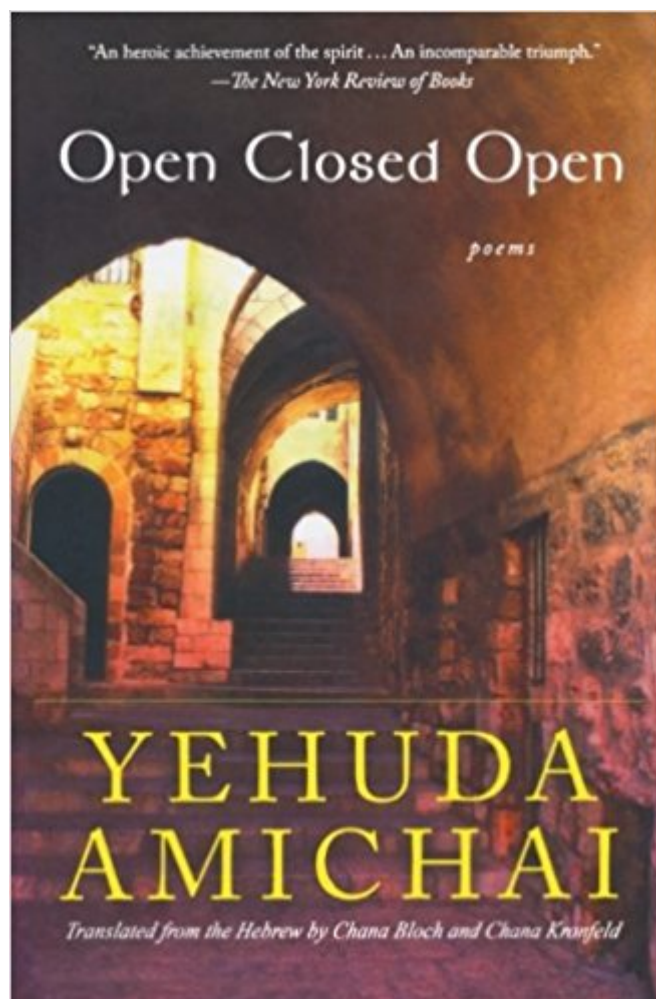


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Open Closed Open: Poems



Synopsis

In poems marked by tenderness and mischief, humanity and humor, Yehuda Amichai breaks open the grand diction of revered Jewish verses and casts the light of his own experience upon them. Here he tells of history, a nation, the self, love, and resurrection. Amichai's last volume is one of meditation and hope, and stands as a testament to one of Israel's greatest poets. Open closed open. Before we are born, everything is open in the universe without us. For as long as we live, everything is closed within us. And when we die, everything is open again. Open closed open. That's all we are. "from *WAS NOT ONE OF THE SIX MILLION: AND WHAT IS MY LIFE SPAN? OPEN CLOSED OPEN* •

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Customer Reviews

Yehuda Amichai, Israel's best-known and greatest poet of the past generation died at age 76 in 2000. The noted critic Irving Howe wrote about him: "At his best, he is the best." • Amichai writes in a simple, natural, style poems whose contents are frequently sharp, witty, sensuous, ironic, sometimes brutal, and yet pleasing. The New York Times wrote that Amichai's poetry is "The kind of resonantly simple poetry that is the work of a great poet." • He writes about war, love, family, sex, God, and frequently mocks biblical stories or, at least, makes readers rethink what they previously thought about the tales. He has the ability to create memorable phrases, to say in a few words, or a simple phrase, what others would need a full page to say. His poems are far better in their original Hebrew, but are still superb in translation. He describes Jerusalem, for example, as

â œa port city on the shore of eternity,â • and also â œJerusalem, the only city in the world / Where the right to vote is granted even to the dead.â • He describes its inhabitants as full of used Jews, â œused by history / secondhand Jews, with small flaws, bargains.â • He describes the biblical Jacob who had a dream of a ladder with God at its top, â œOur father Jacob, on the beaten track, / Carries a ladder on his back / like a window washer to the VIPs. / He does Godâ™s windows, if you please.â • Thinking of Jewish history, he writes â œspilled blood is not the root of trees / bit itâ™s the closest thing to roots / we have.â •The following is a sample of some other poems:The famous French king said, AprÃ’s moi, le deluge!Noah the Righteous said, Before me, the flood,and when he left the ark he declared, The flood is behind me.

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