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**The Association of Jewish Libraries Announces 2019 Winners of Jewish Fiction Award**

**Mark Sarvas** is the winner of the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) Jewish Fiction Award for his novel ***Memento Park***, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. The award includes a $1,000 cash prize as well as support to attend the 54th Annual Conference of the Association of Jewish Libraries in Woodland Hills, CA, June 17-19, 2019. Two honor books were also recognized: ***The Cloister* by James Carroll**, published by Nan Talese, an imprint of Knopf Doubleday, and ***The Fourth Corner of the World* by Scott Nadelson**, published by Engine Books. The Committee reviewed over 70 works of fiction originally written in English with significant Jewish thematic content that were published in the United States in 2018. Thanks to all those who submitted entries for consideration. The wide array of books published this year is a testament to the vibrant state of contemporary Jewish fiction.

The protagonist in Mark Sarvas’s second novel, *Memento Park*, becomes aware of a valuable painting believed to have been stolen from his family in World War II. In order to recover the mysterious work, he must reconnect with his father, his family history, and his own Judaism. “Dramatically paced and laced with mordant wit, Mark Sarvas has fashioned a meditation on art, family, faith, and Jewish history in the form of a suspenseful intellectual thriller,” notes Yermiyahu Ahron Taub, Chairperson of the Award Committee.

In *The Cloister*, James Carroll tells the timeless love story of the discredited medieval French scholar Peter Abelard and his intellectual paramour Héloïse, and its impact on a priest and a Holocaust survivor in post-World War II Manhattan. “Assiduously researched and richly imagined, James Carroll has created a riveting glimpse into how the encounter between Christianity and Judaism many centuries ago continues to reverberate to devastating effect in more recent times,” writes Yermiyahu Ahron Taub.

The characters in Scott Nadelson’s short story collection, *The Fourth Corner of the World*, abandon their lands of origin, sever their roots, and distance themselves from the people they once were. “With diverse settings and time periods - from 1920s Paris, Jewish utopian farmers in 1880s Oregon, teenage girls in 1980s New Jersey, and modern-day suburbanites – each story is fascinating and emotionally charged,” commented Rachel Kamin, a member of the Award Committee.

The AJL Jewish Fiction Award Committee members are Merrily Hart, Rachel Kamin, Clare Kinberg, Rosalind Reisner, and Yermiyahu Ahron Taub.

The Association of Jewish Libraries gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Dan Wyman Books for underwriting the Award. Submissions for the 2020 AJL Fiction Award are now being accepted. For more information, please visit [www.jewishlibraries.org](http://www.jewishlibraries.org).

The Association of Jewish Libraries is an all-volunteer professional organization that promotes Jewish literacy through enhancement of libraries and library resources and through leadership for the profession and practitioners of Judaica librarianship. The Association fosters access to information, learning, teaching and research relating to Jews, Judaism, the Jewish experience and Israel.

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