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REVIEWS

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**Lempel, Blume. *Oedipus in Brooklyn and Other Stories*. Translated from the Yiddish by Ellen Cassedy and Yermiyahu Ahron Taub. Simsbury, CT: Mandel Vilar Press; Takoma Park, MD: Dryad Press, 2016. 225 pp. \$16.95. (9781942134213).**

Blume Lempel was one of the finest writers of prose in Yiddish of all time. Though the narratives in this book are as much memoirs and impressions as they are plotted short stories, the language is stunning in its stark power and evocative beauty. Lempel came to the United States in 1939. Much of her writing elegizes the six million. She describes imagined scenarios of unsparing horror, especially for women, whose suffering she visualized though she never experienced it. Her view of postwar America through the lens of a foreigner whose family and heritage were destroyed is also compelling. On an airplane, in Brooklyn, or in Yosemite National Park, her past is always with her, always casting shadows over the American present, which for her is dark with death, divorce, incest, and the shame of women who can't outlive their past. Lempel's themes are strong and difficult, and these translations live up to the force of her words. Here, there is none of the sentimentality that plagues the perception so many readers have of Yiddish literature, and no solemn sanctification of the dead. Rather, this is the work of a brilliant, talented writer with one foot in the prewar world in Europe and the other in postwar America during its period of growth and development as a modern nation. We owe a great debt to Cassedy and Taub for their deft translation of a significant portion of Lempel's work. Highly recommended for all collections of Jewish literature.

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