

Alter Brody 1895-1979

Alter Brody migrated from a small Russian village to New York, in 1903. He was not famous during his lifetime, and stopped writing after 1930, but he “was one of the first American Jewish poets to write of Jewish themes and subjects” in a unique, effective style that showed his concern for Jewish issues (209). He was also one of the few migrant poets who wrote in English, rather than his native Yiddish (204). Many Jewish migrants would have related to his feelings of “dislocation and regret” concerning his present situation in America, as compared to the “more joyful, innocent existence” of his childhood in Russia, all of which he writes about in his collection of autobiographical poems, called *A Family Album and Other Poems*, (207).

Brody not only wrote in free verse, like Walt Whitman, but created a sad, nostalgic mood throughout his poems, depicting a “deep sense of loss and alienation” using “Whitmanesque repetition of ordinary images and details” (206). These “clear, simple pictures,” were derived from memories of his beloved village in Russia and compared to life in New York City. These “compelling and forceful” images of sight, sound taste and touch, “create a sense of desolation, loneliness and despair” that many migrants of this time experienced (208).

Rubin, Steven. “Poets of the Promised Land.” In Jonathan N. Barron and Eric Murphy Selinger, eds., *Jewish American Poetry*. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2000.