crops were most profitable, such as green peppers and watermelons."

**HANNAH:** "I felt so happy to be on the project. As a woman and a mother, it was important to me that I learned to farm myself, make my own money, learn how to spend it wisely and how to save it for the future. The project means I get a 'road' to myself. I am out and working rather than staying home and depending on my husband. Our daughter Lidiam, who is five, tells me, "I want to grow up to be a powerful lady like my mum".

**MOSHE:** "When I first made an income from farming green peppers, I felt as if I had taken a step from the shade into the sunshine. I have changed as a person. My children are happy and my wife is happy. They can eat well. Now my children go to good schools."

**HANNAH:** "Now we have enough food for ourselves, we no longer have to beg to our neighbours. We have been able to save up and buy a motorcycle, which we use for business and to transport crops. We can pay for our childrens' school fees, uniforms and stationery. We can keep the home well stocked and maintained. There is none of the stress of looking for money. There is peace and I share a real love now with my husband Moshe."

### The future looks bright

**MOSHE:** "My grandparents were Jews. My mother and father were Jews. I don't know anything apart from Judaism. I also work as the local mohel."

**HANNAH:** "I'm a leader in the synagogue. The project has changed the lives of many people in our community. We are able to afford to eat well on Shabbat and buy Shabbat candles and we can all come together to celebrate Passover with a big Seder meal. With my income, I can provide kiddush [blessings over the wine and bread] for the community. I am more confident now."

**MOSHE:** "Finally, our children can have dreams for the future."

*Interviews by Richard Budden from WJR and Tarphon Kamyia, director of Jewish Response Uganda.*




**DON MEDDY** is a Ugandan photographer best known for his expressive portraits, featuring bright natural lighting, bold colours and the landscapes of Eastern Uganda. Apart from working as a photographer, he has worked as a creative director,

guest editor and videographer. In collaboration with Action Aid, he has also mentored young aspiring photographers in Eastern Uganda. He regularly shoots his native city of Mbale for magazine features and social media posts.

World Jewish Relief's project is having a real impact for Jewish community members like Hannah and Moshe and their families. However, many more families still need support to build hopeful futures.

Visit [worldjewishrelief.org.uk](http://worldjewishrelief.org.uk)





no one dies here  
at this time  
because they left there  
at that time

**WE ARE ALIVE HERE  
AT THIS TIME  
BECAUSE THEY LEFT THERE  
AT THAT TIME**  
BY JACQUELINE NICHOLLS



“The seder begins with kiddush (blessing over wine) and the ‘shecheyanu’ blessing, acknowledging that God has kept us alive, and we have reached this moment. Later, we declare that if God had not taken our ancestors out of Egypt then, we would still be there, stuck in slavery. Timing is

everything. We are ones who came from those who knew when to leave. Our collective memory carries stories fleeing from Poland, Yemen, Romania, Ethiopia, Syria, Ukraine... the list is too long, the traumas are too deep. Yet, we tonight, raise four cups of wine with shaking hands, acknowledging the blessing of reaching this time. And a hopeful prayer that those who are still fleeing, and those fighting oppression, find their moments of redemption.”

JACQUELINE NICHOLLS is a fine artist, award-winning visual poet and Jewish educator. Her work explores handwriting as a form of drawing, taking inspiration from Jewish scholarly word play and textual tradition. For her Draw Yomi project, completed in January 2020, Jacqueline drew the Talmud, producing a drawing for every page. She has an MA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins and has an installation opening at The London Library in May. See: [jacquelinenicholls.com](http://jacquelinenicholls.com) ■