



The Department of Russian and Slavic Studies (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) invites you to the guest lecture

## “Poems Written in the Dark: Poetry from the Siege”

by Polina Barskova (U.C. Berkeley)

Monday, November 28, 2022, 13:00-14:30

Mt. Scopus, Library, Media 32



Barskova's talk will be based on her edited volume *Written in the Dark*, her compilation of the work of five poets writing in Leningrad during this period: Gennady Gor, Dmitry Maksimov, Sergey Rudakov, Vladimir Sterligov, and Pavel Zaltsman. Many of these poems, translated in this volume (by various contributing translators) into English for the first time, had remained hidden from the Russian-speaking public for nearly forty years.

Barskova presents these five as heirs to OBERIU, an avant-garde poetic movement active in Leningrad in the 20s and 30s. Barskova argues that the surrealist qualities of the OBERIU poets were expounded upon and strengthened by their Siege successors, though for very different reasons. Rather than challenging the notion of art as representative, surrealist poetics

were called upon for “the paradoxical task . . . to represent, as faithfully and realistically as [possible], things that were seemingly impossible and unrepresentable . . . Indeed, striving towards a different notion of the real was one of OBERIU’s main creative missions. Their Siege successors, however, had no other choice: the situation in which they found themselves was already a different, non-normative reality.”



**Polina Barskova** born in Leningrad, taught [Russian literature](#) at [Hampshire College](#) (MA), and is now a professor at [U.C. Berkeley](#). She has published several volumes of poetry, and she has received the [Andrei Bely Prize](#) and the Nose Prize in her native Russia. She has done extensive archival work on the literature of the [Siege of Leningrad](#), resulting in the award-winning volume *Written in the Dark: Five Poets in the Siege of Leningrad* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2016).