



THE SUE AND LEONARD MILLER  
CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY  
JUDAIC STUDIES

THE GEORGE FELDENKREIS  
PROGRAM IN JUDAIC STUDIES  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



Co-sponsored by UM's Department of English

We invite you to attend a lecture

by

## Meir Shalev

A leading Israeli author. Columnist for *Yedioth Ahronoth*; producer and moderator of radio and TV programs. Meir Shalev has been awarded numerous literary awards in Israel, Europe, and North America, including the American National Jewish Book Award for his book *The Pigeon and the Boy* (2007).

On his new book

# My Russian Grandmother and Her American Vacuum Cleaner

A charming tale of family ties, over-the-top housekeeping - and the sport of storytelling in Nahalal, the village of Meir Shalev's birth. Here we meet Shalev's amazing Grandma Tonia, who arrived in Palestine by boat from Russia in 1923 and lived in a constant state of battle with what she viewed as the family's biggest enemy in their new land: dirt.

Grandma Tonia was never seen without a cleaning rag over her shoulder. She received visitors outdoors. She allowed only the most privileged guests to enter her spotless house. Hilarious and touching, Grandma Tonia and her regulations come richly to life in a narrative that circles around the arrival into the family's dusty agricultural midst of the big, shiny American sweeper sent as a gift by Great-uncle Yeshayahu (he who had shockingly emigrated to the sinful capitalist heaven of Los Angeles!). America, to little Meir and to his forebears, was a land of hedonism and enchanting progress; of tempting luxuries, dangerous music, and degenerate gum-chewing; and of women with painted fingernails. The sweeper, a stealth weapon from Grandpa Aharon's American brother meant to beguile the hardworking socialist household with a bit of American ease, was symbolic of the conflicts and visions of the family in every respect.

The fate of Tonia's "sviepeerrr" - hidden away for decades in a spotless closed-off bathroom after its initial use - is a family mystery that Shalev determines to solve. The result, in this cheerful translation by Evan Fallenberg, is pure delight, as Shalev brings to life the obsessive but loving Tonia, the pioneers who gave his childhood its spirit of wonder, and the grit and humor of people building ever-new lives.

**Tuesday, November 1, 2011 @ 4:00 PM**  
**Miller Center Auditorium - 105 Merrick Building**  
**5202 University Drive, UM - Coral Gables 33146**

**R.S.V.P. [ccjs@miami.edu](mailto:ccjs@miami.edu); Tel. 305-284-6882; Fax 305-284-5274**  
**Free and open to the public. Seating is limited. First come, first served.**

**Directions to the Miller Center.** From U.S.-1: turn right from the north or left from the south onto Granada Boulevard. Bear left onto Pisano Ave. Cross the small bridge and make a left onto University Drive. Parking lots are on your right. After parking, continue walking on University Drive. The Miller Center is at the Merrick building room 105 on your right when you get to the roundabout.



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