

The Dilemma of Memory: Voices of Four Poets

Sunday, November 2nd, 3 pm
The Trustees' Room, Main Library
Reception and book signings to follow.



Diane Freedman, Anna Halberstadt, Deborah Schwartz, and Lee Sharkey will read their narrative and lyrical poetry inspired by their experiences in Vilnius, the city that was the source of inspiration or safe haven and home to some of the major figures of Lithuanian, Russian Slavic, and Yiddish literature and culture. As working poets with differing relationships to the region, they had participated in the 2013 Summer Literary Series: Lithuania, a renowned program that brings together writers/poets/scholars/artists from Eastern European countries and Russia to meet and spend time with their visiting North American peers. Some poems will explore this city, “The Jerusalem of Europe”, as a contended site of multiple narratives and histories; others have been sparked by personal connections and disconnections to the city; still others grapple with the notion of place, remembered and felt. The reading will be followed by a Question and Answer session, book signings, and a reception.

Diane P. Freedman, poet, memoirist, nature writer, and scholar, has published poems and personal essays in *Sou'wester*, *Sunrust*, *Roberson Poetry Annual*, *Wind*, *Ascent*, and the volume *Shorewards: A Collection of American Women's Coastal Writings*. A Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of New Hampshire, she has published widely in her fields of research that include twentieth-century American poetry, memoir and autobiographical criticism, and women's studies. She is the author of *An Alchemy of Genres: Cross-Genre Writing by American Feminist Poet-Critics* (University Press of Virginia), editor of *Millay at 100: A critical reappraisal* (Southern Illinois University Press), and the recently completed *Thoreauvian Excursions: Poems, Essays, Journals* (forthcoming from Hiraeth Press in fall, 2015.) She earned a Ph.D. in English from the University of Washington, an M.A. in creative writing from Boston University, and M.A.T. and

A.B. degrees in English from Cornell University.



Born and raised in Vilnius, Lithuania, **Anna Halberstadt** moved to Moscow at the age of eighteen to study psychology at Moscow State University. She immigrated to New York twelve years later to attend Hunter College, where she earned a degree in social work. Since 1980, she has worked as a clinician, teacher, and administrator of mental health clinics specializing in the adaptation of immigrants, with a special interest in immigrants from the former Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries. She has published many works in her field of psychology but has found poetry to be a more adequate and condensed way to expand on the same themes—growing up as a child of Holocaust survivors in a country still struggling with past trauma, living in three countries (Lithuania, Russia, U.S.), and immigration. She was a finalist in the 2013 *Mudfish* poetry contest, and her collection of poetry, titled “Vilnius Diary,” appeared in the *Mudfish Individual Poet Series* (Box Turtle Press) in July 2014. Her creative work has been published by *The Alembic*, *Amarillo Bay*, *Bluestem*, *Cimarron Review*, *Cloudbank*, *Crack the Spine*, *Forge*, *Good Men Project*, *Mudfish*, *Permafrost*, *Rio Grande*, *Review*, *St. Petersburg Review*, and *Tiferet*, and translations of her poems in the Lithuanian journals *Literatūra Ir Menas* and *Šiaurės Atėnai*. She has studied with Ariana Reines, Jill Hoffman, Saskia Hamilton, and Eileen Myles.



Deborah Schwartz' poetry has been published in various journals including, most recently, *White Whale Review*, *Stroboscope*, *eclectica* and the *Printer's Devil Review*. Her manuscript, *A Girl Could Disappear Like This*, has won a finalist prize with Carolina Wren Press, and a semi-finalist prize with Elixir Press. In addition to

teaching at Boston College, Roxbury Community College, and tuning the occasional piano, she recently left her decades-long work at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston so that she can listen to Lucinda Williams all day on Spotify and write in the local coffee shop.



Lee Sharkey is the author of *Calendars of Fire* (Tupelo Press, 2013), *A Darker, Sweeter String* (Off the Grid Press, 2008), and eight earlier full-length poetry collections and chapbooks. Her work has appeared recently in *Consequence*, *Crazyhorse*, *FIELD*, *Kenyon Review*, *Nimrod*, *The Seattle Review*, and other journals. She is the recipient of the Abraham Sutzkever Centennial Translation Prize, the Maine Arts Commission's Fellowship in Literary Arts, the *Shadowgraph* poetry prize, and *Zone 3's* Rainmaker Award in Poetry. She co-edits the *Beloit Poetry Journal*, one of the country's oldest and most respected literary magazines.

Lee's latest manuscript, *Walking Backwards*, is grounded in her exploration of her Ashkenazi literary heritage and travels in Eastern Europe.