

Grand Things to Write a Poem on: A Verse Autobiography of Shmuel Hanagid

Hillel Halkin



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Grand Things to Write a Poem on: A Verse Autobiography of Shmuel Hanagid Hillel Halkin Shmuel Hanagid, poet, rabbi, Talmudic scholar, statesman, general and bon vivant was born in Cordoba, Spain, in 993 C.E. Settling in the city-state of Granada, he rose through its court life to become Grand Vizier and chief military commander. For years he led Granada's army into the field against its foes. Hanagid was the first major medieval Hebrew poet and the first to write on secular as well as religious themes. Often autobiographical, his poems are about such subjects as God, nature, friendship, love (of both sexes), wine, war, death, and the pains of growing old. Across a thousand years, subtle but passionately bold, they retain the capacity to startle and delight. In this bilingual collection, Hillel Halkin, a leading contemporary translator, has chosen approximately 70 of Hanagid's best poems that tell the story of his life. Grand Things To Write A Poem On is a unique self-portrait in verse of a remarkable Jewish personality.



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