

31<sup>ES</sup> ASSISES DE LA TRADUCTION LITTÉRAIRE ATLAS

Atelier de traduction – Anglais : *Le Paradis des autres*, Joshua COHEN

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Avec Annie-France MISTRAL

# A HEAVEN OF OTHERS

Being the True Account of a Jewish Boy  
Jonathan Schwarzstein of Tchernichovsky Street  
Jerusalem  
and his *Post-Mortem* Adventures in  
& Reflections on  
the Muslim Heaven



as Said to Me and Said through Me  
by an Angel of the One True God  
Revealed to Me at Night  
as if in a Dream

no fault of his own. And that what is mine is my memory. A memory is all that is left and all that is mine—Which either begins or does it end only to begin all over again on what had been the most summery, swelteringly ripest pear day I can remember, I can the most. I was with my parents but already without them, verily I was outside with the cars, amongst the birds and the beeswax I was old enough for alone. It was my birthday, my tenth, a toy birthday and so we were on the way to the toystore for my present but after And only after as the Queen always said this pilgrimage Had to be made.

A nail had been sticking through his shoe, killing it, shoethrough, my Aba's. In pain since yesterday's yesterday, ever since a nail had stuck through cow and foot, my Aba's.

Aba was in a shoestore with the Queen (that's how Ababa we often called him called Ima, Wife, Eve of my Lilith, Mommy, Mom, Hello Muddah, the Woman of the House or Apartmenthold, Bride), me I was, I was as bored as a baked good, the sireet an asphalt birthday cake rising the candle of me flickeringly impatient to reflect dimly in the window of the display under the sign

**H**ow did I get here, if I am still an I? if how and where is here? can still be asked and why?

He got here how he got here. How anyone gets here. How and where it is not my domain, this answering of questions. It is unbecoming. Truly, insulting. Beneath me. Below. Rather it is I, who create these questions and endeavor to create them answerless. Unanswerable to anyone save the asker to whom—and do not fall into the wrong pit if it is in me to ever create one—they are still unanswerable but who still must seek. To hide a find. To question my domain, my only power, rather the only power I allow myself in the how and in the here.

But rest assured that here was arrived at through

saying SHOES, over the sign saying PERSONAL DATA SOLUTIONS reflected hazily inattentive in the window from a store of computers on the opposite side of the Blah blah blah. I was observing myself, my skin stretched across the rounding toes not yet scuffed of shoes not yet my size that never would be. Puffing myself out as if Hanukah donuts were filling my cheeks, frying behind my eyes, I observed my I. Jelly limbs. What was reflected back to me was merely a reflection of my form—jam nose, mouth preserves—the shape of any not quite but almost ten-year-old, itchy in wait, twitchy with sun and light and heat and not the faces For exemplify the Queen had once loved: the default Funny Face, the default Sad Face (opposites fulfill those as engaging as I once was), the Don't Disturb Me When I'm Watching TV Face, which I meant as much as the Keep the Beets Far Far Away from Me on the Other Opposite End of the Table Face, and which of what is me or isn't, I never wasn't. A toy, I just wanted a toy, to break to get another toy. To break next year or upon the New Year, which were never.

He stood there, beyond All. Alone despite any reflection, picking pants from tush. In hot Ennui Aba

would say steeped in stirless Anomie and *vav kaf vav A* stupid day he'd say, Aba sitting to try on pair after pair, after pair, with the Queen standing vetting, disapproving, mostly No-ing, anything but denying anyone but herself least of all. I remember I observed all this wonder through the window in which I observed, just as much, the reflection of the signs—weak as too outstretched....

And then I don't know why I turn but I did.

It was a presence. A breath on the back of my neck, Aba would have said The tush of my head.

I turned to the boy turning to me he was running, his arms flapping flight shed wildly.

He turned and the boy met him.

His skin the milk of pigeons, with dark eyes and hair, maybe the earliest dew of a moustache.

Stubbly manna, it tickled, I laugh as much as we kissed or just seemed to.

He hugged me I don't know why I hug him back in return.

Us, we hug tightly. We fall on each other. We feel for one and for others we fall. We feel. And we hug.

Their eyes shut, they squeeze—just like lemons.

And then they explode.

Mind the seeds.

One boy's name was his, the other boy's name was his too. The same age, then they were ten, near enough. And both are now mine. Equally neither.

But the question's far from where is here, how near from there, without a stir of why.

Answer is I'm dying.

Pigs, here are only pigs, pigs there too, they're everywhere. A huge pink hurtling, oinkmad shuffling to Get the treyf out of Jerusalem, Route One's rushed hour to Tel Aviv then the sea to surf on over to Europe. Honk. Rumps backfire. Hynk. Pigs are coming out of the woodwork. Ambulant help. Emergent winged from the grain of void. Honk if you're no longer living. Pigs are flying past me here but it's not just pigs I see before I can't see anymore or won't live: these pigs are pigs with faces, human like the faces that kiss when you've folded your underwear (appropriate drawer) and scream when you haven't and instead you've strewn the little stained white shrouds all over the branching boughs of the widest and only tree in your smallest and only garden: this a