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| Dropkin, Celia (1887-1956) |
| Levin, Tsilye |
| Celia Dropkin, one of the greatest yet lesser-known Yiddish poets, revolutionised modern Yiddish poetry with her pioneering exploration of gender dynamics. Bold erotic motifs in Dropkin’s poetry shocked her contemporaries, while her poems, written mostly in the 1920s and 1930s, sound au courant in the twenty-first century. In her poetry, Dropkin addressed themes such as sexuality, love, artistic creativity, motherhood, and 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, making 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*. Her children reissued the volume after her death, updating it to include her short stories and reproductions of paintings that she created later in life. Dropkin’s 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). |
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| Further reading:  (Glatshtayn)  (Solokoff, Lapidus Lerner and Norich)  (Zucker) |