



# Yom Kippur in Amsterdam: Stories (Library of Modern Jewish Literature)

*Maxim D. Shrayer*

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Whether set in Maxim Shrayer's native Russia or in North America and Western Europe, the eight stories in this collection explore emotionally intricate relationships that cross traditional boundaries of ethnicity, religion, and culture. Tracing the lives, obsessions, and aspirations of Jewish-Russian immigrants, these poignant, humorous, and tender stories create an expansive portrait of individuals struggling to come to terms with ghosts of their European pasts while simultaneously seeking to build new lives in their American present.

The title story follows Jake Glaz, a young Jewish man apprehensive about intermarriage to a Catholic woman. After realizing Erin will not convert, Jake leaves the United States to spend Yom Kippur in Amsterdam, "a beautiful place for a Jew to atone." In "Sonetchka," a literary scholar and his former Moscow girlfriend reunite in her suburban Connecticut apartment. As they reminisce about their Soviet youth and quietly admire each other's professional successes, both wrestle with the curious mix of prosperity, loneliness, and insecurity that defines their lives in the United States. Yom Kippur in Amsterdam takes the immigrant narrative into the twentyfirst century. Emerging from the tradition of Isaac Babel, Vladimir Nabokov, and Isaac Bachevis Singer, Shrayer's vibrant literary voice significantly contributes to the evolution of Jewish writing in America.

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