



The Queen's Caprice: Stories

Jean Echenoz

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France's preeminent fiction writer is frequently credited with a kind of literary magic, an ability to craft stories with such precision and detail that readers are caught off guard by the powerful currents of emotion and imagination that lie just beneath the placid surface of his writing. As Gary Indiana put it in *Bookforum*, "Echenoz risks everything in his fiction, gambling on the prodigious blandishments of his voice to lure his readers into a maze of improbabilities and preposterous happenings."

The Queen's Caprice—seven new stories presented in English for the first time—reveals Echenoz at the height of his talents. The author takes us on a journey across radically different places and landscapes, giving free rein to a "terrific sense of humor tinged with existential mischief" (*L'Express*). The title story explores a tiny corner of the French countryside; "Nelson" offers a brilliant miniaturist portrait of the hero of the Battle of Trafalgar; "Babylon" sketches the ancient city of Mesopotamia, based on trace descriptions from Herodotus; and other stories visit the forests of England, the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris, Tampa Bay, and the interior of a submarine. Amid the thrill and allure of this voyage of words, "again and again we pause to savor the richness of Echenoz's startling, crystalline observations" (Lydia Davis).

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