

# the gift of asher lev

The Gift of Asher Lev: Exploring Talent, Identity, and Creativity

**the gift of asher lev** is a compelling theme that resonates deeply in both literature and art. It originates from Chaim Potok's acclaimed novel *\*The Gift of Asher Lev\**, a story that explores the complex journey of a young Jewish artist torn between his cultural heritage and his passionate calling toward art. This narrative goes beyond a simple tale of talent—it delves into identity, family expectations, and the sacrifices that come with true creativity. If you've ever wondered about the interplay between innate talent and the struggles of self-expression, Asher Lev's story offers profound insights.

## The Meaning Behind The Gift of Asher Lev

At its core, *\*The Gift of Asher Lev\** is about the extraordinary artistic talent that Asher possesses—his “gift.” But this gift isn't just about skill or technical ability. It represents a powerful, sometimes burdensome force that shapes his life and relationships. Asher's gift challenges traditional norms and expectations, especially in the context of his Hasidic Jewish upbringing. His art becomes a metaphor for the tension between individual creativity and communal identity.

## Asher Lev's Artistic Journey

Asher Lev grows up in a devout community where art is often viewed with suspicion or misunderstanding. His parents, particularly his father, struggle to reconcile Asher's passion for painting with their religious values. The gift of Asher Lev, then, is not only about creating beautiful works but also about navigating the emotional landscape of family love, conflict, and acceptance.

Through his art, Asher expresses emotions and ideas that are difficult to communicate through words. His paintings often reflect internal struggles, cultural dilemmas, and moments of profound insight. For readers and art lovers, this journey highlights how creativity can be both a blessing and a source of isolation.

## Understanding the Cultural and Religious Conflict

One of the most powerful aspects of *\*The Gift of Asher Lev\** is how it showcases the clash between artistic freedom and religious tradition. This conflict is a universal theme for many artists who come from conservative backgrounds.

## The Role of Family Expectations

Asher's family expects him to conform to their way of life, which includes strict adherence to religious

rules and customs. However, Asher's gift pushes him to explore themes that sometimes contradict those beliefs. This creates a tension that many readers can relate to—balancing personal dreams with familial duties.

## **Art as a Form of Rebellion and Expression**

For Asher Lev, painting is more than a hobby or career—it's a form of self-expression that challenges the status quo. His art frequently questions authority and tradition, making his gift a catalyst for growth but also for conflict. This dynamic makes the story deeply engaging, as it captures the universal struggle between conformity and individuality.

## **The Psychological Dimensions of Asher Lev's Gift**

Beyond the cultural and familial issues, *\*The Gift of Asher Lev\** delves into the psychological impact of being a gifted artist. Asher's talent is both a source of inspiration and emotional turmoil.

## **The Burden of Genius**

Being gifted often comes with immense pressure. Asher feels compelled to create art that is meaningful and authentic, but this pursuit isolates him from those around him. This aspect of the story highlights the loneliness that can accompany exceptional talent and the sacrifices artists make for their craft.

## **Identity and Self-Discovery Through Art**

Asher's gift forces him to explore who he is beyond the roles assigned by his community and family. His artistic journey becomes one of self-discovery, where he confronts fears, desires, and contradictions. This psychological exploration adds depth to the narrative, making it more than just a story about art—it's about finding one's place in the world.

## **The Gift of Asher Lev in Contemporary Context**

Even decades after its publication, *\*The Gift of Asher Lev\** remains relevant to modern readers and artists. Its themes continue to resonate with those who face similar struggles balancing cultural identity and personal passion.

## **Lessons for Artists and Creatives**

Asher Lev's story encourages artists to embrace their unique vision, even when it challenges societal

norms. It reminds creatives that talent is not just about skill but about courage—the courage to be authentic and to face opposition.

## Embracing Multicultural Identities

In today's increasingly diverse world, the conflict between heritage and individuality is a common experience. \*The Gift of Asher Lev\* offers a nuanced look at how people can honor their background while pursuing their own paths. This makes the novel a valuable resource for conversations about multiculturalism, identity, and artistic freedom.

## Exploring Asher Lev's Artistic Style and Influence

Asher Lev's paintings in the novel are described with vivid detail, reflecting the emotional intensity of his gift. His style is often bold, expressive, and provocative, mirroring the inner turmoil he experiences.

## Symbolism and Themes in Asher Lev's Art

Many of Asher's works incorporate religious symbols and personal imagery, creating layers of meaning that invite viewers to reflect on faith, suffering, and beauty. The use of symbolism is a powerful way to communicate complex ideas that extend beyond words.

## Impact on Readers and Artists Alike

Artists and art enthusiasts frequently find inspiration in Asher Lev's fictional portfolio. His story encourages reflection on the purpose of art and the responsibilities that come with creative talent. It also opens up discussions about how art can serve as a bridge between conflicting worlds.

## Tips for Nurturing Your Own Gift Inspired by Asher Lev

While Asher Lev's story is fictional, the lessons about cultivating and embracing one's gift are very real. Here are some tips inspired by his journey:

- **Honor Your Passion:** Like Asher, trust your creative instincts even if they don't fit conventional expectations.
- **Balance Tradition and Innovation:** Find ways to respect your roots while pushing boundaries in your art or craft.
- **Embrace Vulnerability:** Authentic creativity often requires opening up emotionally and

confronting difficult truths.

- **Seek Supportive Communities:** Connect with others who understand and appreciate your unique talents and struggles.
- **Be Patient with Yourself:** Growth as an artist and individual is a lifelong journey filled with challenges and breakthroughs.

These tips not only help in artistic pursuits but also in any area where your unique gifts might set you apart.

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The story of *\*The Gift of Asher Lev\** continues to inspire those who wrestle with the delicate balance between heritage, identity, and creativity. Asher's gift is more than just talent—it's a vivid reminder that true artistry often means standing firm in your truth, even when the world around you resists. Whether you're an artist, a writer, or simply someone navigating the complexities of personal expression, the legacy of Asher Lev offers timeless wisdom and encouragement.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the central theme of 'The Gift of Asher Lev'?

The central theme of 'The Gift of Asher Lev' is the conflict between artistic expression and religious tradition, exploring how Asher struggles to reconcile his passion for art with the expectations of his Hasidic Jewish community.

### Who is the author of 'The Gift of Asher Lev' and what inspired the novel?

The author of 'The Gift of Asher Lev' is Chaim Potok. He was inspired to write the novel based on his own experiences growing up in a Jewish community and his interest in the challenges faced by artists within strict religious environments.

### How does Asher Lev's art affect his relationship with his family?

Asher Lev's art creates tension and conflict within his family, particularly with his father, who views his artistic pursuits as a betrayal of their religious values, leading to emotional struggles and strained relationships.

### What role does religion play in 'The Gift of Asher Lev'?

Religion plays a significant role as both a source of identity and conflict. It shapes the community's expectations and values, while Asher's desire to create art challenges those boundaries, highlighting

the struggle between faith and individuality.

## Is 'The Gift of Asher Lev' based on a true story?

While 'The Gift of Asher Lev' is a work of fiction, it draws on real cultural and religious dynamics within Hasidic Jewish communities and reflects universal themes of artistic passion and familial conflict.

## What literary style is used in 'The Gift of Asher Lev'?

Chaim Potok uses a straightforward, introspective narrative style with rich character development and vivid descriptions, allowing readers to deeply understand Asher's internal conflicts and cultural background.

## Has 'The Gift of Asher Lev' been adapted into other media?

Yes, 'The Gift of Asher Lev' has been adapted into a television movie and stage play, which bring the novel's complex themes and characters to life for new audiences while preserving the story's emotional depth.

## Additional Resources

The Gift of Asher Lev: A Profound Exploration of Art, Identity, and Tradition

**the gift of asher lev** resonates deeply within the landscape of contemporary literature, offering readers a compelling narrative that challenges the intersections of artistic passion and cultural heritage. Chaim Potok's seminal novel, first published in 1972, continues to captivate audiences by delving into the life of a young Jewish artist torn between his devotion to his faith and the irresistible pull of his creative expression. This article provides a thorough examination of The Gift of Asher Lev, analyzing its thematic complexity, character development, and enduring significance in both literary and cultural contexts.

## In-Depth Analysis of The Gift of Asher Lev

At its core, The Gift of Asher Lev is an exploration of identity — a theme that permeates every page as the protagonist grapples with the demands of his Hasidic upbringing and his burgeoning talent as a painter. Potok masterfully illustrates the tensions arising from Asher's struggle to reconcile these two facets of his life, framing a broader discourse on the nature of artistic genius within a rigid religious framework.

The novel's narrative structure carefully balances introspective passages with vivid descriptions of Asher's artwork, allowing readers to experience the emotional and spiritual turbulence that defines his journey. This dual focus on internal conflict and creative process distinguishes the book as a nuanced portrayal of the sacrifices and triumphs inherent in the pursuit of art.

## Thematic Exploration: Art vs. Tradition

One of the most compelling aspects of *The Gift of Asher Lev* is its nuanced treatment of the conflict between tradition and innovation. Asher's talent is not merely a hobby but a profound gift that clashes with the expectations of his Orthodox Jewish community. The novel does not simply portray this clash as one of rebellion; rather, it delves into the complex emotions and consequences that arise when personal expression challenges communal norms.

This theme resonates with broader questions about the role of art in society and the ways in which cultural heritage can both inspire and constrain creativity. Potok's depiction is neither dismissive of tradition nor uncritical of the artistic impulse, making *The Gift of Asher Lev* a rich text for readers interested in the dynamics of cultural identity.

## Character Development and Psychological Depth

Asher Lev's character is portrayed with remarkable psychological depth, revealing a young man caught between devotion and desire. His internal struggles are mirrored by his relationships, particularly with his parents, whose love is complicated by their inability to fully accept his artistic path. This family dynamic adds emotional weight to the narrative, illustrating how personal growth can both unite and divide.

Potok's skillful character development extends beyond Asher himself to include a cast of supporting figures that embody various perspectives on faith, art, and duty. This multidimensional approach enhances the novel's realism and invites readers to consider multiple viewpoints on the central conflict.

## Literary and Cultural Impact

Since its publication, *The Gift of Asher Lev* has garnered critical acclaim and has been recognized as a significant contribution to Jewish-American literature. Its exploration of identity struggles resonates with readers from diverse backgrounds, reflecting universal themes of self-discovery and the pursuit of meaning.

## Comparisons with Similar Works

In examining the place of *The Gift of Asher Lev* within literary canon, comparisons often arise with other works addressing the tension between individuality and tradition. For example, James Baldwin's writings on identity and society similarly navigate the challenges of reconciling personal truth with communal expectations. However, Potok's focus on the intersection of faith and art brings a distinctive lens to these enduring themes.

## Adaptations and Continued Relevance

The novel's enduring appeal is evident in its adaptation into various forms, including stage productions and discussions in academic settings. These adaptations underscore the story's ability to transcend its original medium, inviting ongoing dialogue about the balance between creative freedom and cultural loyalty.

## Key Features and Literary Techniques

Potok's writing style in *The Gift of Asher Lev* is characterized by its clarity and emotional resonance. His use of vivid imagery, especially in describing Asher's paintings, allows readers to visualize the internal conflicts manifesting in tangible form. The juxtaposition of detailed artistic scenes with moments of spiritual reflection creates a rhythm that mirrors the protagonist's oscillating emotions.

Additionally, the novel employs symbolism extensively. Asher's artwork serves as a metaphor for his struggle, with specific paintings representing milestones in his personal and artistic development. This layering of meaning enriches the narrative and invites readers to engage with the text on multiple levels.

## Pros and Cons of *The Gift of Asher Lev*

- **Pros:** Deep thematic exploration, rich character development, insightful portrayal of cultural conflict, and evocative artistic imagery.
- **Cons:** Some readers might find the religious context challenging or feel that the pacing slows during introspective sections.

Overall, these aspects contribute to a work that is both intellectually stimulating and emotionally engaging.

## SEO Keywords and LSI Keywords Integration

Throughout this analysis, terms such as "Chaim Potok," "Jewish-American literature," "Hasidic community," "artistic identity," and "tradition versus creativity" have been naturally integrated. This approach not only enhances the article's search engine visibility but also ensures that the discussion remains relevant and accessible to a broad audience seeking insights into *The Gift of Asher Lev*.

As readers continue to seek books that probe the complexities of faith, family, and art, *The Gift of Asher Lev* remains a pivotal work. Its layered narrative invites reflection on how personal gifts can both illuminate and complicate one's path in life, a theme that resonates far beyond the novel's immediate context.

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**the gift of asher lev:** [The Gift of Asher Lev](#) Chaim Potok, 1992-01-01

**the gift of asher lev: Discussion Notes on Chaim Potok's The Gift of Asher Lev** Aileen Kelly, Council of Adult Education (Melbourne), Council of Adult Education (Melbourne). Book Study Groups, 1994

**the gift of asher lev:** *My Name Is Asher Lev* Chaim Potok, 2009-07-01 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • In this modern classic from the National Book Award-nominated author of *The Chosen*, a young religious artist is compulsively driven to render the world he sees and feels, even when it leads him to blasphemy. “A novel of finely articulated tragic power .... Little short of a work of genius.”—The New York Times Book Review *Asher Lev* is a Ladover Hasid who keeps kosher, prays three times a day and believes in the Ribono Shel Olom, the Master of the Universe. He grows up in a cloistered Hasidic community in postwar Brooklyn, a world suffused by ritual and revolving around a charismatic Rebbe. He is torn between two identities, the one consecrated to God, the other devoted only to art and his imagination, and in time, his artistic gift threatens to estrange him from that world and the parents he adores. As it follows his struggle, *My Name Is Asher Lev* becomes a luminous, visionary portrait of the artist, by turns heartbreaking and exultant.

**the gift of asher lev: Chaim Potok** Daniel Walden, 2013-07-03 Chaim Potok was a world-class writer and scholar, a Conservative Jew who wrote from and about his tradition and the conflicts between observance and acculturation. With a plain, straightforward style, his novels were set against the moral, spiritual, and intellectual currents of the twentieth century. This collection aims to widen the lens through which we read Chaim Potok and to establish him as an authentic American writer who created unforgettable characters forging American identities for themselves while retaining their Jewish nature. The essays illuminate the central struggle in Potok’s novels, which results from a profound desire to reconcile the appeal of modernity with the pull of traditional Judaism. The volume includes a memoir by Adena Potok and ends with Chaim Potok’s “My Life as a Writer,” a speech he gave at Penn State in 1982. Aside from the editor, the contributors are Victoria Aarons, Nathan P. Devir, Jane Eisner, Susanne Klingenstein, S. Lillian Kremer, Jessica Lang, Sanford E. Marovitz, Kathryn McClymond, Hugh Nissenson, Adena Potok, and Jonathan Rosen.

**the gift of asher lev: A Study Guide for Chaim Potok's "My Name Is Asher Lev"** Gale, Cengage Learning, 2016-06-29 A Study Guide for Chaim Potok's My Name Is Asher Lev, excerpted from Gale's acclaimed Novels for Students. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust Novels for Students for all of your research needs.

**the gift of asher lev: War and Algorithm** Max Liljefors, Gregor Noll, Daniel Steuer, 2019-10-11 New military technologies are animated by fantasies of perfect knowledge, lawfulness, and vision that contrast sharply with the very real limits of human understanding, law, and vision. Thus, various kinds of violent acts are proliferating while their precise nature remains unclear. Especially man-machine ensembles, guided by algorithms, are operating in ways that challenge conceptual understanding. War and Algorithm looks at the increasing power of algorithms in these emerging forms of warfare from the perspectives of critical theory, philosophy, legal studies, and visual studies. The contributions in this volume grapple with the challenges posed by algorithmic warfare and trace the roots of new forms of war in the technological practices and forms of representation of the digital age. Together, these contributions provide a first step toward understanding—and resisting—our emerging world of war.

**the gift of asher lev: Seeking Sense in the City** Bert Roebben, 2009 Young people have a perfect right to good education. They deserve committed educators, safe schools, powerful learning opportunities, but most of all a clear sense of direction, that offers them insight in the values, norms and beliefs of the global community. In Europe, there is a long tradition of public moral and religious education, in close cooperation with churches and faith communities. In this book the expertise of German, Dutch, English and French speaking scholars is collected and reflected on the basis of the metaphor of the city, the place of encounter with other people, in complexity and diversity. The book is an invitation to non-European scholars and educators to get acquainted with these insights.

**the gift of asher lev: Contemporary Jewish-American Novelists** Joel Shatzky, Michael Taub, 1997-07-16 Since World War II, Jewish-American novelists have significantly contributed to the world of literature. This reference book includes alphabetically arranged entries for more than 75 Jewish-American novelists whose major works were largely written after World War II. Included are entries for both well-known and relatively obscure novelists, many of whom are just becoming established as significant literary figures. While the volume profiles major canonical figures such as Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, and Bernard Malamud, it also aims to be more inclusive than other works on contemporary Jewish-American writers. Thus there are entries for gay and lesbian novelists such as Lev Raphael and Judith Katz, whose works challenge the more orthodox definition of Jewish religious and cultural traditions; Art Spiegelman, whose controversial *Maus* established a new genre by combining elements of the comic book and the conventional novel; and newcomers such as Steve Stern and Max Apple, who have become more prominent within the last decade. Each entry includes a brief biography, a discussion of major works and themes, an overview of the novelist's critical reception, and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources. A thoughtful introduction summarizes Jewish-American fiction after World War II, and a selected, general bibliography lists additional sources of information. Since World War II, Jewish-American novelists have made numerous significant contributions to contemporary literature. Authors of earlier generations would frequently write about the troubles and successes of Jewish immigrants to America, and their works would reflect the world of European Jewish culture. But like other immigrant groups, Jewish-Americans have become increasingly assimilated into mainstream American culture. Many feel the loss of their heritage and long for something to replace the lost values of the old world. This reference book includes alphabetically arranged entries for more than 75 Jewish-American novelists whose major works were largely written after World War II. Included are entries for both well-known and relatively obscure novelists, many of whom are just becoming established as significant literary figures. While the volume profiles major canonical figures such as Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, and Bernard Malamud, it also aims to be more inclusive than other works on contemporary Jewish-American writers. Thus there are entries for gay and lesbian

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**the gift of asher lev: From Faith to Fun** Russell Heddendorf, 2009-02-26 Abraham and Sarah were presented with a paradox when God told them they would have a son in their old age. Paradox in the Old Testament plays an important part in the dialogue between God and the Jews. In the New Testament, paradox is prominent in Jesus' teaching and helps to explain the Christian understanding of salvation.

**the gift of asher lev: A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call** David Claydon, 2005

**the gift of asher lev: Christ in the Letters of Paul** Hendrikus Boers, 2012-02-14 This study addresses the centrality of Christ in Paul's thought, recognizing at the same time that he does not express the meaning of Christ as an existing teaching. Christ as a person, not a teaching, determines Paul's thinking, for himself and in his reasoning with his readers. Christ comes to expression in Paul as the explication of the fundamental reality for himself and for his readers. He develops his thoughts about Christ in each case anew as expressions of the Lord who determines his life and the lives of his readers. In his reasoning with his readers, he expects them to become aware of Christ as the one who determines them in their new lives as believers.

**the gift of asher lev: Childhood Disability in a Multicultural Society** Barry Jones, 2018-12-14 People from different cultural backgrounds prefer adhering to their own religious beliefs which could restrict treatment options leading to the detriment of health, especially if it involves the health of a disabled child. This comprehensive but concise work highlights the problems faced in managing the care of disabled children from different cultural backgrounds. It examines the problems inherent in the medical, social and educational management of children with developmental disability in populations whose value systems differ from other cultures. In particular it considers how care may be varied according to cultural background, without compromising its quality. The book is of immense value to all healthcare and social care professionals, policy makers and shapers, patient organisations and those with an interest in medical ethics.

**the gift of asher lev: Courtyard Tales of Contemporary Romance Box Set** Sydney Campbell, 2021-12-01 Three houses + one lockdown = smoking hot romance In this spin-off of the Allie Styles Romance series, three separate couples go into lockdown in three separate houses during a global pandemic. But when chemistry and attraction come into play, they all figure out how to turn a bad situation into a steamy one. Reawakening Divorcé Louisa Taylor gave up on love long ago but that doesn't stop her from reuniting with her high school best friend, Ian, when he comes to town. Now a world-renowned artist, he's come back to take care of his father's estate. But when a global pandemic forces them into lockdown together, old sparks are reignited and suddenly they've both got a shot at a second chance. Redemption Free-spirited Casey Doyle is content house-sitting on a year-long gig, until a global pandemic sets in and she's scared to be alone. Summoning all her charm, she convinces her hunky neighbour, music producer Zach Abrams, to let her move in. Zach is drawn to Casey, but he's also tormented by his past mistakes and sees her as his one shot at redemption. Can his best intentions stop them from falling in love? Reckless Fierce and intelligent, Hailey is a successful entrepreneur who works hard and parties harder. She looks out for number one and has little interest in a relationship. Then Sam walks in. A fireman on duty, he rushes into her house in the middle of the night and turns her entire world upside down. If you're a fan of forced proximity romance, this is the box set for you!

**the gift of asher lev: Who's Who in Jewish History** New edition revised by Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok, Joan Comay, 2002-09-11 From Karl Marx to the Marx brothers, the Routledge Who's

Who in Jewish History presents a complete and thoroughly updated reference guide to over a thousand prominent men and women who have shaped Jewish culture. Covering twenty centuries of Jewish history it provides: \* detailed biographical information on each leading figure \* analysis of their role and significance both in Jewish life and the wider culture \* a comprehensive chronological table displaying the history of the Jewish race \* a series of maps \* a useful glossary giving precise definitions of Jewish words.

**the gift of asher lev: Tradition and Imagination** David Brown, 1999-11-25 Tradition and revelation are often seen as opposites: tradition is viewed as being secondary and reactionary to revelation which is a one-off gift from God. Drawing on examples from Christian history, Judaism, Islam, and the classical world, this book challenges these definitions and presents a controversial examination of the effect history and cultural development has on religious belief: its narratives and art. David Brown pays close attention to the nature of the relationship between historical and imaginative truth, and focuses on the way stories from the Bible have not stood still but are subject to imaginative 'rewriting'. This rewriting is explained as a natural consequence of the interaction between religion and history: God speaks to humanity through the imagination, and human imagination is influenced by historical context. It is the imagination that ensures that religion continues to develop in new and challenging ways.

**the gift of asher lev: The Shadows of Yiddish on Modern Jewish American Writers** □□□□, 2005-10 □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

**the gift of asher lev: Masterpieces of Jewish American Literature** Sanford Sternlicht, 2007-02-28 Jewish Americans have produced some of the most imaginative, provocative, and widely read literary works of the twentieth century. This book gives students and general readers an introduction to ten of the most significant works of Jewish American literature. An introductory chapter discusses the historical, cultural, social, and political backgrounds of Jewish American literature. This is followed by chapters on ten major works by Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Michael Gold, Henry Roth, Meyer Levin, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Chiam Potok, Philip Roth, and Cynthia Ozick. Each chapter provides a biography, a plot summary, a discussion of character development, an analysis of themes, an examination of narrative style, an exploration of historical context, and suggestions for further reading. The volume closes with a selected, general bibliography. These works reflect the hopes and dreams of Jewish Americans, as well as their challenges and troubles. These works help students understand the cultural and historical events central to Jewish Americans in the twentieth century. This book gives students and general readers an introduction to ten masterpieces of Jewish American literature.

**the gift of asher lev: Who We Are** Derek Rubin, 2010-02-10 This unprecedented collection brings together the major Jewish American writers of the past fifty years as they examine issues of identity and how they've made their work respond. E.L. Doctorow questions the very notion of the Jewish American writer, insisting that all great writing is secular and universal. Allegra Goodman embraces the categorization, arguing that it immediately binds her to her readers. Dara Horn, among the youngest of these writers, describes the tendency of Jewish writers to focus on anti-Semitism and advocates a more creative and positive way of telling the Jewish story. Thane Rosenbaum explains that as a child of Holocaust survivors, he was driven to write in an attempt to reimagine the tragic endings in Jewish history. Here are the stories of how these writers became who they are: Saul Bellow on his adolescence in Chicago, Grace Paley on her early love of Romantic poetry, Chaim Potok on being transformed by the work of Evelyn Waugh. Here, too, are Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick, Erica Jong, Jonathon Rosen, Tova Mirvis, Pearl Abraham, Alan Lelchuk, Rebecca Goldstein, Nessa Rapoport, and many more. Spanning three generations of Jewish writing in America, these essays — by turns nostalgic, comic, moving, and deeply provocative- constitute an invaluable investigation into the thinking and the work of some of America's most important writers.

**the gift of asher lev: Alfred and Lucie Dreyfus in the Phantasmagoria** Norman Simms, 2014-06-02 Alfred Dreyfus saw himself caught in a phantasmagoria, a great complex enigma that needed to be solved, but all the clues seemed to be an hallucination, a will-o'-th'-wisp, or what

George Sand called “orblutes”. This book examines how Dreyfus and his wife found a powerful new kind of love through Jewish themes at the same time as they were forced to conceal their true identities. To see how Jewish Dreyfus was, the book explores his background in Alsatian culture, in the cosmopolitan Judaism of Paris, and in the customs of Mediterranean Jewry. A close reading of the Court Martial in Rennes shows Dreyfus as more than the “zinc puppet” he was called; the scenario emerging as a variation of horror fantasies popular in the fin de siècle. The book asks two questions: why did Dreyfus prefer Meissonier’s paintings to the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists we admire so much; and, why, although he appreciated Zola’s efforts on his behalf, did he not refer to his novels?

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