

**Booklist**  
**March 2002**

**Jerusalem Calling, by Joel Schalit**  
**Akashic Books**

Schalit's anticapitalist, Jewish, postpunk perspectives on the Middle East, the relevance of rock music, and the true impact of religion in America pack a powerful punch, yet resonate with fellow feeling. Skeptical but not bitter, he recounts his travels with a lifelong nomad's open-eyed wisdom as well as wonder, and he passionately criticizes but never heckles, for he decries the human impulses and faces behind such disparate behemoths as capitalism and Zionism. He is cynical about cynicism and angry with those who won't feel anger and those who won't admit that solutions are still possible. In a revealing anecdote, he recalls getting lost looking with his siblings for another brother's Miami home. His sister says, "Maybe we weren't meant to find it," and another brother retorts, "What do you mean? This place looks so much like a jazzed-up Tel Aviv, it's hard to imagine we were ever lost." Schalit knows that common ground exists, and that the true differences are between the persistent searchers and those who have cut their losses.

-Will Hickman