

(Auto)Biographies

Bibliography compiled for the Contemporary Jewish Writing Class

at Congregation Beth Ami in April-May 2015

by Gabor Por - April 30, 2015

Available online at JewishBookWorld.org/tag/cjw/

2013 and 2014 National Jewish Book Award Winners and Finalists:

- **An American Bride In Kabul: A Memoir** by *Phyllis Chesler* (Palgrave , 2013) 256 pages, **SCL***
How a naïve American girl learned to see the world through eastern as well as western eyes and came to appreciate Enlightenment values. This dramatic tale re-creates a time gone by, a place that is no more, and shares the way in which Chesler turned adversity into a passion for world-wide social, educational, and political reform. - <http://amzn.to/1EwB7Qz>
- **David: The Divided Heart** by *David Wolpe* (Yale UP, 2014) 176 pages, **SCL***
The author questions why David holds such an exalted place in history and legend, and then proceeds to unravel his complex character based on information found in the book of Samuel and later literature. - <http://amzn.to/1QQIF86>
- **The Impossible Exile: Stefan Zweig at the End of the World** by *George Prochnik* (Other Press, 2014) 408 pages
An original study of exile, told through the biography of Austrian writer Stefan Zweig, the man who inspired *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. - <http://amzn.to/1EuBAT3>
- **Little Failure: A Memoir** by *Gary Shteyngart* (Random House , 2014) 368 pages, **SCL***
Shteyngart shares his American immigrant experience, moving back and forth through time and memory with self-deprecating humor, moving insights, and literary bravado. The result is a resonant story of family and belonging that feels epic and intimate and distinctly his own. - <http://amzn.to/1JEU4to>
- **Rebbe: The Life and Teachings of Menachem M. Schneerson, the Most Influential Rabbi in Modern History** by *Joseph Telushkin* (HarperWave, 2014) 640 pages , **SCL***
A captivating portrait of the late Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, a towering figure who saw beyond conventional boundaries to turn his movement, Chabad-Lubavitch, into one of the most dynamic and widespread organizations ever seen in the Jewish world. - <http://amzn.to/1JcKrtS>
- **The Rise of Abraham Cahan** by *Seth Lipsky* (Schocken/Nextbook, 2013) 240 pages
A noted journalist writing for both English-language and Yiddish newspapers, Abraham Cahan founded the Yiddish daily in New York City in 1897. Over the next fifty years he turned it into a national newspaper that changed American politics. - <http://amzn.to/1EUAJyw>
- **The Short, Strange Life of Herschel Grynszpan: A Boy Avenger, a Nazi Diplomat, and a Murder in Paris** by *Jonathan Kirsch* (Liveright, 2013) 352 pages, **SCL***
On the seventy-fifth anniversary of Kristallnacht comes this untold story of a teenager whose act of defiance would have dire international consequences. - <http://amzn.to/1bHmsl3>
- **The Worlds of Sholem Aleichem: The Remarkable Life and Afterlife of the Man Who Created Tevye** by *Jeremy Dauber* (Schocken, 2014) 464 pages, **SCL***
Novelist, playwright, journalist, essayist, and editor, Sholem Aleichem was one of the founding giants of modern Yiddish literature. The creator of a pantheon of characters who have been immortalized in books and plays. - <http://amzn.to/1EwDkLK>

More Biographies

- **All Who Go Do Not Return: A Memoir** by *Shulem Deen* (Graywolf, 2015) 288 pages, **SCL***
A moving and revealing exploration of Hasidic life, and one man's struggles with faith, family, and community. - <http://amzn.to/1dypMGH>
- **American Ghost: A Family's Haunted Past in the Desert Southwest** by *Hannah Nordhaus* (Harper, 2015) 336 pages, **SCL***
Uncovering the truth about her great-great-grandmother, Julia in this spellbinding exploration of myth, family history, and the American West. - <http://amzn.to/1JcPE4N>
- **Becoming Freud: The Making of a Psychoanalyst** by *Adam Phillips* (Yale UP, 2015) 192 pages, **SCL***
The story of the young Freud—Freud up until the age of fifty—that incorporates all of Freud's many misgivings about the art of biography. - <http://amzn.to/1JcQ4Ik>
- **The Circles of Life: My Ukrainian Family's Odyssey of Secrets, Love and Survival from Pre-War Odessa to the Promised Land and America** by *Anna Aizic* (Meir, 2014) 152 pages
Memoir in letters manages to transcend numerous potential hazards of the form to engage and enlighten her readers. - <http://amzn.to/1GLgraR>
- **The Confabulist** by *Steven Galloway* (Riverhead, 2014) 320 pages, **SCL***
An exciting new novel that uses the life and sudden death of Harry Houdini to weave a tale of magic, intrigue, and illusion. - <http://amzn.to/1JVqgk8>
- **A Fifty-Year Silence: Love, War, and a Ruined House in France** by *Miranda Richmond Mouillot* (Crown, 2015) 288 pages, **SCL***
A woman moves across an ocean to uncover the truth about her grandparents' estrangement and pieces together the story of their wartime experiences. - <http://amzn.to/1zvthrm>
- **Golda Meir: True Grit** by *Ann Atkins* (Flash History, 2015) 320 pages
Undaunted by the objections of her family, sects of Jewish culture, and the back-door politics of powerful governments, Golda's pragmatic decisions reveal her destiny and the unwavering conviction that all people can live in peace and with dignity. - <http://amzn.to/1DZW7f5>
- **The Late Starters Orchestra** by *Ari L. Goldman* (Algonquin, 2014) 304 pages, **SCL***
About teachers and students, fathers and sons, courage and creativity, individual perseverance and the power of community. - <http://amzn.to/1dysCvp>
- **Mark Rothko: Toward the Light in the Chapel** by *Annie Cohen-Solal* (Yale UP, 2015) 296 pages, **SCL***
Tells the unlikely story of how a young immigrant from Dvinsk became a crucial transforming agent of the art world—one whose legacy prevails to this day. - <http://amzn.to/1AmRN98>
- **Moses: The Righteous Sky Gazer** by *Shlomo Giora Shoham* (Cambridge Scholars, 2014) 325 pages
This intellectual biography describes the personal development and Weltanschauung of Moses from his childhood until his death. - <http://amzn.to/1KydMjf>
- **My Rebbe** by *Adin Steinsaltz* (Maggid, 2014) 250 pages
For Rabbi Steinsaltz, the Lubavitcher Rebbe embodied a lifelong mission to better the world. Far surpassing the role of teacher, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson was at once a scientific mind and faithful believer. - <http://amzn.to/1Q4nJs1>
- **Sex vs. Survival: The Life and Ideas of Sabina Spielrein** by *John Launer* (Overlook, 2015) 384 pages
The first full and accessible account of one of the most significant and overlooked figures in the field of sexual psychology. - <http://amzn.to/1FB4ovl>
- **Stella! Mother Of Modern Acting** by *Sheana Ochoa* (Applause, 2014) 354 pages
Stella Adler became a child star of the Yiddish stage in New York, where she was being groomed to refine acting craft and eventually help pioneer its modern gold standard: method acting. - <http://amzn.to/1AmSwXS>

* Books marked with SCL are available at the Sonoma County Library