

BOOG CITY

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FROM AN EXTENDED COMMUNITY

ISSUE 132 FREE



Dan Wilcox, Photographs

Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Tom Nattell, Tom's House, Albany, N.Y., September, 1994

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Segue reading series presents



Joey De Jesus and erica kaufman

Sat. Nov. 16, 4:30 p.m.

at

**The Zinc Bar
82 W. 3rd St.
NYC**

\$5 admission goes to support the readers

Joey De Jesus is the author of (Operating System), NOCT: The Threshold of Madness (The Atlas Review), and co-author of Writing Voice into the Archive vol. 1. Joey is on the Advisory Board at No, Dear magazine. They received a 2019-20 BRIC ArtFP Project Room Commission & 2017 NYFA Fellowship in Poetry. Joey is an adjunct at BMCC.

erica kaufman is the author of Post Classic (Roof Books), Instant Classic (Roof Books) and censored impulse (Factory School). She is co-editor of No Gender: Reflections on the Life and Work of kari edwards and Adrienne Rich: Teaching at CUNY, 1968-1974. kaufman is the director of the Bard College Institute for Writing & Thinking.

Venue is bet. Thompson/Sullivan sts.

Nearest wheelchair accessible subway is A/C/E @ West 4th St. Zinc bar is not wheelchair accessible but if you need an accommodation please email seguefoundation@verizon.net.

For the full fall/winter lineup:

https://www.seguefoundation.com/calendar_pdfs/segue_fall-winter_2019-20.pdf

GREG FUCHS' UNGUIDED TOUR



Mount Hope Place & Jerome Avenue, Bronx October 2019

Inside Boog City

PLAY

Kevin Killian's *The Lenticular*

POETRY

Tanya Larkin, Brendan Lorber, Erin Mouré, Jess Mynes

PRINTED MATTER

Paul Siegell *Picked a Hot Pepper People but Good*

POETRY



Jess Mynes

Wendall, Mass.

Notebooks and Branches

We labor over the color but each threshold is caked in sentiment and birdsong. Let's wave to the stars that are low enough to hear our breathing. It's time to iron the horizon. I regret the lines before the first rain drops cloud the foot print puddle.

Imagine if the rest of the song is just a puff disguised as strength. Here life vanishes into lined paper and you are the last person that thinks the beach is winning over the sea. Whether the clock is silence or just

a sleepy waltz preempts any temptation this book resting on my knee offers. I await a frantic structure to hold the leaves to a match. Above the tree-line that confines my mind. Where climbing shadows

can't stop seeds from gathering steam.

II.

A pig is cleaner than a bar of soap but clouds are faster than this Buick. Hollows deeper than loneliness on a night so pitched its static draws out the road in a rain metered past tense. I want to be here, feeling as vast

as the rattle in your chest. What window to what is forgotten. Beholding to no one that won't have you to begin with. Cracks in a folded map worn to conceal direction. Right down to the sound at the lake where the sky is a wider blade. Each turn in the mirror impresses

the departure, stressing that dust is a verb.

Green Pants, Yellow Shirt

Knowledge that for a moment is a deepening shame. In a marrow still dark from its own events. Desire in the form

of everything I know. Where margins lay waste to image without ornament, outlasting daybreak's likeness. If identity is intention,

its syllables are devotions of rehearsal. Melody that reminds us this world is an individual reckoning. Currents flowering in rising confines

estranged by memory. Story where sequence compromises the rift between radiance and survival. Creativity in tempo to transcend declaration

of oncoming beckoning. Disquiet and unrest where it blooms. The dream in me stumbles, emptied of surrounding cruelty. Precedence imprint

as inevitable impersonation. Each moment in the fullness of confusion. Through branching limbs, in shallows. Fecundities in an absence beyond perfection.

Resolve that would render scenes refined by shape, by metric. What it means to sing conflicting harmonies, to seek reaches defined by differing order.

These wings are so life-like.



Tanya Larkin

Somerville, Mass.

Graceland (or Girls I Played Ball With)

Lacey Difiore, kicked in the head by a horse, she was the first to go. I didn't think much of it until later when I would groom horses to get my head straight I thought of it all the time the way they slowly lifted their hooves to shake off flies or spooked at the wrong approach. To be so scared and in such a big body. It seemed like a curse they mourned in slow blinks until they broke into a canter, a trot, a gallop, and then into their original wildness. I wasn't ready to ride yet, not out of the darkness of the stable, onto the ravaged grass where we fielded grounders. Oh Lacey of the neglected flowers White clover is what they are called although you would know better as their right names are yet in heaven said a poet, insane with his belief in a good God.

Good God, then there was Heidi Dess who died from playing chicken on the highway next to the tournament another shortstop that whipped the ball to first so hard she stung the first baseman's hand despite the leather She died between games her games of course while we played on carrying the rumor of her death from the bench to the outfield where you could faintly hear the coach yell "look alive out there" more than usual Heidi Dess party girl clean-up heavy makeup covered in a film of dust she kicked-up on the pivot I want to say the rest of us wordlessly conspired to let her team win so they could cry into the trophy cup. A glint in the fog of their grief but more likely they trounced us as always "Cake-eaters" they had called us. Then their trash talk sharpened I knew none of them well when they were alive but in death I understood something important about them.

Tonya Nicholson, with whom I shared a name and thus felt especially fond killed within hours of contracting a virus. Meningiitis. "I'm not going to die, am I?" she joked as they rushed her to the OR. She lived on Graceland which overlooks the only hollow in the township and boasts a cemetery where your loved ones can get the best view. Location, location. But didn't Tonya Nicholson already have it—an above ground pool, too. Sometimes I think nothing has happened to me but it has at least in the sense that it hasn't. Death, to me, is still a shell game gone wrong. An animal was supposed to be switched in at the last moment, the girl switched out. Not left on the slab with a view she wasn't able to see. Down the hollow to the left, if you squint, those white touches of paint are tufts of excelsior. Lambs, I think, trotting lightly after their mothers. Or caught in dreamy idle under the one cloud in an otherwise blue, very blue—sky.

Plein Air

The pines swing wildly in the wind from one side to another like mad old monks bowing to everything they bend so far to the ground they threaten to topple and pop out of the soil or split in two but mostly never do which makes you wonder how do they get away with that?

How deep and long their roots must run driving down into the darkness to risk such deathly unchecked joy if that is what it is Not very I come to find out There's no underground self to mirror the one we see its good posture and flources ever-widening to the ground On the earth it seems they have a very loose grip

At night it's hard to sleep They are loud like heaving metronomes out of sync or more like the dry hinges of ancient enormous doors opening and closing It's hard to know which is opening which closing hard to know where to enter

PRINTED MATTER

Paul Siegell Picked a Hot Pepper People but Good

BY ANNE-ADELE WIGHT



Take Out Delivery

Paul Siegell
Spuyten Duyvil Publishing

Like a waterwheel ablaze, everything is of the hunt, voracious." The poems in Paul Siegell's *Take Out Delivery* burst at the seams with food, with the devouring of food, with the insatiable consumption of pop culture. Siegell dishes out pizza, fortune cookies, Campbell's soup, pasta, eggplant, tapioca, cassava, and Philly soft pretzels—all in the first eight pages. Even the title turns our minds toward dinner: what to get? where? how? The poem titles, each beginning, "We've Come for Your..." remind us that we don't live at the top of the food chain.

This book is a hybrid, a cross-genre work with its home in the 21st century. Groups of poems alternate with clusters of cartoons featuring the hot pepper people. Ingeniously assembled by an off-label use of punctuation marks, these beings have the genetic characteristics of Siegell's earlier punctuation cartoons, but here they strut with special flamboyance. While "tightening up their grooviest of shoelaces," one queries, "chaos cicada?"; the other replies, "impulse octopus!"

Always generous, Siegell agreed to let me interview him. When asked, "Who is the 'we' of the poem titles?," he replied, "The hot pepper people." They turn out to have names: Hemingway, Gorbachev, Tug McGraw, Rachmaninoff, Catherine the Great, Leonardo DiCaprio, Cleopatra, and many more. Throughout the poems we find the names of famous people, public figures who traded privacy for immortality and whose names have contributed to defining pop, and not-so-pop, culture. Siegell says, "I spent my childhood watching MTV," a medium in which everything has its defining name and its distinctive brand.

Wordplay drives the activities of the hot pepper people. Siegell describes his creative process: "It's really hard for me not to play." His strongest imperative is to sign his work by making it uniquely his. If he can't say definitively, "This is mine," he isn't satisfied. Once he realized that "proper nouns were going to take the weight of this book," the visual element became essential and the cartoons found their place. Throw in one more character, Jay Uxtapo, who personifies creative juxtaposition, and we're off, circling in a vortex from which we emerge dizzy but well fed.

The recurring theme of a scavenger hunt unifies most of the poems. Jay Uxtapo presents "Pterodactyl scavenger hunt," "Stark raving mad scavenger hunt," "Manna from heaven scavenger hunt," and many more. Siegell points out a subtle detail: in a clever use of assonance, each scavenger hunt is associated with another short "a" sound, which underlines the phrase.

For all its hyperactive scavenger hunts, *Take Out Delivery* is no bag of popcorn. About a quarter of the way in, Siegell realized he needed a serious theme to give the book more heft. Pop culture has its grim side, notably the 9/11 attacks. A line at the bottom of the copyright page clues the reader in to what's coming: "Lucky numbers · 9, 11, 9, 11, 9, 1, 11." The first cartoon appears on page nine, followed by the first poem on page 11. Divided by cartoons, the poems occur in alternating groups of nine and 11. Between the last two groups, a lone poem, "We've Come for Your Pause Button," begins, "Fire and smoke engulf the towers of the World." There follows "One of the saddest scavenger hunts ever imagined." The 9/11 section brings a radical shift of pattern, rhythm, and tone. Siegell slams on the brakes in this moment of honoring the dead. Two empty squares, facing each other and each alone on its page, could look like brake pedals but represent something far sadder: the footprints of the fallen Twin Towers.

Under the calliope music a funeral march plays. For any American, references to 9/11 bring up the precariousness of survival. We comfort and distract ourselves with too much work, too much noise, excessive consumption. The book's "moment of silence," as Siegell describes it, forces a sudden examination of our fears.

In "We've Come for Your Train Conductor Hole Puncher," a poem preceding the 9/11 section, Siegell drops one more hint by multiplying 111,111,111 x 111,111,111. This calculation involves 18 ones, or (you guessed it) 9 elevens. The result is spectacular.

Paul Siegell's middle name is Michael, which is pretty funny. He's the author of wild life rifle fire (*Otoliths*), jambandbootleg (*A-Head Publishing*), Poemergency Room (*Otoliths*), & thanks to Spuyten Duyvil, this offering in 2018. Born & loved on Long Island, BA'd & BS'd at the University of Pittsburgh, & then employed as a copywriter in Orlando, Atlanta, & now Philadelphia, Paul is a senior editor at *Painted Bride Quarterly* & has contributed to *American Poetry Review*, *Bedfellows*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *E-Verse Radio*, & other fine journals & anthologies. Kindly find more of his work - & concrete poetry t-shirts - at "ReVeLeR @ eYeLeVeL" (<http://paulsiegell.blogspot.com/>) and @paulsiegell.

Anne-Adele Wight's most recent book, *An Internet of Containment*, was published by BlazeVOX [books] at the end of 2018. Her previous books, all from BlazeVOX, include *The Age of Greenhouses*, *Opera House Arterial*, and *Sidestep Catapult*. Her work has been published internationally in print and online and includes appearances in *Apiary*, *Philadelphia Poets*, *American Writing*, *Luna Luna*, *Bedfellows*, *Oz Burp*, and *Have Your Chill*. She has read extensively in Philadelphia and other cities and has curated readings for two long-running poetry series. She has received awards from Philadelphia Poets, the Philadelphia Writers' Conference, and the Sandy Crimmins Poetry Festival.



This book is a hybrid, a cross-genre work with its home in the 21st century.



Erin Mouré
Montreal

Sleep Mneumonics for Bungalow Bears

for and on behalf of MIM, 12 May 2019

Benny was brown, dark and light worn down in few years
to a weave and tufts,
vamoosed into the garbage out back at the weedy fence
afterward
who knew
who

Sara was black and white, taller than Benny, elegantly
tuxedoed, and later, the one
who held her in the photos in white shirt and rhinestone
blue bow tie married
a Sara.

Bouncer was tiniest. Up up into the air and onto the roof!
Bouncer!
Brought down with a rake held high and groped over shingles, then

up up into the air and onto the roof of the bungalow!

Bungalow, bungalow, bungalow.
from the Hindi बंगला, "bangala," a style native to the subcontinent, to Bengal.

Up up into the air and onto the roof of the house!
Raked down, or left for a father to fetch from a ladder at dinner-time.

Or rained on for several days.
Bouncer!
Bouncer!

The littlest one bounced this tiny bear.
He grew up so tall and brought home ducks, turkeys, geese, deer.
He knew about combines and the wide seeder.
Why did we all have bears!

Where oh where did the bears lumber off to when the rain stopped
and the clouds scudded east over the top of the bungalows on
toward the lakes of blond barley and past them to Saskatoon?

(I'm tired, so tired, please down don't come yet,
I'm sleeping now,
please wait one more hour in Saskatoon...

2 Poems With Mistakes in Them

Lunch for Recording Artists

What are you serving, she said,
trying to decide whether to stay.

White noise
spread on
Ukrainian bread.

Orange bottles of sleep.

Lumps

My fingers have arthritic *bultos*
just like beads of water
spilled on a waterproof surface.

I have something in common with science.

Everything touch, I ruin:
I ruin everything.



Brendan Lorber
Park Slope, Brooklyn

from The Jewel of the Sky Poems

for Dottie Lasky & Christina Davis

First we get the clouds aboard

Nothing shocks us except the gilded switch that lives
for that reason alone and also to summon the flight
attendant about having been shocked into awareness
of sitting aboard something tricked out as a wrist
with twenty silver bangles There's no reason to not
encrust our safety with precious gems and travel
inside a cabin less turboprop to Buffalo than sci fi colony
to the advanced décor at the heart of new homeworld

Bedazzled for departure

Outside are the sun and moon we get at but never reach
except as the end of a poem is whatever line you finally
drift off on The drift we catch between getting
away from it all and getting away with it all as though
the voyage was the destination which it isn't any more
than the seatbelt is the plane no matter how many
rhinestones the preflight checklist says to hot glue to it

Bernoulli in Pucci

The fuselage so laden with precious stones it's hard
to believe flight is possible but the way they catch
the light is the only thing keeping us aloft where
we age more slowly into the restrained glamour of
a new natural environment with ornament as structure

How many more opals do we need to bear the load
of our shared sadness at discovering the skymall
is not a real place among the clouds Or that nobody
has yet published *Windshear* the underground
inflight magazine and left them in the seat pockets

An idea of beauty whatever that means as a communal
gathering place a sort of Monte Carlo in which we all
better turn out to be the charming cat burglar Nobody
suspects among the priceless ornaments of this aircraft
that we have the freshly lifted Bernoulli Diamond
in our Pucci carry on We need its angles not to fence
nor for the thrill of theft but because ears popping
from day to day pressure what else could sustain us?

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Poetry Bios

Tanya Larkin who teaches poetry writing at Tufts University and is part of a pop-up poetry typewriter assembly line called First Impressions. Her most recent work, a lyric essay called "The Path," can be found at The Critical Flame (<http://criticalflame.org/the-path/>). **Brendan Lorber** is a poet, prose writer, and editor who lives in a little castle on the highest geographic point in Brooklyn, across from the Green-Wood Cemetery. Over two decades in the making, his first full-length book just came out. It's called *If this is paradise why are we still driving?* and is published by the Subpress Collective. He's also written several chapbooks, most recently *Unfixed Elegy and Other Poems* (Butterlamb Press). He's had work in the *American Poetry Review*, *Fence*, *McSweeney's*, and elsewhere. Since 1995 he has published and edited *Lungfull!* Magazine, an annual anthology of contemporary literature that prints the rough drafts of contributors' work in addition to the final versions in order to reveal the creative process. **Erin Mouré's** 2019 books are a translation of Lupe Gómez, *Camouflage* (Circumference Books) from Galician, a co-translation with Roman Ivashkiv of Yuri Izdryk; *Smokes* (Lost Horse Press) from Ukrainian, and her own *The Elements* (Anansi Press). She hopes soon to announce publishers in the U.S.A. for a selected poems from Galician by Uxío Novoneyra and a translation of Chus Pato's latest work, *Un Libre Favor*, which just appeared in spring 2019 to acclaim in Galicia. **Jess Mynes** is the author of several books including *Sky Brightly Picked* (Skysill Press) and *One Anthem* (Pressed Wafer Press). His poems have appeared in numerous publications including *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Nation*, *Bright Pink Mosquito*, *Hyperallergic*, *Let the Bucket Down*, *Vlak*, *Shampoo*, and *Big Bell*. He co-curated a reading series, *All Small Caps*, in Wendell, Mass. for eight years. He publishes innovative contemporary poets as the editor of *Fewer & Further Press*.

Dan Wilcox

Albany, N.Y.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dwlcx>
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QE2, Central Ave., Albany, N.Y., A punk rock club where Tom Nattell created the Albany poetry scene beginning in 1988.

Bio

Although Dan Wilcox once worked as a dishwasher & as a short-order cook, he has never driven a cab, or played professional baseball. For most of his career he worked as a bureaucrat and wrote poetry. He was recently named one of the 2019 Literary Legends by the Albany Public Library Foundation.

His poems have been published widely in small press journals and anthologies over the years, most recently in *Ghost Fishing: an Eco-Justice Anthology*, edited by Melissa Tuckey. He has published a number of chapbooks, most under his own imprint A.P.D. (all poets die, etc.). Gloucester Notes is available from FootHills Publishing.

Currently he organizes poetry events in Albany, N.Y. and is an active member of Veterans For Peace. You can read his Blog about the Albany poetry scene and some of his poems at <https://dwlcx.blogspot.com/>.

Artist's Statement

I began taking photos at poetry readings in the late 1970s when I lived in the East Village, mainly to remember who the poets were if I spotted them on the street. I continued on to when I lived in Yonkers and went to the poetry series at the riverrun bookstore in Hastings-on-the-Hudson. I moved to Albany in 1986 just as the local poetry scene was beginning to build. Back then folks didn't carry around cameras in their pockets as they now do with cellphones, and I was usually the only one with a camera—a film camera. I would take photos at all the poetry readings, open mics, and other events, such as the 24-hour Readings Against the End of the World. Even before I went digital in 2008 I claimed to have "the world's largest collection of photos of unknown poets."

I would carry around a pocket notebook, note the names of the poets and also something about what they read, a title, theme, whatever, and would transcribe these scribbles into larger spiral notebooks. I started a Blog in January 2007, at which time I started using reporters' notebooks and trying to keep my notes more legible to report on the event directly on the Blog. Getting a digital camera made it a lot easier to include photos from the events. I continue to this day.

During this year I have started writing about the Albany poetry scene from my files and those early notebooks, with the working title "Opening the Mic: a Personal History of the Albany Poetry Scene" up to 2007, in the investigative poetry style of Ed Sanders.

You can find a library of over 4,000 of my photos on <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dwlcx> as well as on my Blog <https://dwlcx.blogspot.com/> & on my Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/dwlcx>.



Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Tom Nattell, Tom's House, Albany, N.Y., September, 1994



Marcus Anderson, Poets in the Park, Washington Park, Albany, N.Y., July 2002



Poets in the Park, Washington Park, Albany, N.Y., July 2005



Anne Waldman, QE2, Albany, N.Y., October, 1989.



Janine Pommy Vega, Colony Cafe, Woodstock, N.Y., May, 2002



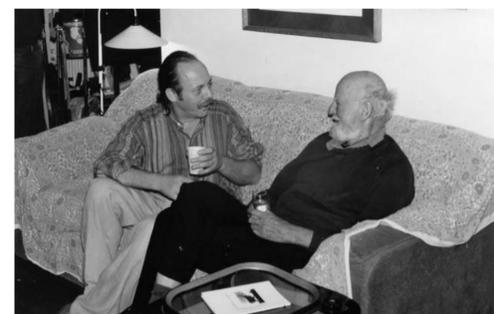
There are six dead poets in this photo, March 1991, 8th Step Coffee House, Albany, N.Y.



Poets' Audience, Valentines, Albany, N.Y., July, 2002



Allen Ginsberg at the QE2, November 1990.



Pierre Joris and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, party at Tom Nattell's house, Albany, N.Y., September, 1994.



Enid Dame, Cafe Web, Albany, N.Y., October, 2000



Paul Weinman, QE2, Albany, N.Y., November 1989.

Kevin Killian's Play The LENTICULAR

At the recent Welcome to Boog City 13 Arts Festival we were pleased to stage a play by the late Kevin Killian. A link to video of a performance of The LENTICULAR, featuring Rolls Andre, Lee Ann Brown, Shiv Mirabito, Aeliana Nicole, and Alexa Smith is on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOUqsy29bQw&t=6s>. Thanks to Mitch Corber for shooting the video. So here it is, The LENTICULAR.

The LENTICULAR Kevin Killian

CHARACTERS

Kabin Karki, an art writer
Greta Court, a registered nurse
Allison, her sister, an adept of the lenticular
Midge, a caterer
"Dr. Tim," a prominent G.P.

[Play opens in Rosedale, an affluent suburb north of Toronto.
In the salon of the Court sisters, guests gather for dinner.]

[Enter KABIN and GRETA.]

KABIN. But Greta dear, where are the goldfish I adore? I couldn't help notice the empty bowl out in the foyer.

GRETA. It's complicated.

KABIN. Their wee, mincing tails—so flirtatious. Tell me, is Allison home? I tell you, I'm dying to hear the latest about—oh, what is it that interests her so? Those little picture things that change.

GRETA. The lenticular, Kabin. That's her King Charles' head.

KABIN. Why do I so frequently think of lentil soup when you mention that word? [Snaps fingers at an unseen audience.] Greek experts, come, trace their common derivation.

GRETA. I shouldn't know this, but somehow I do, through osmosis I guess—my sad fate—lenticular images in fact do derive their name from the same root as the quotidian lentil.

KABIN. You nurses must know all sorts of things.

GRETA. I suppose we do.

KABIN. Between lentil beans, and those gerbils, and flashlights—

GRETA. When they learn I'm a nurse, men will always hone in on one ordinary extraction procedure. But in my case, Kabin, I'm concerned about my sister. She's obsessed. She's turned our entire dining room into a large lenticular artcube, that stretches from hutch to sideboard and gives the unsettling illusion that one has already eaten. You can't even make out the food on your plate, it seems to bilocate each time your fork makes a job for it.

KABIN. I wonder if the extraction procedure to which you allude is the same one I'm thinking of.

GRETA (wearily). It is. The question is, what to do with Allison? You were engaged to her once, Kabin—give me some advice. I don't really love her the way a sister should.

KABIN. Ah me! She and I set a date, and she broke it off. Why? Hard to say. But I still love her, speaking as an aesthetician. She's quite extraordinary looking, and she sure can rock a caftan.

GRETA. This time she's gone too far.

KABIN. Dear, you can always get new goldfish!

GRETA. She's called Tim! My boss! Doctor Tim! I couldn't be more embarrassed. And your mission, Kabin? Somehow distract Dr. Tim when dinner starts, don't let Allison browbeat him with her LQ test.

KABIN. Have I met Tim?

GRETA. I don't know, but I love him the way meat loves salt, as much as, or more than, my sister loves her lenticules.

KABIN. Oh, OK. What's cooking? It smells divine, and neither of you were ever known for your cuisine.

GRETA. Our salons are now catered, out of household things.

KABIN. And what's an "LQ test?"

GRETA. Here's the chef now.

[Enter MIDGE, a caterer.]

MIDGE. Miss Greta, we're going to start laying down the food in a minute. Hope you're hungry! Oh! Who's this?

KABIN. I'm Kabin Karki, from Nepal. Don't bother re-pronouncing my name, just remember it's like the little log cabin, and under its mat you'll find my car key.

MIDGE. I'm Midge. Of Midge's Digestibles. May I give you my card?

KABIN. But I would rather you let me give my heart—to sir, with love.



Aeliana Nicole and Lee Ann Brown.

MIDGE (puzzled). Oh Miss Court, that mural in your dinette! It frightens me. I walk in from one door, I see a field of African veldt. Coming from the pantry, it's like a flowery apron on an amateur cook—you know, all violets, no real rigor.

KABIN (to GRETA). When we used to "date," Allison was all about grilling the wait staff. "Is this produce raw?" It was mortifying and I see she hasn't changed.

MIDGE (producing a tray with hors d'oeuvres). While we wait for the final guest, won't you try some nibbles? This is (scrunches face to remember) goldfish almondine, raised locally. Indeed within eight feet of the eat site.

GRETA. I'll have to check my own heart rate, after I scream.

MIDGE. "Tino Sehgal, 2011."

KABIN (fretfully). —Yes, think of Allison's work as performance art of a sort. You stood on line for eight hours at the Met, to watch Alexander McQueen fit Marina Abramovic. This you get every day, no waiting.

GRETA. No goldfish for me, thanks, Midge. Gee, it's like a Gershwin tune.

MIDGE. Miss Allison has ordered the Thayer Abbott special. Camouflage birds. From above, they're blue to match the sky, from below, nature gives them white underbellies, so their enemies think they're snow and burrow.

GRETA. I said no thank you.

MIDGE. Think of penguins!

KABIN. Midge, dear, let's meet again at the eat site.

[Enter ALLISON COURT, binoculars in hand.]

ALLISON. And who's this—is this the famous Doctor Tim I hear so much about?

[Exit MIDGE.]

KABIN. Allison, don't be so disconnected! You were my fiancée; you know I'm no doctor. You've known me since RISD where we worked with Dale Chihuly.

ALLISON. Rings a bell.

GRETA. Please, Allison, relax. Let this be one occasion where you don't whip out your LQ test at the drop of a napkin ring.

KABIN (soothingly). That's OK, Greta. Allison dear, try it on me! I love taking tests, it puts me firmly on the side of the federal.

GRETA. Oh dear!

ALLISON (pleased to get a chance to let her LQ test sparkle). So Doctor, peer through those lenses and tell me what you see on my dining room wall.

KABIN (obeying her). A peacock's tail?

ALLISON. It's actually only more lenses, infinitely small, though I'm trying to enlarge them by one method or another.

GRETA. She thought she might found a new size of lenticule on the golden backs of my little fish.

ALLISON. We call this a lenticular print. It may look like a peacock feather to you, Dr. Tim, but it's really only superb printing by my factory elves.

GRETA. "Now run over to the other side and see what appears."

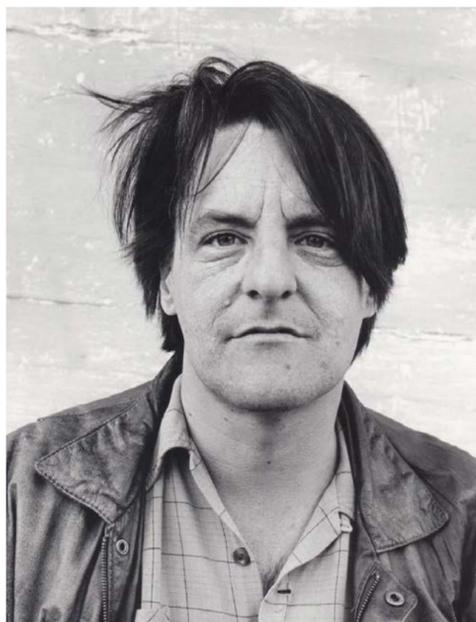
ALLISON. Now run over to the other side—[to GRETA, sourly.] Stealing my thunder, sister mine?

GRETA. I'm sorry!

ALLISON. Re-apply these binoculars to your eyes, Doctor, uh—Mr. whatever. And turn them to focus into the room on the far side of the threshold. What appears?

KABIN. Hastily, I see what looks like a gravestone in an autumn cemetery.

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Kevin Killian in 1989. Loring McAlpin photo.

Deeplian G. Cole photo

POETS THEATER

GRETA. Poor little innocent fish, sacrificed to lenticular science.

KABIN. A grayeyard in old Nepal, IMHO.

ALLISON (assuming the attitude of a museum tour guide). What the public came to love about the lenticular was its way of emblemizing the loss of the past to the present, or the present to the future.

KABIN. It makes time pass by quickly—a boon to the bored! One step and you’re in the grid of life, proud as a peacock, but blink and, well, you’re dead.

MIDGE (from kitchen). Not literally!

ALLISON. The Lenticular is death, but only the sort of death Misumi, echoing Michel Foucault, calls incorporeal materialism. And step back to where you were, or shut your left eye, and the grave disappears, and you’re back to life (or the next thing to it)—you’re back in the past. The past recaptured, the future negated. Proust would have loved it, and in his honor Midge is passing around some delectable goldfish almondine.

MIDGE (calling from the kitchen). Half a mol!

GRETA. Is it really about the passage from death to life?

ALLISON. And back again.

KABIN. Cher had a sizeable hit with that Massumian insight. “If I Could Turn Back Time,” remember Allison? It was going to be our first dance as newlyweds. Cher stood atop an enormous battleship and made the world listen to itself! The tortoise nearly mated the hare.

ALLISON (slowly). I think I remember.... Doctor Tim.

[Enter Dr. TIM, a wealthy resident at Lovecraft General and GRETA’s boss.]

Dr. TIM. I’m Dr. Tim! Are there two of us?

KABIN. I’m Kabin. And this is Allison, Greta’s little sister. [Lowering his voice.] She looks sweet and innocent, doesn’t she doctor, but believe me, she’s Satan with that strap-on, as I’m sure you’ve heard.

Dr. TIM. How do you do, Ms. Court? Now you have an interest in things lenticular, or so I hear from your charming sister.

GRETA. Hello, Doctor!

Dr. TIM (ignoring her). Administer your LQ test, Allison, or should I say, Dolores, our Lady of Pain? A Swinburne touch to the lenticular, or so I have always thought since its adoption by medical science in the 1950s.

Could you hurt me, sweet lips, though I hurt you?
Men touch them, and change in a trice
The lilies and languors of virtue
For the raptures and roses of vice.

ALLISON (eagerly). Finally, one who understands! As a little girl I was drawn to the flame of the candle, rather than its wick. Daddy gave me a set of tiny cards, no bigger than your mandible, Doctor, each revealing a scene from nature. In one a green tree on a hill. Tuck up the card and the leaves turned red, tuck it up another notch and the tree is shining white with cold.

GRETA (in a low voice). That was my card, sister mine! Yours was the lighthouse.

ALLISON. In a second card a lighthouse stood wet and dark on a mossy cliff, but when I spun the card around my head, beams of light burst out of its lens, under its dome, circling the dark bloody sea below.

GRETA (low voice). That was my heart, not the sea.

Dr. TIM (grabbing binoculars from KABIN). My nose tells me dinner’s ready in the next room. Shall I see what’s cooking?

ALLISON. I’ve convoked this dinner to show off my newest work of art. That mural which performs life and death is lovely, but it’s very 2008. My elves have been slaving day and night, weaving a carpet made of lenticules. You’ll feel like you’re walking on a cloud—and you will be!—and the next step you will be greeted by the hounds of Hell.

Dr. TIM (impressed). By Jove! (Sotto voce, to KABIN). Satan with a strapon, for sure!

KABIN. Allison, where’s Greta?

ALLISON (flippantly). Have you checked the—nurses’ station? That old-fashioned white she wears, the no-color of a movie screen. No wonder all you men prefer me, for I come in colors, everywhere. Do you know this poem, which I sort of adapted to my own style sense?

Whenas in silks my lencis self goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of my clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free;
O how that glittering taketh me!

Dr. TIM. Do I hear raised voices from the pantry?

KABIN. Somehow Greta exited without being seen!

ALLISON. And you doubted the power of the purposive lenticular!

[From offstage we hear the raised voices in the pantry. Fearfully MIDGE screams out, “I’m sorry I killed your fish!” GRETA rumbles. “They were my heart, they were not fish. They were the lenses of my youth as a girl.” A loud shriek.]

KABIN. Maybe “doubted” is the wrong word. I never “doubted” per se. But when we were an item, Allison, you used often to exaggerate your influence in world affairs.

Dr. TIM. Mistress Allison, do you ever see clients alone? I have a bit of an extraction problem your arts might assuage.

KABIN. Remember when you said you met J.D. Salinger in—where was it, dear, somewhere doomy, like New Hampshire? And you talked him into putting those brassy stripes on the corners of his books?

ALLISON. “Brassy!” I think not. They do the trick, don’t they? For Jerry, the lenticular bounces us back and forth from the illuminations that sometimes rattle our lives, turning us into quiz kids, and then back into the doldrums of the mundane, where we realize wisdom is but a fleeting thing. We’re really as phony as the squares we despise.

KABIN. “Jerry”?

ALLISON. That is the name his intimates used to bark out erotic orders to him with, while tightly encased in black vinyl, as he lay moaning on the damp floor of his homely, Buddhist, dungeon basement. “Jerry, you piece of shit,” began many perorations.

Dr. TIM (impressed). My word, Miss Court, you’re a firework! Come on, show me what you’re worth!

[Enter GRETA, in a daze, her hands bloody, her maquillage whitened, drawn. Her formerly crisp nurse’s uniform is stained and crumpled. She carries a large mirror.]

GRETA. There was the real world, Allison, and then the world you took from me.

ALLISON. Hold up the mirror, do, angle it so we can see into my newly carpeted dining room.

KABIN. Doctor Tim, do something, poor dear’s at the edge of shock!

GRETA. I’ll be fine. Let’s hold the mirror up to dialectic, shall we?

[GRETA raises large mirror so that AUDIENCE can see the interior of the dining room. One enormous wall is woven with lenticules which seem to twinkle as the mirror trembles. On the new carpet, we see the dead body of poor MIDGE.]

KABIN. How ghastly! Isn’t she that catering girl so keen to pass on her card?

ALLISON. Perhaps!

[Pause.]

[Dr. TIM walks offstage to MIDGE’s body, realizes that he’s dead. We see him do so in the mirror. TIM realizes the horror of the situation and begins to scream.]

ALLISON. Blow out the candles, Greta!

KABIN. My eyes are playing tricks on me! Is that Midge, or is it a whole system of values dead on the rug?

GRETA. It is not one person who ruined our lives, but a whole nexus of market demands.

Dr. TIM (from offstage). By Jove, I think it’s capitalism!

[Curtain falls.]



Rolls Andre, Alexa Smith, and Shiv Mirabito.



Lee Ann Brown, Aeliana Nicole, Alexa Smith, Rolls Andre, and Shiv Mirabito.