

Where the Bird Sings Best

By Alejandro Jodorowsky

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The magnum opus from Alejandro Jodorowsky—director of *The Holy Mountain*, star of Jodorowsky's *Dune*, spiritual guru behind *Psychomagic* and *The Way of Tarot*, innovator behind classic comics *The Incal* and *Metabarons*, and legend of Latin American literature.

There has never been an artist like the polymathic Chilean director, author, and mystic Alejandro Jodorowsky. For eight decades, he has blazed new trails across a dazzling variety of creative fields. While his psychedelic, visionary films have been celebrated by the likes of John Lennon, Marina Abramovic, and Kanye West, his novels—praised throughout Latin America in the same breath as those of Gabriel García Márquez—have remained largely unknown in the English-speaking world. Until now.

Where the Bird Sings Best tells the fantastic story of the Jodorowskys' emigration from Ukraine to Chile amidst the political and cultural upheavals of the 19th and 20th centuries. Like *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Jodorowsky's book transforms family history into heroic legend: incestuous beekeepers hide their crime with a living cloak of bees, a czar fakes his own death to live as a hermit amongst the animals, a devout grandfather confides only in the ghost of a wise rabbi, a transgender ballerina with a voracious sexual appetite holds a would-be saint in thrall. Kaleidoscopic, exhilarating, and erotic, *Where the Bird Sings Best* expands the classic immigration story to mythic proportions.

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Where the Bird Sings Best By Alejandro Jodorowsky Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"Where the Bird Sings Best is Alejandro Jodorowsky's brilliant, mad and unpredictable semi-autobiographical novel. Translated by Alfred MacAdam, this multigenerational chronicle introduces a host of memorable characters, from a dwarf prostitute and a floating ghost-Rabbi to a lion tamer who eats raw meat and teaches his beasts to jump through flaming hoops. Fantastical elements aside, *Where the Bird Sings Best* is a **fiercely original immigration tale** that culminates in the author's birth in Chile in 1929 — a complicated time in that nation's history. Combine that with poetry, tarot and Jewish mysticism and you have **a genius's surreal vision brought to life.**"

—*NPR, Best Books of 2015*

"Wildly inventive . . . Jodorowsky's masterpiece swirls around the reader, lurching from violent episode to mystical encounter to cosmic sexual escapade as we follow our narrator's grandparents' journey from the old world to, refreshingly, South America. As the drama unfolds, the reader's response veers from incredulity to awe, from doubt to delight. The momentum holds for the length of the novel as a cavalcade of outsized characters careen across the page in a frenzy that seems for once an adequate and just representation of the living fury that is history . . . The images possess an extreme yet striking beauty . . . In the case of *Where the Bird Sings Best*, he has masterminded a success."

—*The Los Angeles Review of Books*

"This epic family saga, reminiscent of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in structure and breadth, reads at a breakneck pace. Though ostensibly a novelization of the author's own family history, it is a raucous carnival of the surreal, mystical, and grotesque . . . It weaves together Jewish philosophy, passion, humor, Tarot, ballet, circuses, natural disasters, spectacular suicides, lion tamers, knife throwers, Catholic devotion, farmers, betrayals, prostitutes, leftist politics, political violence, and the ghost of a wise rabbi who follows the family from the Old World to the New."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"First, a hard-boiled fact: No one alive today, anywhere, has been able to demonstrate the sheer possibilities of artistic invention — and in so many disciplines — as powerfully as Alejandro Jodorowsky . . . His new semi-autobiographical novel *Where the Bird Sings Best*, translated by Alfred MacAdam, is his magnum opus, a fantastical something that in many ways mirrors the author himself: It is brilliant, mad, unpredictable . . . It's not difficult to see why *Where the Bird Sings Best* has been compared to Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. But Jodorowsky's saga stands firmly on its own . . . Reading Jodorowsky is not suspending reality; it is allowing yourself to believe that with imagination, anything and everything is in the realm of possibility . . . You can't be certain as to what *exactly* Jodorowsky is channeling in *Where the Bird Sings Best* — but it doesn't feel like it's native to our universe. Still, in this absurd and glorious carnival, he is the only one worthy to be called the keeper or tamer of anything."

—*Juan Vidal, NPR Books*

"Jodorowsky is today's true Renaissance man—a master of many mediums that all point directly towards a towering and imaginative vision replete with profound insights into the real by way of the surreal. The

stories told in *Where the Bird Sings Best* contain deep moral lessons, giving his mythic immigration story the feel of a modern day *Sefer-ha-Aggadah*—the classic collection of Jewish folk tales drawn from the Mishnah, Midrash and Talmud. This long awaited and brilliantly evocative translation is a must read—frightening, hilarious, outrageous, touching, and (as is always with Jodorowsky’s work) filled with a deep core of mystic truth."

—**John Zorn**

“A sweeping tale of personal, philosophical, and political struggles. It’s an immigrant’s story of Fellini-esque proportions . . . For the self-proclaimed atheist mystic, the sacraments are memory, dreams, family, wisdom, the grotesque, and the reinvention of the self . . . Publisher Restless Books reminds us that during Jodorowsky’s decades-long absence from cinema, he maintained his status as a notable Latin American novelist . . . A conduit and biographical key that further reveals his mesmerizing process of imaginative self-fashioning.”

— *Flavorwire*

“In his ancestral adventures, Jodorowsky brings to life not just the engaging story of his own family, but the mechanisms of engagement underlying story itself. Each paragraph pulsates, threatens to burst from its burgeoning body of details. Jodorowsky relieves pressure as necessary. But time after time, he proceeds to build up and dazzle all over again. One gets the sense when reading that at no point did Jodorowsky ever come up with something and save it for later. Each individual section is endowed with Jodorowsky’s full vitality.”

— *The Jewish Book Council*

“I find myself impressed by his dilatory imagination, love of pure spectacle, and puckish sense of humor . . . Sober, dressed, and with all the lights on, I ripped through *Where the Bird Sings Best* — the first of Jodorowsky’s many novels to appear in English translation — in just a few enraptured days. The trick is to eschew caricature and give yourself over to the experience, at which point the wondrous strange takes over. The mind — and, god help me, the spirit — finds itself traveling in realms it could not have otherwise explored, or even dreamed exist . . . ***Where the Bird Sings Best* is electrifying.**”

— *Barnes & Noble Review*

About the Author

Alejandro Jodorowsky was born to Ukrainian Jewish immigrants in Tocopilla, Chile. From an early age, he became interested in mime and theater; at the age of 23, he left for Paris to pursue the arts, and has lived there ever since. A friend and companion of Fernando Arrabal and Roland Topor, he founded the Panic movement and has directed several classic films of this style, including *The Holy Mountain*, *El Topo* and *Santa Sangre*. A mime artist, specialist in the art of tarot, and prolific author, he has written novels, poetry, short stories, essays, and over thirty successful comic books, working with such highly regarded comic book artists as Moebius and Bess. Restless Books will be publishing three of Jodorowsky's best-known books for the first time in English: *Donde mejor canta un pájaro* (*Where the Bird Sings Best*), *El niño del jueves negro* (*The Son of Black Thursday*), and *Albina y los hombres perro* (*Albina and the Dog Men*).

Alfred MacAdam is professor of Latin American literature at Barnard College-Columbia University. He has translated works by Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, Juan Carlos Onetti, José Donoso, and Jorge Volpi among others. He recently published an essay on the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa included in the

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Harris:

Within other case, little persons like to read book *Where the Bird Sings Best*. You can choose the best book if you like reading a book. So long as we know about how is important any book *Where the Bird Sings Best*. You can add information and of course you can around the world by the book. Absolutely right, since from book you can realize everything! From your country until eventually foreign or abroad you will end up known. About simple factor until wonderful thing you may know that. In this era, we are able to open a book or perhaps searching by internet product. It is called e-book. You may use it when you feel bored to go to the library. Let's go through.

Donald Campbell:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive at this point, people have do something to make all of them survives, being in the middle of typically the crowded place and notice by surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a publication your ability to survive boost then having chance to stay than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading any book, we give you that *Where the Bird Sings Best* book as basic and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

Kenneth Clark:

The reason? Because this *Where the Bird Sings Best* is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap it but latter it will surprise you with the secret that inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book possess such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I have been you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

Tammie Torres:

Where the Bird Sings Best can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. We all recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary which could increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to set every word into delight arrangement in writing *Where the Bird Sings Best* although doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource data that maybe you can be one of it. This great information could drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial imagining.

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