



Jared Joseph

Drowsy. Drowsy Baby

#RECURRENT Series

Civil Coping Mechanisms

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Jared Joseph's *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby* is a book and the translation of a book. It is a scroll named Jenny, after Noah's unnamed wife, both pictured and absent. Like Edmond Jabès, Yoel Hoffman, and Susan Howe, Jared Joseph viscerally merges questions of linguistic, textual, and memorial representation with the persistent violence of religious narrative, historical trauma, and familial haunting. What emerges is a poetic experiment or examination of God and fragment, a book of poetry insistent on challenging the emotional and formal impacts of a page and a life. *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby* is a book and the translation of a book. It is a song named Joseph, after an unnamed player piano, both pictured and absent.

While reading Jared Joseph's book, I wrote to him, *The honorable thing to do would be to put quotation marks around the entire text, or like pointing someone in the direction of the nearest cathedral,*

basilica. I was thinking, at the time, of the spectacular, effervescent, and eternally unfinished Sagrada Familia (in Barcelona; shifting landscapes, for a minute). Neither cathedral nor basilica, it is a temple. Expiatory. Where people go to atone. That to describe Jared Joseph's book would be like putting quotation marks around la Sagrada Familia. No longer impossible, easy: a signpost, an arrow, a finger, a gesture. To not only bind the reader to the space Jared Joseph has created, but Jared Joseph to, among other expressions, his great great grandfather, in the fashion of an even more expiatory, and ultimately effervescent, experience.

- BRANDON SHIMODA, Author of *Evening Oracle*

Jared Joseph's profoundly ambitious *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby* is simultaneously a mystical text, an autofiction driven by Nabokovian madness, the result of a termite artist eating his way through history, a no-holds-barred conceptual hoax, a personal genealogy. It is a book of fear and a book of defenses: from the violent and treasonous acts depicted in the pages, to the writing techniques of montage and erasure, the book is involved in a constant tugging between violence and protection, attack and defense.

- JOHANNES GÖRANSSON, Author of *The Sugar Book*

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. Joseph's writing emerges, fusing beautiful prose, linguistic glitches, proper names into surprising forms: "Claude...Cloud" is where Nation and Person meet up in Joseph's at once idiosyncratic and capacious landscape. Hence, *Drowsy. Drowsy Baby* is as much rendered pastiche as it is slumbering flight—"If I can retrieve something...I think it says something." 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*