

No matter what was going on in the rest of her life, Beth told me, Shabbat was a day to relax and feel peaceful with herself. We talked about what Shabbat meant to her. I remember feeling deeply surprised, relieved, and happy that I'd found this peaceful retreat in the middle of Manhattan. Here, every week, Janet and Beth reaffirmed for themselves what was important. I thought perhaps this is why this apartment feels like a home.

Thinking about Janet and Beth and that first year in New York brought up more memories. I remembered one night when I couldn't sleep. I remembered getting out of bed and taking out my journal. I expected to write regretfully about friends I'd left in California, or of my worries about finding work. Instead, I found myself making a list similar to the list Mrs. Moskowitz makes when she is first left alone in her new apartment. "I miss my blue chair," I wrote, "I miss my sofa," and so on. When I was done, I felt comforted, and could fall asleep.

I also remembered my frequent trips back to California. I remembered returning to New York each time with a suitcase full of favorite things from home. Just as Mrs. Moskowitz begins to feel happy when she unpacks her candlesticks, as I unpacked each item, I felt just a little bit more at home.

The few words I'd typed out had brought up many feelings and memories, but they did not make up a picturebook. I was stuck. I talked to my agent. We decided that I was probably not the right person to write this book. I put the project aside.

Around this time another friend of mine, Nancy, was getting married. I bought her a little handmade pillow as a wedding present. It was very pretty. Before wrapping it, and giving it up to Nancy to put on her sofa, I decided to test it out on my sofa. It looked lovely sitting there. But, my sofa didn't measure up to the pillow. My sofa suddenly looked very shabby. And, somehow, now the picture above my sofa didn't look right either. My rug looked worn, and the pottery on the coffee table didn't look right either. I felt very agitated. I rearranged the pottery. I adjusted the picture. I swept the rug and cleaned the living room. When I was done, I felt centered and calm. And, I had a structure for my Sabbath story.

I wrote up a story proposal and sent it to David at JPS. He liked the proposal, and, with his help, I began writing *Mrs. Moskowitz*.

That's the story behind my story. *Mrs. Moskowitz* is a book about some simple

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**Uri Orlev:
Children's Book Award Winner**
Introduction by
Judy Greenblatt

This year, among the candidates for the Children's Book Award, was one whose author clearly shared our goals. Immediately after World War II, there was a great silence on the part of survivors as they attempted to come to terms with what they had experienced. After a period of many years, they slowly began to find their tongues. Uri Orlev is one who has found an eloquent and powerful voice indeed. It was a long time before he could give expression to his experiences.

Uri Orlev was born in Warsaw in 1931. His father was captured by the Russians at the start of the war, and Uri spent the years 1939-1941 hiding in the Warsaw ghetto, together with his mother and younger brother. His mother was killed, and he and his brother were sent to Bergen-Belson.

The Island on Bird Street, winner of AJL's Sydney Taylor Best Book Award for 1984, is the story of Alex, a boy left alone in a Polish ghetto, based on Mr. Orlev's childhood experiences. The horrors of war are clear, yet the point of view maintained is optimistic. Alex, age 11, survives the winter in a ruined house in the ghetto. Not blind hope, but faith based on the words of his parents and of his father's friend, Boruch, guide him through his darkest days. The Island on Bird Street was published in Hebrew in 1981, and won the Mordechai Bernstein Award for Children's Literature, given by Haifa University.

Mr. Orlev immigrated to Israel after the war, and at first worked on a kibbutz in the lower Galilee. He is the author of an adult novel, The Lead Soldiers, but for the past five years has concentrated on writing for children.

Mr. Orlev lives with his wife and three children in Jerusalem, so you will understand that he could not be with us tonight. He has, however, sent us a letter.

Remarks by Uri Orlev

I wish to express my deep gratitude to your Association for presenting *The Island on Bird Street* with your Best Book Award.

I feel privileged to have been able in this book to share some of my experiences in the Holocaust with others.

I feel privileged to have been able to speak in it for all those who perished.

But perhaps, above all, I feel privileged to have demonstrated in it the total failure of

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**Miriam Chaikin:
Body-of-Work Award Winner**
Introduction by
Judy Greenblatt

The 1984 recipient of the Sydney Taylor Body-of-Work Award is Miriam Chaikin. Ms. Chaikin has won a place of deep affection and respect in all our hearts and minds, as well as in those of our children. When the books started to arrive at our door in great numbers last fall, my daughter Miriam—who was then ten—could be counted on to appear immediately after the mailman, asking longingly if another Molly book had arrived.

Miriam Chaikin was born in Jerusalem, grew up in Brooklyn—home of the Molly books—and now lives in Manhattan. She was brought up in a close-knit Orthodox family. This upbringing has been a major influence on her writing. That she feels holidays renew family ties and spirit, and link us with a shared past, is clearly evident in her work.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Chaikin worked for two U.S. Senators. She entered publishing via the subsidiary rights area, and was then a book editor and later editorial director for a major publishing house. Now a writer and a free-lance editorial consultant, Ms. Chaikin has authored the text of several picture books and has poems in various anthologies.

Molly, heroine of the series about a girl growing up in an Orthodox family in Brooklyn in the 1940s, initially appeared in I Should Worry, I Should Care, Miriam Chaikin's first novel. But the four Molly books have not

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Amy Schwartz (continued from column 1)

feelings, but, to me, important ones. I'm happy that what has touched me has touched others also.

I'm grateful to the Jewish Publication Society for publishing my story. I'd like to thank my editor David Adler for his editorial help, his patience, and encouragement.

Thank you for inviting me here and thank you for this award.

Uri Orlev: (continued from column 2)

the Nazis to destroy the human spirit in even a little boy.

I am sorry to have been unable to attend this festive occasion and wish to thank you once more for the prize you have honored me with.