



Drowsy. Drowsy Baby is a timely, hybrid work of powerful recollection—By way of the poet's "difficult lyric," a "combination of the story of Joseph and the story of [my name]," Jared Joseph courts autobiography to unveil vexed family histories as poetic translation suspended in free fall...a great great grandfather figure pushed from a cliff into the abyss—one of many deep sites of this poet's reclamation ... For Joseph, homonyms often reign: tear/tear reveals the contact zone between liturgical genealogy and local bar love, an urgent politics of now, where playful punctuation beats, as if it is the breath itself—fields of commas induce coma, interrogations beget interrogative fields, suspended question marks mark the unconscious, where language is both erasure and concrete, a brilliant display of heart and the human mind.

— RONALDO V. WILSON, author of *Poems of the Black Object*

TEACHING GUIDE

Drowsy. Drowsy Baby

by Jared Joseph

978-1937865894 / 184 pages / \$15.95

Recommended Classes:

- Creative Writing
- Creative Nonfiction & Memoir
- Contemporary American Poetry
- American/Contemporary Literature
- Experimental Writing
- Comparative Literature
- Translation Theory

Keywords:

Poetry / Memoir / Autobiography / Translation / Historical Trauma / Nation / Family / Subject Formation / Experimental / Sacred Texts / Mysticism / Hybridity / Source Texts / Conceptual Writing / Middle East Studies / Jewish / Memory

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the source texts that *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby* employs? Can they be counted or named? What sort of relationships do the source texts enjoy with one another?
2. Is *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby* a memoir? A history? A book of poems? Soothsaying? Can it be more than one at once? Is it a synthesis or is it an assemblage? Is it an experiment? Is it a failure? What is a literary form? What is a genre?
3. If *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby* is made of other books, is any of it readable? Is any of it one book? Does it end? Where does it begin?
4. What is the relationship between personal memory and historical memory?

5. Who is Joseph? How many Joseph's are there in *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby*? How does the book work with or against ideas of what a traditional protagonist is?
6. What is the relationship between prophecy and poetry? What is the relationship between revelation and invention? Between poetry and translation? Between religious fidelity and translation fidelity? What is lost in a translation between languages? What is lost in a translation between cultures? Between historical eras? What is left over? What happens to what is untranslatable?
7. Is reading an act of devotion? An act of faith? Re-writing? What is the importance of "the word" or "words" in today's social and cultural climate?
8. What traumatic historical and personal events does the book recount? Is it possible to recount them fully? Is it permissible to? Is it necessary to? Can one write about an event one did not witness? How is trauma inherited or passed on?
9. What is the function of Names in *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby*? How many names are there? What is Noah's wife named? Who names her, and is it convincing? What is an acknowledgment? Who is this book for? To whom is this book written? Is there a difference?
10. Who is "I" in *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby*? Does it stay the same throughout? Is there a stable narrator? How many voices are in *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby*?
11. How many sections are in *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby*? What is the paratext of *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby*? What is the primary text? Why is the Works Cited page titled as it is?
12. What is the function of error in *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby*? What sorts of error exist in the text? How does error affect reading?

Possible Assignments:

- Fill in the blank and erased sections of "Sefer Sanigoria." Treat it like a Mad Lib.
- Consider a specific moment in your life when a friend or loved one made a gesture or said a word whose meaning was unclear. Describe this moment and translate all of the possible meanings of this moment.
- Write on paper a prose piece where you clearly and in fine detail describe the most defining moments of your life. Type this up on Microsoft Word: however, before you begin to type, format your document to be in another language (Spanish, German, Arabic, Russian, French), and set Autocorrect to automatically "Replace text as you type," so it autocorrects in the selected foreign language.
- Co-write a poem with a dead author.