

Hearing News from the Temple Mount in Salt Lake City

You know that conversation
in the elevator in the Catskills:
how one woman says, *Oy,*
the food here is so terrible
and the other *and the portions*
are so small! It's a variant
on Jacob's line to Pharaoh
when he gets to Egypt —*few*
and evil have been the days
of my life. Naturally, he's our
chosen namesake: this Israel
the Torah keeps forgetting and
calling Jacob, as if it doesn't
trust his cleaned-up name. . . .

Obviously he's the perfect
guy for us — we're always
willing to take something
over nothing — hence
our lunatic attachment
to that miserable pinpoint
in the desert, where now,
whether it's Ishmael
or Isaac on the altar,
there's an earsplitting
crowd working to drown
out every angel until
Abraham fulfills his sacrifice.

It's none of my diaspora-
befuddled business, but
I'm not in the mood
to celebrate. Call me
thin-skinned, but I can't
get used to the idea that
all these hordes of people
wish me dead. You have
to remember: I'm Jacob's
offspring; I want as many
evil days as I can lay my
hands on . . . Thank God
I live in Salt Lake City. Who's

going to come looking for me
here? In this calm Zion,
where a bunch of blonde
mishuginers think *they're*
the chosen people of God.
Good luck to them is all
I have to say; let them
get the joy from it that I do.