**Celia Dropkin (December 5, 1887 – August 18, 1956)**

Celia Dropkin, one of the greatest but lesser known Yiddish poets, revolutionized modern Yiddish poetry with her pioneer exploration of gender dynamics. Bold erotic motifs in Dropkin’s poetry shocked her contemporaries, while her poems, written mostly in the 1920s and ‘30s, sound au courant in the twenty-first century. This outstanding poet passionately and courageously dealt with such themes as sexuality, love, artistic creativity, motherhood, nature, as well as domination, and sexual politics in man-woman relationships.

Born in Bobruisk, Belarus as Tsilye Levin, she wrote her first poems in Russian at the age of 10. After her immigration to the United States in 1912, she began writing in Yiddish and made her literary debut in 1918. She was affiliated with modernist groups formed by Yiddish poets in America, such as *Di* *Inzikhistin* [Introspectivists] and *Di Yunge* [The Young]. During her lifetime she published only one volume of poetry, *In heysn vint*, which her children reissued after her death to include her short stories, and reproductions of paintings which she created later in life. Her modernist poetry shattered cultural stereotypes about the social and gender roles imposed on men and women, making her a path-breaking poet who “filled the stillness of Yiddish poetry with a passionate breath” (Yakov Glatshtayn).

**List of works**:

Dropkin, Celia. (1935) *In heysn vint* [In the Hot Wind], New York: C. Dropkin.

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**References and further reading**:

Solokoff, N., Lapidus Lerner, A., Norich, A. (1992) Eds. *Gender and Text in Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature,* New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Zucker, S. "The Red Flower: Rebellion and Guilt in the Poetry of Celia Dropkin," *Studies in American Jewish Literature,* 15 (1996): 99-117.

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