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Between Heaven and Earth: An Illuminated Torah Commentary

Ilene Winn-Lederer

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Artist Ilene Winn-Lederer's conception of *Between Heaven and Earth: An Illuminated Torah Commentary* had its roots in the unique invitation she designed for her son's bar mitzvah in the 1980s. The tri-fold card incorporated themes from the Torah, the Haftorah, and the commentaries on both books, and it led to many commissions for artworks based on themes from Jewish liturgy. Eventually this cumulative body of work inspired her to illuminate the complete Torah, and for five years she focused her studies and extraordinary illustrative skills on the creation of this book.

The first five books of the Bible, the Torah, are divided into fifty-four portions, or *parashiyot* (singular *parashah*). Each week of the Jewish year, a portion is read and studied; every Jewish congregation in the world reads from the same *parashah* each week, and the Torah is read in sequence through the year.

Between Heaven and Earth presents a two-page spread for each *parashah*, with Winn-Lederer's bold and beautiful imagery accented with Hebrew and English text excerpts rendered in her elegant calligraphy. The illuminated Torah is followed by a section titled "AfterImages: Artist's Notes," in which Lederer details the biblical story, symbols, and personal reflections that guided each illustration. She conveys her extensive knowledge of the Torah clearly and accessibly, offering her interpretations against a backdrop of years of scholarship.

Between Heaven and Earth is a signature work from a consummate artist whose vision is informed by both tradition and her vigorous imagination.

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