

THE GRAVITY [OF THE THING]

[HOME](#)[FEATURES](#)[ISSUES](#)[BARING THE DEVICE](#)[SUBSCRIBE](#)[ABOUT](#)

Sounds Like | Jennifer Lang

I read one syllable at a time first-grader fashion: *ga-go-a-im*, which makes me think of the game charades—sounds like *garinim*, Hebrew for sunflower seeds, a common Israeli snack—here, in my favorite shabby-chic Jaffa boutique called Sharon some-tongue-twisting-last-name-I-can-never-remember, where I fondle handmade journals and pads of paper, each inscribed with poetic words and biblical verses like *halomot* (dreams) and *ve-hiye erev, vi-hiye boker* (there was evening, there was morning), so with my American manners and accented Hebrew, I ask the sales clerk what the G-word means, and she says, *Longings*, sure of herself, her mastery of my tongue, when, as the locals say idiomatically, the *asimon*—the obsolete phone token—falls and meaning and origin merge, as in *K'mo ani mitgagat alich?* I miss you? and she nods, then I nod, pigeon-chest-puffing proud of myself because this ancient abjad—22 letters written only of consonants—acts like a woman in midlife, warm and fuzzy on Wednesday, a hormonal mind-fuck on Thursday, and today, a too-hot-for-my-taste Sunday in May, she's a tease; I know the infinitive *lehitgaageya*—to miss—and how to conjugate it, and I understand the lexicon centers around a three-letter root from which nouns, adjectives, and verbs form, but sometimes 2 and 2 do not make 4 and living in a foreign country forces me to be nimble-minded and connect dots between things like missing and longing. Deep sigh. I take a last look at the notebook and leave, hunger settling in for the night.

American-French-Israeli hybrid, Jennifer Lang writes. Three-time Pushcard Prize nominee. Flash in *Atticus Review*, *CHEAP POP!*, the *Maine Review*, *Miracle Monocle*, *Pithead Chapel*, *Headway*, and the *Citron Review*. MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Assistant Editor for *Brevity*. Founder of Israel Writers Studio.

Posted in Summer 2020 Tagged Flash, Jennifer Lang, Poetry, Prose Poetry, Sounds Like

<< The Memory Game | Franki Haber

Itchy | Turandot Shayegan >>



[ABOUT](#) [CONTACT](#) [SUBSCRIBE](#) [TIP JAR](#) [TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)