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Shrayer, Maxim D. *Yom Kippur in Amsterdam*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2009. 152 pp. ISBN 978-0-8156-0918-6, \$24.95.

Give another cheer for immigration, which has given us the unique voice of Maxim Shrayer, an immigrant from Soviet Russia. Shrayer is a professor of Russian and English literatures and Jewish Studies at Boston College, a translator and a memoirist, as well as the author of several volumes of literary criticism.

In the eight stories in the present collection, his first work of fiction, we make the acquaintance of an astonishingly broad range of characters: young and old academics both in elite American institutions and in Russia, poets and lovers, herdsmen and scientists. Many of these characters struggle with their Jewishness, a Jewishness watered down by several generations who lived under a totalitarian regime or else in a secular state—places that recognized neither religion nor ethnicity. In each case these characters find themselves in an intricate web of relationships that have roots in the past, with connections across the globe and sometimes across centuries. The tone is most often elegiac—a sense of longing suffuses all the stories. The exquisitely precise vocabulary manages to locate the characters in the present even as they attempt to make sense of the situations in which their history, their cultures, and their own aspirations have placed them.

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