Yiddish Writing
After the Holocaust: An Act of Survival
A lecture by Esther Frank, McGill University

Theodor Adorno famously said that writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. The work of the Yiddish poet, essayist, and short story writer Rachel (Rokhl) Korn, spanning Europe and America from the years 1918-1982, repudiates this claim. She was one of a few Yiddish writers who lived through The Wars, first in Warsaw, Poland, until 1939, and then in the former Soviet Union, until 1948, when she moved to Canada. Choosing to write in the language of her culture, Korn deliberately returned to conventions of the lyric that she developed before the Second World War, redefining and affirming in her art what was destroyed in her life. Her writing in the post war years won her international critical renown as she continued working in Yiddish and was translated into English and other languages.

Esther Frank is a Faculty Lecturer in the Department of Jewish Studies at McGill University in Toronto, Canada. Her research focuses on American Yiddish writers, and includes an ongoing project on the life and times of Lamed Shapiro. This lecture is sponsored by the European Studies Program, Jewish Studies and the Walker Institute of International and Area Studies.