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Article abstract

The artistic production of several contemporary Hebrew-language women poets manifests a privileged concern with the body and its expressive capacities. In this context, the work of Hila Lahav is particularly significant, as it develops a poetics in which the body becomes both the subject and the medium of artistic creation. Focusing on Hila Lahav’s collection ‘Ad Ha-boqer’ (Till Morning), this article examines how her writing articulates an Ars poetica rooted in the fragmented, wounded body as a site of resistance to violence and silence. Through the figure of the unnamed wife in Judges 19 and the recurrent imagery of skin, dismemberment, and metamorphosis, Hila Lahav’s poems reconfigure abjection, mourning, and vulnerability as the conditions of a speaking body rather than a mute corpse. By reading Till Morning alongside biblical exegesis and feminist criticism, the article traces how Lahav’s poetic voice “writes its own name” on and through the body, elaborating a corporeal practice of memory and testimony that refuses both erasure and voyeuristic representations of sexual violence.

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Writing the Torn Body: Ars Poetica, Violence, and Resistance in Hila Lahav "Till Morning"

Elisa Carandina

I was always aware of a possible silence falling / like the cover of a tomb and engulfing me forever
Louise Bourgeois, *Wonderwater*, Roni Horn, 2004

In 2014 Hila Lahav published her second poetry collection entitled *'Ad ha-boqer, Till Morning*¹. The title is a quotation from Judges 19:25:

וְלֹא־אָבּוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים לְשָׁמֶעַ לוֹ וַיַּחֲזֶק הָאִישׁ בְּכִילָגָשׁוֹ וַיֵּצֵא אֲלֵיהֶם הַחַיִּץ וַיַּדְעוּ אֹתָהּ וַיַּתְעַלְלוּ־בָּהּ
כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וַיִּשְׁלְחוּהָ (בעלות) [כַּעֲלוֹת] הַשָּׁחַר:²

But the men did not want to listen to him, and the man seized his concubine³
and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night long
till morning, and they let her go at daybreak.⁴

The biblical text uses three different expressions, *kol ha-laylah 'ad ha-boqer*, "all night long till morning," and then again *ba-'alot ha-šahar*, "at daybreak," in order to define and, within the text itself, prolong the time of the violence. Readers are not allowed to exit this sentence beforehand; the text forces them to remain inside this space of violence with no possibility of escape. Addressing precisely this aspect, Phyllis Trible defines the pericope Judges 19:1–30 as belonging to a group of biblical stories delineating a "land of terror" from which one does not return unscathed:

The betrayal, rape, torture, murder, and dismemberment of an unnamed woman is a story we want to forget but are commanded to speak. It depicts the horrors of male power, brutality, and triumphalism; of female helplessness, abuse, and annihilation. To hear this story is to inhabit a world of unrelenting terror that refuses to let us pass by on the other side.⁵

At first glance, choosing this text in order to articulate a reflection on *ars poetica* as writing of the body seems paradoxical. On the one hand, in the absence of a voice and a subject, a nameless corpse appears to be the very last place where one would go to look for a poetic

¹ Hila Lahav, *'Ad ha-boqer* ("Till Morning"), Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Tel Aviv 2004.

² The biblical passages cited in Hebrew follow the version available at <<https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Tanakh>>.

³ The critical debate surrounding the translation of the Hebrew word "pilegeš" is extremely extensive and will not be addressed here. The rendering of the term as "concubine" is already found in the Septuagint (παλλακή), in the Vulgate, and in the Targumim, and has been recently called into question. For a critical overview of the term and some alternative solutions, see for example Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1988, pp. 81–89, and Diane Kriger, "The Pilegesh: Status or Topos," in Ead., *Sex Rewarded, Sex Punished. A Study of the Status "Female Slave" in Early Jewish Law*, Academic Studies Press, Boston, MA, 2011, pp. 89–119.

⁴ All English translations of biblical passages cited in this article are taken from Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York and London, 2018.

⁵ Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1984, p. 80.

voice, or where one would wish to find it. On the other hand, to choose a body that is the object of violence as the point of departure for a reflection on artistic creation in relation to the inhabited and perceived body means selecting the least comfortable position from which to articulate such a reflection. More precisely, it means choosing a body that no longer belongs to the subject, who has been deprived not only of her body but of her very subjectivity. In the biblical text this voiceless body is that of a nameless woman who never utters a word, and thus stands in total opposition to the creative act understood as *prise de parole*, as the assumption of speech that is articulated as body, as voice, as identity, as name.

I do not, however, intend here to analyse Hila Lahav's text as a rereading of the biblical passage that the author uses as a frame within which to introduce a poetic act with autobiographical components. Instead, I propose to use this biblical episode as a key for interpreting Hila Lahav's use of the body in her poetics, in order to develop an even more radical hypothesis. More precisely, I wish to reflect on the choice to give voice to this body as a practice of resistance to silence and to violence. This choice must be read, on the one hand, in the context of the poetic production of several contemporary Hebrew-language women writers, such as Shira Stav or Tali Latowicki, who display a privileged interest in the body and who explore forms of artistic creation linked to the abject and to suffering. On the other hand, this very same biblical episode was at the centre of another act of artistic resistance by Michal Heiman, who placed it at the heart of a triptych that rethinks Gustave Doré's biblical illustrations.⁶ Hila Lahav chooses the body of the woman in Judges 19 not only by opposing the violence through giving her a body, embodying her, and making her speak without enacting or reproducing that violence, but also by making this wounded body into the body of the poet. The exposed, skinless body of Marsyas thus becomes the body from which to articulate a poetic discourse made of resistance, mourning, and pain, as I will fully explore in the last section of this article.

As for the autobiographical dimension, my reflections are grounded in the approach developed by Jill Bennett in *Empathic Vision*, which involves separating the traumatic experience, which always belongs to the subjects who have lived it, from an art that "by virtue of its specific affective capacities, is able to exploit forms of embodied perception in order to promote forms of critical inquiry."⁷ This perspective opens up the possibility of exploring, in a critical and empathic way, forms of representing trauma in terms of an empathy that is not based on affinity, which Jill Bennett defines as "feeling for another insofar as we can imagine being that other," but on "*feeling for* another that entails an encounter with something irreducibly different and, often, inaccessible"⁸. Keeping in mind, therefore, that my exploration of Hila Lahav's text neither intends to ignore the author's private experience nor to appropriate it by using it as the interpretive key to the text, I will propose an itinerary through her collection *Till morning* in order to introduce the corporeal dimension of the poet's own notion of *ars poetica*, by exploring the traumatic dimension in and of the text.

1. Multiplication, metamorphosis, and skin

⁶ See Elisa Carandina, *Rewriting the Sacrificial Pattern in Michal Heiman's Project Lying Women*, in Ead. (dir.), *Maternal Sacrifices, A New Gaze at Sacrificial Patterns in Jewish Cultures*, « HENOCH », 46/2, 2024, 366-390.

⁷ Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2005, p. 10.

⁸ Ibid.

Hila Lahav, a poet and musician born in 1985 in Zichron Yaacov, whose poems have been translated into English and Italian and who has to date published three poetry collections⁹, addresses in *Till morning* a first question that concerns the expressive possibilities of a subject deprived of her subjectivity and of her body. The poet's answer is a long poem in five sections, alternating with five moments entitled "Twelve," each devoted to different parts of the body: skin, foot, eye, neck, belly, heart, ear, knee, mouth, hand, shoulder, and nose. These twelve body parts, which recall the concluding section of the biblical episode in which the Levite seizes the woman and cuts her "limb by limb into twelve pieces" and then sends them throughout the territory of Israel (Judges 19:29), are entrusted with the task of recounting the experience of violence from the point of view of the body of the one who undergoes it. These twelve body parts thus become the instrument through which to give voice to the woman of Judges 19 — a woman who is gang raped and dismembered:

Her bodily integrity, so effectively destroyed already by rape and torture, is further sacrificed, disintegrated [...] Her body will be shattered, not like ashes on the wind, but like rotting flesh, not purified but defiled, and according to the purity laws doubly so. The raped body is now an untouchable, defiling body, an *abjection* (Kristeva 1982).¹⁰

In Hila Lahav's words, "It rots without / being consumed. Food becomes flesh and my flesh food."¹¹ The poet, who describes the theme of the body as "the paradox par excellence,"¹² the unavoidable *unheimlich* one cannot avoid speaking about, chooses therefore to expose violence by resorting to a narrative voiced by twelve body parts, each of which embodies every nuance and ambivalence of that violence. The text lets each body part speak, and each narrates, in five different moments, every minute of an endless night that repeats itself, multiplying voices, space, and time. The twelve parts into which the body is disintegrated thereby make it possible to explore a violence that is incarnated and experienced differently and contradictorily by skin, foot, eye, neck, belly, heart, ear, knee, mouth, hand, shoulder, and nose.

This body and its fragmentation must then be further contextualised in relation to Hila Lahav's own definition of poetry. According to the author, the ambition of poetry is to break old metaphors and create new ones that allow for greater accuracy and precision in approaching things.¹³ The first step in this process is a defamiliarisation of the familiar, accomplished through breaking it into fragments so as to produce elements that are no longer recognisable as parts of a whole. If breaking into pieces is thus part of the process of alienation necessary to approach a new form of knowledge and its expression, the fragmented body that speaks in *Till morning* is both the instrument and the subject of this dynamic. The collection, as Hila Lahav herself acknowledges, aims to find new expressive means to narrate the violence of rape by seeking a discourse characterised by a force and assertiveness that do

⁹ For the author's bio-bibliography, see the entry in the dictionary of Hebrew literature edited by Joseph Galron-Goldschlager <<https://library.osu.edu/projects/hebrew-lexicon/01999.php>>. On Hila Lahav's work, in addition to the articles and interviews published in the Israeli press on the occasion of the release of her works and cited in the dictionary entry, see the contribution by Tamar Hess devoted to a section of the poet's first collection, "First Person, Identification, and Collective Guilt in Israeli Women's Poetry," «Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture», vol. 25, no. 3/4, 2020, pp. 186–90.

¹⁰ Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, cit., p. 125.

¹¹ Lahav, *Ad ha-boqer*, cit., p. 53. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the present author.

¹² Conversation with the present author, 15 October 2020.

¹³ Ibid.

not in any way satisfy a pornographic or predatory gaze.¹⁴ The poetess's words echo Cheryl Exum's awareness, with regard to the biblical pericope and to forms of narrating violence that perpetuate it: "I take this violence seriously, though I do not take it literally, for like pornography – though not so blatantly – these literary rapes perpetuate ways of looking at women that encourage objectification and violence."¹⁵

From this point of view, Hila Lahav's fragmented body corresponds to a deliberate choice to represent the multiplication of the forms that violence takes, and mirrors, symmetrically, the multiplication of the subjects who enact it. It does so in a radical and mute attempt to exhaust violence, centimetre by centimetre, to extinguish it by refusing, as it were, all the words that have already been used to describe and circumscribe it. The contradictory and paradoxical nature of the experiences lived by the limbs, not only in relation to one another but also within the experience of each single body part, enables the text to avoid a univocal representation of violence and instead to describe its multidirectionality and multiformity. This representation is never abstract but always language attached to, and faithful to, the body. If the woman's dismembered body parts in Judges 19 are used as messages sent throughout Israel, in *Till morning* it is the word itself that becomes flesh.

הכתף

האצבעות אמרו: הצל. היד אמרה: הפה. השכם אמר:
שא. הגב אמר: פל. הלב אמר: לא עוד. הצוואר אמר:
עצר

והוספתי לעמד.
עמדתי עד אור¹⁶.

The fingers were saying: save. The hand was saying: strike. The shoulder blades were saying: / carry. The back was saying: fall. The heart was saying: enough. The neck was saying: / stop / And I kept on standing. / I stood until dawn.¹⁷

This concrete and manifold violence fragments into individual voices that ask for everything and its opposite, that do everything and its opposite, but that above all betray. Over the course of the collection, the body is accused not only, and not so much, of not knowing what to do, but of "standing," of enduring, of becoming a treacherous body that acts against itself by collaborating with those who perpetrate the violence and, for this reason, will be suspected of

¹⁴ Interview with Hila Lahav by Yoni Livneh published in Yedioth Ahronoth on 16 January 2015, available at <<https://bedofsodom.wordpress.com/2015/01/17/%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%A2%D7%9D-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%94-%D7%9C%D7%94%D7%91-%D7%A2%D7%93%D6%BE%D7%94%D7%91%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%A8/>>.

¹⁵ Exum, *Fragmented Women*, cit., p. 170.

¹⁶ Lahav, *Ad ha-boqer*, cit., p. 14.

¹⁷ Another English translation is available in Hilà Lahav, *Selected Poems, 2009-2019*, Translated by Fani Schwarz and Hilà Lahav, p.17: "The Shoulder. The fingers said: rescue. The hand said: hit. The shoulder blades: carry. /The back said: fall. The heart said no more. The neck said:/hold./And I stood on. /I stood till dawn.

deserving that violence, of taking pleasure in that violence. To endure, to be unable to stop the blood in the veins and the air in the nostrils, constitutes, in fact, the charge brought against the body and its guilt. This unwanted practice of resistance introduces, albeit polemically, the first element in the opposition to the reduction of the body to a mute corpse: this treacherous body recounts the forms of violence, leaving its physical trace on the page, also thanks to lines that break apart halfway.

A second dimension of this practice of resistance is the refusal of violent language, that is, the refusal of language as a means of perpetuating violence. The distance between what violence seeks to impose on language and the new forms of representation that the text chooses is staged in “Poem I” and “Poem II” as a refusal to gratify the desire of the other. This refusal is articulated in the tension between “song” and “poem,” both *šir* in Hebrew, in order to distinguish artistic creation from obscene speech that gratifies and yields to the desire for violence:

I שיר

הוא רוצה שֶאֱנִי אֶצְעַק אָבֵל אֲנִי שׁוֹתֶקֶת
הקול הַזֶּה הוא הַדְחִיפָה כְּשֶהִיא נוֹגַעַת
בַּסְרָעֶפֶת
כְּשֶהִיא נוֹגַעַת בְּמִיתָר אֶיךָ
אֲנִי שָׁרָה

II שיר

הוא רוצה שֶאֱנִי אֶשְׁתַּק אָבֵל אֲנִי צוֹעֶקֶת
הַדְחִיפָה עֲבָרָה אֶת הַסְרָעֶפֶת,
אִישׁ לֹא נָשָׂר
כְּמוֹנִי
בֵּין הַגִּרְכִּים
זֶה הַשִּׁיר שֶהָיָה לִי בְּרֹאשׁ
כְּשֶהָיִיתִי קְטַנָּה¹⁸

Poem I

He wants me to scream but I remain silent / This voice is the push when it touches / the diaphragm / When it touches the string / how I then begin to sing.

Poem II

He wants me to be silent but I scream / The push has passed through the diaphragm, / there is no one who sings / like me / between the thighs / This is the song I had in my head/when I was little

In Hila Lahav’s collection, language is constantly used as a tool to speak violence without reproducing it, thereby leaving space for violence within the text but denying it the possibility

¹⁸ Lahav, ‘*Ad ha-boqer*’, cit., pp. 68–69.

of becoming a medium of communication with readers. To this end, one of the poet's privileged strategies is the use of synaesthesia – “the foot that will listen, the knee that will vomit¹⁹” – to convey a body that expresses the pain of violence by seeking new images, without falling back on those already available or on the violence potentially inherent in them.

The relationship between body and poetic voice is thus literally condensed in the expression “I am the body that has been torn from the body,” *ani ha-guf še-niqra' me-ha-guf*. This is the body deprived of itself, the body that has betrayed, as discussed above, and in this separation of the body from the body lies also its multiplication, or reduction to pieces. This tearing uses the same verb, *qr'*, that describes the rending of garments as a sign of mourning. As already mentioned, and as will be seen more clearly in the concluding section, this mourning is an integral part of this poetic voice understood as a body that refuses to be a mute corpse. Between these two elements, there is a third component that recalls a story of voice and skin, that of Marsyas: “Nec quicquam nisi vulnus erat,” Ovid says of him in Book VI of the *Metamorphoses*. Skin is the instrument through which these three levels are brought together in the expression of an artistic voice that speaks from a wounded body that refuses to remain silent. In *Till morning* the skin is the element that gathers and exposes the different parts of the body, that marks the boundary with the outside world to the point of becoming the only horizon, as in the poem that opens the collection:

עורה הִיא רְקִיעַ עַל גּוּפָהּ. עוֹרָה הַשְּׁחִיר וְהָאֲדִים עִם שָׁחַר.

עוֹרָה נִמְתַּח עַל אֵיבָרֶיהָ הַכְּחֻלִּים בְּלִי קֶמֶט.

עוֹרָה הִיא רְקִיעַ בְּלִי עָנָן וְבוֹ צִפּוֹר אֶלְמֶת²⁰.

Her skin was the firmament on her body, darkened and reddened at dawn./ Her skin was stretched over her blue limbs without a wrinkle./ Her skin was a sky bereft of clouds, and in it a mute bird.²¹

Skin marks the passing of the hours as the threshold between body and world, a world that has become the body because “the earth is vast but what they want is inside / my body, I am so beautiful / that the sun rises in my belly / burns completely.”²² As threshold, skin gathers the body parts and constitutes a kind of atmosphere that surrounds them in an attempt to keep everything inside, to reconstruct a space of protection. There is no refuge other than skin, because cries for help go unheard²³, and skin becomes yet another threshold that evokes the one on which the woman of Judges 19 will be found, that is, the threshold of a house from whose protection she has been expelled and excluded. Just as Mieke Bal chooses to call this

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

²⁰ Lahav, ‘*Ad ha-boqer*, cit., p. 5.

²¹ Another English translation is available in Hilà Lahav, *Selected Poems, 2009-2019*, Translated by Fani Schwarz and Hilà Lahav, p.13 “*Her skin – a sky upon her body. It blackened, it turned red with dawn. / Upon her bluish limbs it stretched without a crease. / Her skin – a sky where but a mute bird sings.*”

²² Lahav, ‘*Ad ha-boqer*, cit., p. 41.

²³ Ibid., p. 9.

woman Beth, in reference to the construct state of *bayit*, “house,”²⁴ Hila Lahav interprets the loss of protection in relation to skin, pointing to the limits of a body that contains only reasons to flee from it and that, at the same time, strains to contain all that “sticky²⁵” pain that does not evaporate and from which it is impossible to free oneself. This skin stands, so to speak, in front of the body’s limbs despite the humiliation to which it is subjected; it cannot offer protection, yet it is the instrument of salvation, thanks to its power of transformation.

This skin is also “tender and transparent,” like a worm.²⁶ I do not intend here to explore all the functions that Lahav attributes to this element which, in its triple function as caterpillar, worm, and scarlet, becomes in the collection an alter ego of the poetic “I”. I will only clarify the aspects that link it to skin and metamorphosis. Leaving the poetic “I” skinless like Marsyas, defenceless like a worm, the tender and transparent skin of this caterpillar — so easily crushed — makes metamorphosis possible. It becomes the very instrument with which to resist violence, for it is this worm that will sing, as we read at the end of the poem that begins with the statement that “it is possible to glue back together / what has not been broken.²⁷” The recovery of lost integrity thus passes through a process of metamorphosis, of shedding the skin of a body torn from the body, a body that is all wound. This metamorphosis leaves the body exposed and vulnerable without reducing it to silence; it re-composes it by exposing it, and this process is what defines the poetic act in Hila Lahav.

2. Writing one’s own name

Framed within the story of the nameless and speechless woman of Judges 19, Hila Lahav recounts the poet’s discovery of her own voice as a metamorphosis — the becoming of a body torn from itself, a body that bears mourning and wounds yet refuses to occupy the position of a mute, nameless corpse.

One manifestation of this can be found in Lahav’s previous and first collection, *Yehidah (Soul)*²⁸, in particular in the poem “I write my name.”²⁹ The starting point is the assertion of a poetic voice that has a name, indeed that is the repeated act of writing that name, as the text states: “I write my name over and over on the crumbling earth.” While leaving to others the task of writing about “the sun that will come to the cemetery” or about “the skies that will know how to catch the souls that ascend,” the poetic “I” claims her art as the art of writing her own name. This writing precariously balances between birth in a cemetery and death in it, as we read in the opening of the poem: “Although I grew up among gravestones I am scarcely made of cheap materials at all. Instead of porphyry’s strength / I inherited the thinness of hyssop and the hesitancy of the grasses.”³⁰

The strength of this poetic writing cannot be that of the gravestones and its silence, but that of the plants that grow among the graves, and in particular that of hyssop. Among the various functions that hyssop fulfils in the biblical text, there is its role in purification rituals, as evoked in Psalm 51:7: dipped in blood, it is used to sprinkle the healed leper or the house (Leviticus 14:6–7, 14:51), or again in Numbers 19:18 it is used in the ritual of purification for

²⁴ Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, cit., pp. 89–90.

²⁵ Lahav, *Ad ha-boqer*, cit., p. 61.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 72.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

²⁸ Hila Lahav, *Yehidah* (“Soul”), Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Tel Aviv 2011.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 26–27.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

those who have come into contact with a corpse: “And a clean person shall take a hyssop and dip it in water and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the vessels and on the people who were there and on him who touched the bone or the corpse or the dead person or the grave.” Proximity to the abject is expressed here as proximity to the corpse and its impurity, and as the strength to endure beside the tombstones without becoming a corpse.³¹

Hila Lahav’s poetic voice thus has a name and a body. With these qualities, the poetic “I” can claim artistic creation in the following terms:

[...] עֲדֵינִי לֹא נִמְצָא לִי הַבֵּהֶט וְלֹא
מִסְפָּרָה הַחֲלָקָה. בֵּינָתִים, שְׁלֹא לְשֹׁכֵחַ, אֲנִי מַצְיֵרֶת
אֶת גּוּפִי בַּמָּקוֹם שֶׁאֲנִי שׂוֹמֵר דּוֹרְכִים בּוֹ,
אֲנִי מְנַגֶּנֶת בַּחֲלִיל כְּדֵי לְשַׁמֵּר
לְעַצְמִי אֶת הַמָּקוֹם
בְּשָׂמִים לְצַד הַקִּינּוֹת.

[...]

ב
בַּמָּקוֹם לְקַבֵּעַ אֶת עַצְמִי בְּשִׁישׁ אֲנִי מִשְׁתַּדֶּלֶת
לְהוֹסִיף וְלִהְיוֹת צֶמַח מִצְבּוֹת.

My porphyry has not yet found its place nor/ has my grave received a number.
For now, so as not to forget, I trace / the outlines of my body on the ground
that people trample, / I play the flute to guarantee/ myself a place / in the
heavens beside the lamentations.

[...]

2

Instead of fixing myself in marble I strive / to go on as grass among the
gravestones.³²

The poetic voice is thus a voice that rises not only among graves but fully conscious of the force that would consign it to the condition of a mute corpse. Its choice is to draw the outline of a body on the ground that everyone tramples. This body drawn on the ground evokes the chalk outlines tracing the silhouette of a corpse before it is removed. The name that the poet chooses for herself, and that therefore defines her *ars poetica*, is not the one engraved on a tombstone, nor is her strength to be sought in the cadaverous fixity of porphyry. The name that defines the author as a poet is a line drawn around a body that refuses to be reduced to the condition of mute corpse, a margin that claims a liminal position with respect to the abject, whose strength is that of the grasses that rise between the tombs, that of the flute’s melody that insinuates itself among the lamentations. What emerges is a practice of resistance

³¹ See Libby Cone-Elaine James, "Hyssop," in Eric Ziolkowski et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception Online: Ho Tsun Shen – Insult*, De Gruyter, Berlin–Boston, MA, 2010, pp. 692–94.

³² Lahav, *Yehidah*, cit., pp. 26–27.

that finds new artistic means not to be reduced to the silence of a corpse while still bearing the mourning for what has happened. The body torn from the body, vulnerable and wounded, thus completes its trajectory as a body that bears mourning for itself and that, from and against this body, articulates a poetic voice as writing of the name, of the body, and of the voice that stands as protection against anonymity, violence, and silence.

Abstract

The artistic production of several contemporary Hebrew-language women poets manifests a privileged concern with the body and its expressive capacities. In this context, the work of Hila Lahav is particularly significant, as it develops a poetics in which the body becomes both the subject and the medium of artistic creation. Focusing on Hila Lahav's collection '*Ad ha-boqer (Till Morning)*', this article examines how her writing articulates an *ars poetica* rooted in the fragmented, wounded body as a site of resistance to violence and silence. Through the figure of the unnamed wife in Judges 19 and the recurrent imagery of skin, dismemberment, and metamorphosis, Hila Lahav's poems reconfigure abjection, mourning, and vulnerability as the conditions of a speaking body rather than a mute corpse. By reading *Till Morning* alongside biblical exegesis and feminist criticism, the article traces the ways in which Lahav's poetic voice "writes its own name" on and through the body, elaborating a corporeal practice of memory and testimony that refuses both erasure and voyeuristic representations of sexual violence.