



**Laissez-Passer**  
**by Ricky Rapoport Friesem**  
**Kipod Press**  
**Israel 2009**  
**Softbound, 115 pages**

*Review by Zvi A. Sesling*

Israel has always produced good poets, starting in biblical times. In the more modern era many began writing in their mother tongues: Russian, Polish, German, French. Eventually Hebrew became the language of their art. Today there are many Hebrew poets and almost as many who write poetry in English. Voices Israel is one organization in Israel that promotes English poetry with a newsletter, annual poetry competition as well as a yearly anthology.

One Israeli poet writing in English is Ricky Rapoport Friesem whose latest book *Laissez-Passer, Poems 2001-2009* was recently released. Friesem is a poet and documentary film maker who has written two cook-books, an award winning poetry collection and has had her poetry published in numerous magazines.

Friesem's poetry is often ironic, honest and short. She writes some great lines like the opening to "Frequent Flyer," In a strange city/where no one knows my name/I can ignore the sights.

There is also the entirety of the title poem "Laissez-Passer"

Only words  
can grant me freedom  
let me break through  
love's tight bonds  
slide me through  
restraint's barbed borders  
turn me loose in the beyond

Friesem notes about the words *laissez-passer*, "In French, literally, 'let go.' Usually used to refer to a special travel document issued in lieu of a passport. And so we see her travel document within the seven lines of the poem that will help her find her freedom.

In the clever "Book Collector" Friesem sees herself as an overlooked book by a potential lover, or perhaps just scanned but never fully appreciated. Even the final line might be a double entendre:

## Wilderness House Literary Review 5/1

I am a book  
you'll never read.

You'll stroke my cover  
run your fingers down my spine,  
riffle through me, feel my heft  
and nod with satisfaction.  
But read me? Never.

I make a nice addition  
to your bookshelf.  
Great book.  
In good condition.  
Barely used.

In a book of more than 100 poems there are many to choose from and quite a few you will find worthy of a second read. Ricky Rapoport Friesem has written a personal and enjoyable poetry book.