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Tinel draws Babel & Singer

KOENRAAD TINEL

In their corporeal and poetic stories, Isaak Babel and Isaac Bashevis Singer have immortalised human characters, and, conversely, pulled Godly ones down to earth. Koenraad Tinel captures the stories of these two great literary minds in sometimes gentle, sometimes furious, fragile, and fleshly images. Tinel draws *Babel & Singer*, between fall and fantasy, the ephemeral and the unforgettable.

Koenraad Tinel (b. 1934) was the youngest son in an art-loving family. When the landings in Normandy seem to steer the War to a definitive conclusion, his Nazi-sympathising father fled to Germany with his family. The raw experience of this flight, stays hidden inside Koenraad Tinel's soul for over sixty years, only to come out in a series of 240 fluid, furious drawings in 2009. Scheisseimer became an overwhelming graphic story as well as a Hetpaleis theatre production. Tinel regularly works with befriended musicians and theatre-makers, as scenographer or live-illustrator.



De
Smokkelaar

Isaac Baskeris Singer

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The phone rang and when I answered I heard mumbling, stammering, and coughing. After a while a man said: 'You'll probably have forgotten but you promised to sign my, I mean, your books, once. When we met each other, in Philadelphia, you gave me your address and phone number. Your address hasn't changed, but you have a secret number now. Your secretary gave me your number, but I had to promise not to keep you too long.'



He tried to make me remember a lecture I gave an evening in Philadelphia, and suddenly I realized that that was ten years ago. He said to me: 'Are you hiding away? Back then, you were still in the yellow pages. In my own humble way, I do the same. I avoid the people.' 'Why?' I asked. 'It would take too long to explain and I promised not to disturb you for too long.'



We arranged to meet. He would come to my house late in the evening.
It was December and New York was covered in a thick layer of snow.
From his idiomatic Yiddish, it appeared he had been among the Polish refugees
who had come to the US a while after the war. The ones who came to America
longer ago suffused their Yiddish with English words. I stood at the window and looked
out over Broadway. The street below was white and the sky overhead was violet.



The radiator softly murmured a melody that made me think of our tiled stove in the Krochmalnastreet, and the petroleum lamp above my father's desk. From experience, I knew people who were meant to visit me at an appointed time always arrived early. I expected to hear the doorbell any minute, but half an hour passed without him showing up. I searched the sky for stars, but I knew that I wouldn't find any in the New York sky.



Then I heard a kind of scratching at the door. I went to open it, and found a small man behind a trolley packed full of books. In the middle of winter, my guest was dressed in a flimsy-looking raincoat, an open-collared shirt, and a knitted hat on his head. He asked: 'Don't you have a doorbell?' 'The bell is here.' I said. 'What? I'm half-blind. All because of the age. We don't die suddenly, but gradually.'

