

A Crisp Day By Jiya Kowarsky

A crisp day, a beyond beautiful blue sky, walking down a street – everyone can remember a time in her life that was vivid, whose memories echo back over the years. This was my time living in Haifa as an exchange student at age sixteen. I opened my window and there was the golden dome of the Baha'i Temple, I swam in the green waves of the Mediterranean, I gulped down a falafel, I went to school with the Israeli students at the Leo Baeck School who welcomed me with open arms.



I always had a love affair with Hebrew and was determined to speak Hebrew, even though everyone wanted to practice their English on me. I was stubborn and I learned to speak well, but I never mastered reading Hebrew.

This was the great gift of the past six months. At home, without all the coming and going, I settled down into my routines. I started to read a Hebrew novel by Meir Shalev. Some of you may recall his best seller – A Pigeon and A Boy. This is not the one I am reading – The one I am reading is entitled – Two She Bears.

I ordered a hard back of the novel in English and have the Hebrew paperback propped up against it at the same page. I also list each new word that I learn in a notebook.

What is so satisfying is that reading the words and soaking up their incredible beauty transport me back to my time in Haifa, when I was breathing in that crisp air, tasting the savory falafel, gazing up at the wondrous Israeli sky.

Was this worth the ticket of the last six months? Maybe it was.

Tuesday morning Jewish Tangents and Saturday morning Torah Study are important to both Jiya and Steve. Jiya is also a member of the Social Action Team and volunteers at the Wyandanch Day Camp. Jiya and Steve have found some incredible friends at TBT and this is no small thing.