

Reading #1: Poem

The following poem was written by Rachel Bluwstein who immigrated to Palestine from Russia in 1910. Generally referred to as “Rachel”, she is one of the few Jewish women known by just her first name -- like Golda or Mathilde. Rachel is rightfully considered the founding mother of modern Hebrew poetry.

In this poem Rachel describes a new form of heroism – the early Zionist re-sculpting of the land of Israel.

To My Land (El Artzi)

by Rachel Bluwstein

I have not sung to you, my land

Nor have I glorified your name

Through deeds of heroism,

With the spoils of war:

Only a tree -- have my hands planted

Along the quiet shores of the Jordan.

Only a path -- have my feet conquered (trodden)

Over the surface of the fields.

Indeed, it is very meager

I know this, mother,

Indeed it is very meager

The offering of your daughter;

Only the sound of the shout of joy

On the day that the light shines,

Only crying in secret

For your suffering.

1926 Tel Aviv

