



thisweek

Readings & signings on LI

Monday

Dr. Haki Madhubuti, an influential figure in the Black Arts Movement, presents a lecture, "What It Means to be Black and Literate in the 21st Century and the Importance of Art in the Maturation of All People." At 7 p.m., *Adelphi University, Thomas Dixon Lovely Ballroom, Ruth S. Harley University Center, Garden City; 516-877-4979, african-studies.adelphi.edu*

Wednesday

Massapequa Park author **Salvatore J. LaGumina** discusses and signs copies of "Long Island Italian Americans: History, Heritage and Tradition." At 7 p.m., *Westbury Library, 445 Jefferson St.; 516-333-0176, westburylibrary.org*

Thursday

Carl Hiaasen speaks and signs copies of his new young-adult novel, "Skink — No Surrender." At 7 p.m., *Barnes & Noble, 91 Old Country Rd., Carle Place; 516-741-9850, barnesandnoble.com*



Saturday

Betty Medsger speaks and signs copies of "The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI." Tickets, \$75, include lunch; reservations required. At noon, *Pridwin Beach Hotel & Cottages, 81 Shore Rd., Shelter Island; 631-749-0042, pridwin.com*



Sound Beach author **Patricia Chapple Wright** discusses and signs copies of "High Moon Over the Amazon: My Quest to Understand the Monkeys of the Night." At 5 p.m., *Canio's Books, 290 Main St., Sag Harbor; 631-725-4926, caniosbooks.com*



reviews

A Lena Dunham kind of girl

NOT THAT KIND OF GIRL: A Young Woman Tells You What She's "Learned," by Lena Dunham. Random House, 265 pp., \$28.

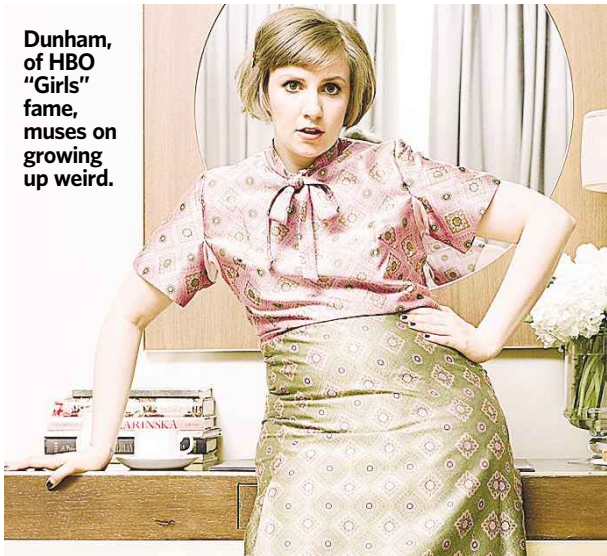
BY MARION WINIK
Special to Newsday

'My mother invented the selfie," explains Lena Dunham in "Not That Kind of Girl," her debut collection of essays. "Sure there were self-portraits before her, but she perfected the art of the vulnerable candid with unclear purpose."

Both of Dunham's parents are artists; elsewhere, she explains that her dad paints "huge pictures of penises for a job." In fact, Carroll Dunham is more renowned for his images of female reproductive equipment.

So if you've been wondering how a young woman with a regular old body like Lena Dunham has the nerve to appear naked on her HBO hit, "Girls," here's your answer: She's in the family business! Her warm portraits of her mother and father,

Dunham, of HBO "Girls" fame, muses on growing up weird.



AUTUMN DE WILDE

including lists of "Things I've Learned" from each of them, are the highlight of this book.

Like Tina Fey and Mindy Kaling before her, Dunham offers an account of how growing up neurotic, awkward and smart can lead to a career in comedy. The book pays tribute to an earlier forerunner — Helen Gurley Brown, whose advice book "Having It

All" Dunham encountered in her 20s. Though she was horrified by some of Brown's pre-feminist positions (sex with married men — really?), she was inspired by "the way Helen shares her own embarrassing, acne-ridden history in an attempt to say, *Look, happiness and satisfaction can happen to anyone.*"

Dunham's no-holds-barred

stitch feels less original in print than it does on TV — perhaps it is the absence of her specific face and body that makes these essays about bad sex, weight-loss regimens and mental health lapses feel a bit familiar. On the other hand, she offers a version of the growing-up-weird story that is particular to her generation.

Random House reportedly paid more than \$3 million for this book, and wants it taken seriously — every event on Dunham's book tour features a conversation with someone like Zadie Smith, Mary Karr or Curtis Sittenfeld. If "Not That Kind of Girl" doesn't put her in their league, she is still in her 20s, already an award-winning actress, screenwriter and director. Surely, as with all her shortcomings, Dunham would be the first to admit this one. Several times in the book, she considers looking back at her current efforts later in life, expressing the hope that "future me will be proud of present me for trying to wrap my head around the big ideas and also for trying to make you feel like we're all in this together."

I think the future her definitely will.

Betrayal by the Black Sea

THE BETRAYERS, by David Bezmozgis. Little, Brown and Co., 225 pp., \$26.

BY ANN LEVIN
The Associated Press

The betrayals come thick and fast in David Bezmozgis' aptly titled and beautifully written second novel, "The Betrayers." The first involves Baruch Kotler, a 64-year-old Israeli politician who cheated on his wife with a much younger woman. Soon enough we learn that Kotler, a world-renowned Soviet Jewish dissident, was betrayed by a putative political ally, the prime minister, who secretly arranged to leak photos of the affair to the media because Kotler resisted pressure to go along with the ruling coalition's plan to dis-

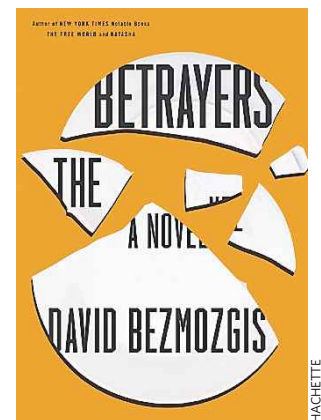
mantle Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

To escape the media circus that erupts when the photos are published, Kotler and his lover, Leora, flee to the Black Sea resort of Yalta, where the Ukrainian-born Baruch, originally Boris, vacationed with his parents as a boy. There, in a dilapidated guesthouse in the foothills of the Crimean Mountains, he encounters a former roommate from Soviet days — also Jewish, also a Zionist — who years before denounced Kotler to the KGB as an American spy.

As the clever plot builds to a climax, Bezmozgis explores larger, ever thornier questions of loyalty and treachery. With what or whom does one keep absolute faith? Are there certain bedrock principles and promises made to family, nation or ideology that one

never betrays? And what of the promises that a government makes to its own people? Was it wrong, as Baruch believes, for Israel to uproot settlers from lands occupied in the Six-Day War without first having a peace deal with the Palestinians? And if so, then why is he troubled that his own son, a religious Jew serving in the Israeli army, might disobey orders to evict settlers?

Bezmozgis, who was born in Riga, Latvia, and emigrated to Canada as a boy, writes extraordinarily well about Zionism and the complex politics and social issues in modern-day Israel and the lands of the former Soviet Union. Earlier this year, he wrote a piece for The New Yorker, worrying that the uprising in Ukraine might make the novel he'd been



HACHETTE

working on for four years seem irrelevant or dated. He need not have worried. Though the pitch-perfect dialogue occasionally lapses into speechifying, Bezmozgis, for the most part, has created an utterly believable and memorable cast of characters whose passions and problems are as timeless as the allure of a Black Sea summer resort.