

Review by Jake Marmer for *Mima'amakim*, Feb. 2006

Eve Grubin's [Morning Prayer](#) came out a few months ago, in the middle of the subway strike; crisis notwithstanding, I was completely transported. Alright, this may not be the greatest pun ever, but, it is absolutely true that Eve's book blew me away. It took me over a month to read this thin debut collection - the work was too powerful to digest in large dozes. Basically, this is what we, Mima'amakim folk, term as the "Artistic Exploration of the Jewish Religious Experience" - for the first time, written on the really professional level. Poetry is top-notch, and rather than even trying to get into the detailed critique, I'll quote one of the back-cover blurbs, given by my favorite contemporary poet, [Yusef Komunyakaa](#):

Eve Grubin has found "her own wildness" in *Morning Prayer*, her first book of poetry, and she has also teased a sober knowingness out of our twenty-first century wilderness. Without the slightest grandstanding, this wonderful young poet's old soul is hard at work, sure-eyed and determined to render a lyrical clarity that surprises and penetrates.

From my end, I'll offer one quick comment. Much of the Jewish religion-themed art (poetry, music, theater) of the past decade has been neo-chassidic - ecstatic, mysticism-wrought, rule-transcending, and sometimes, decadent in the shock effects of its conflicts. Eve's work, however, is much more akin to the "misnaged" approach: even her explosive leaps of religious passion are somehow paced, moderated; everywhere, there's the ambiance of the humble intellectual surrender to the laws. She's not interested in cheap shots of the shock-effect: this work is about the tremendous craft and endless arguments with the self, an internal beit midrash.

Speaking of the beit midrash, Eve is a fellow at [Drisha](#) this year. At the same time, she teaches creative writing at the **New School** and serves as the program director at the [Poetry Society of America](#).

Some of her work is available online: see the [Drunken Boat](#), [UES](#), [Virginia Quarterly Review](#), and [LPZ](#).