



David Bezmozgis

Topics

Best Selling and Award Winning Authors, Culture and Society, Jewish Interest, Pop Culture and Entertainment

Travels From

Massachusetts

Bio

David Bezmozgis was born in Riga, Latvia in the former USSR. He immigrated to Canada with his parents in 1980. In the spring of 2003, he emerged on the literary scene when three of his stories were published almost simultaneously in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, and *Zoetrope All-Story*. These stories formed the core of David's first book, the acclaimed *Natasha and Other Stories*, which chronicled the experiences of a family of Soviet Jews who immigrated to Toronto in the 1980s. "These complex, evocative stories herald the arrival of a significant new voice," declared *Publisher's Weekly*. *Natasha* went on to be translated into more than a dozen languages and was a *New York Times Notable Book for 2004*, as well as an *Amazon.com Top 10 Book*, and among the "Best Books" selections of *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Economist*, *Publisher's Weekly*, and *The Independent*. It was also chosen by *The New York Public Library* as one of the "25 Books to Remember for 2004." Among its prizes, it garnered the Commonwealth First Book Prize (Canada/Caribbean), The Reform Judaism Prize for Jewish Fiction, The Canadian Jewish Fiction Prize, the Jewish Quarterly Wingate Prize for Fiction (UK), and the City of Toronto Book Award. It was also shortlisted for *The Guardian* First Book Award, *The Los Angeles Times* Art Seidenbaum First Book Award, and The Governor General's Award For Fiction (Canada). David's work has been widely anthologized and was selected for inclusion in *The Best American Short Stories* in 2005 and 2006.

He has twice been a participant in The New Yorker Festival (2005, 2009) and has been a featured

speaker at universities and literary festivals around the world as well as venues such as The New York Public Library and The Armand Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. David is a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellow as well as a MacDowell Colony Fellow. Alongside his literary work, David has also established himself as a versatile and talented filmmaker. He holds an MFA in Production from USC's School of Cinematic Arts, and he has written and directed both documentaries and narrative films. In the summer of 2006, David was among a select number of screenwriters to be invited to the Sundance Screenwriter's Lab. In 2009, *Victoria Day*, David's first feature film as writer, director, and producer, premiered at The Sundance Film Festival. Also set in Toronto in the 1980s, the film covered territory similar to that of *Natasha*. Since its Sundance premiere, *Victoria Day* has also played at numerous film festivals around the world, including The Shanghai International Film Festival, The Moscow International Film Festival, The Athens International Film Festival, and the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival.

SPEECHES

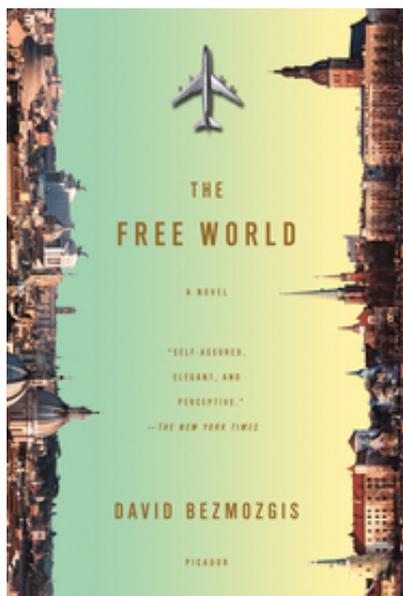
Who Chooses Whom? The Author and His Subject David talks about why he has written primarily about the Russian and Russian/Jewish immigrant experience. The talk touches upon the larger question of how a writer finds their subject, as well as the consequences—both positive and negative—of coming to be defined by a particular subject, be it stylistic, tonal, ethnic, or genre-based.

The Russian Jewish Immigrant Experience - Who Are the Russian Jews? Where Do They Fit in North American Jewish Life & Culture? Having extensively written about and studied the history and culture of Russian Jews (and being one himself), David examines where these Jews fit into the fabric of North American Jewish life. Who are they? What are the historical, political, and social forces that shaped them? What are the commonalities and differences between them and North American Jews? How have these factors impacted their integration into North American Jewish life? And what might the future hold?

Being a Hyphenate Literature and Cinema – The Story of My Career as an Author-Filmmaker. As both an accomplished author and film director, David discusses the reasons behind the choices he made that led him on his unusual career path. What is the appeal of working in both mediums? How do they complement each other—and how do they clash? A candid account of what it's like to juggle a career in both literature and film.

BOOKS

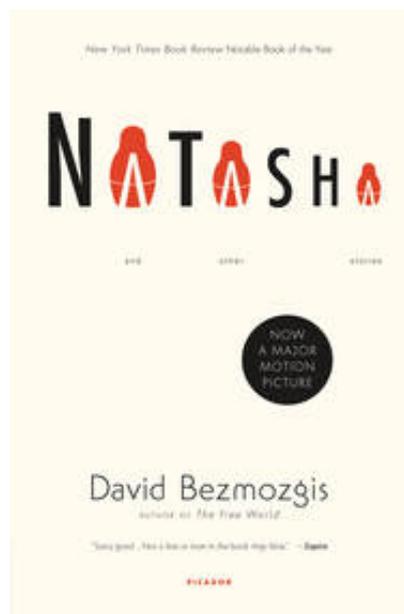
[The Free World](#) A Novel



Picador

Summer, 1978. Brezhnev sits like a stone in the Kremlin, Israel, and Egypt are inching towards peace, and in the bustling, polyglot streets of Rome, strange new creatures have appeared: Soviet Jews who have escaped to freedom through a crack in the Iron Curtain. Among the thousands who have landed in Italy to secure visas for new lives in the West are the members of the Krasnansky family — three generations of Russian Jews.

Trade Paperback



[Natasha](#) And Other Stories

Picador

In the space of a few weeks, America thus met the Bermans—Bella and Roman and their son, Mark—Russian Jews who have fled the Riga of Brezhnev for Toronto, the city of their dreams. Told through Mark's eyes, the stories in *Natasha* possess a serious wit and uniquely Jewish perspective that recall the first published stories of Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth, not to mention the recent work of Jhumpa Lahiri, Nathan Englander, and Adam Haslett.

Trade Paperback

REVIEWS: Praise for *The Free World*

“Self-assured, elegant, and perceptive.”

—Adam Langer, *The New York Times*

“Thought-provoking . . . powerfully realized, absorbing, and old-fashioned in satisfying ways.”

—*The Boston Globe*

“Bezmozgis’s keen sensitivity and ability to render human frailty is exquisite.”
—*Time Out New York* (4 out of 5 stars)