**Kadya Molodowsky (May 10, 1894 – March 23, 1975)**

Kadya Molodowsky, known as “the first lady of Yiddish literature,” published continuously between 1927 and 1974, and earned renown as a prolific poet, prose writer, playwright, essayist, and a co-founder and editor of such Yiddish literary magazines as *Svive* (Milieu), one of the first apolitical Yiddish periodicals, and *Heym* (Home).

Born in Bereza Kartuska, Belarus, she made a literary debut, having survived the Kiev pogrom in 1920. Her first book of poetry, *Kheshvendike nekht* featured “Froyen-lider” (Women-Poems), her most famous sequence of poems addressing the modernist struggle between the newly acquired female subjectivity and religious and societal constraints imposed on Jewish women. *Kheshvendike nekht,* as well as her other early volumes of poetry, *Mayselekh, Dzhike Gas,* and *Freydke* bore the mood of despair evoked by the poverty and desperate situation of the Jews in Eastern Europe. Before she emigrated to New York in 1935, she pioneered with poetry for and about children. In 1946 she published a volume of poetry, *Der melekh Dovid aleyn iz geblibn*, considered by some as one of her finest works, dealing indirectly yet profoundly with the loss of European Jewry in the Holocaust. Throughout her oeuvre, Molodowsky explored the questions of reconciling the Jewish identity with modernity.

**List of works (selection):**

Molodowsky, Kadya. (1927) *Kheshvendike nekht: lider* [Nights of Heshvan: Poems], Vilna: Kletskin.

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–––; (1933) *Dzhike gas* [Dzhike Street], Warsaw: Literarishe bleter.

–––; (1935) *Freydke,* Warsaw: Literarishe bleter.

–––; (1945) *Yidishe kinder: mayselekh* [Jewish Children: Tales], New York: Tsentral-komitet fun di yidishe folks-shul in di Fareynikte Shtatn un Kanade.

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–––; (1957) *A shtub mit zibn fenster*, New York: Matones; Schoolnik, Leah. Transl. *A House with Seven Windows: Short Stories*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.

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**References and further reading**:

Hellerstein, Kathryn. (2014) *A Question of Tradition: Women Poets in Yiddish 1586–1987*, California: Stanford University Press

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Klepfisz, Irena. "Di mames, dos loshn / The Mothers, the Language: Feminism, Yidishkayt, and the Politics of Memory," *Bridges,* 4 (Winter-Spring 1994): 12-47.

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