Hebrew Poetry Written with a Gothic Script

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By KEN FRIEDEN

Elise Lasker-Schueler's "Hebraische Balladen" ("German-Jewish Literature"; 1912) became part of the German cultural milieu that gave rise to Expressionist art and poetry. From 1901 to 1912 she was married to the man who founded "The Storm" (Der Sturm), the prominent journal of Expressionism. She witnessed the emerging Zionist movement and, from a distance, became aware of Martin Buber's popularization of Chasidic traditions. Soon after receiving the Kleist Prize for literature, she was beaten by Nazis in Hitler's Berlin of 1933, and immediately thereafter left for Switzerland. In 1939 until her death in 1945 she lived in Jerusalem.

Leon Yudkin, a professor of Hebrew at the University of Manchester, is uniquely qualified to provide an enlightening introduction to her work for the general reader. Clearly he has done justice to the cover of this neglected work. Elise Lasker-Schueler's work is an associate professor at Emory University, where he directs the program in Judaic studies and literature.

"My People" translated by Audri Duczkas and Jeanette Litman-Demestere in Else Lasker-Schueler's, "Hebrew Ballads and Other Poems" (Jewish Publication Society).