# COMMUNITY ARTS ENVIRONMENT HEALTH ISSUE 49 SUMMER 2014







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BEYOND SUCCESSFUL:
15 YEARS OF AL DI LA

READER INTERVIEW
NICOLE C. KEAR
AUTHOR & PSREADER COLUMNIST

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#### CONTRIBUTORS



















NICOLE CACCAVO KEAR's memoir, Now I See You, comes out June '14 by St. Martin's Press, and she contributes regularly to Parents and American Baby, as well as Salon and Babble in between her dispatches at the Reader. You can keep up with her misadventures in Mommydom on her blog, A Mom Amok (amomamok.com). A native of Brooklyn, she lives in the Slope with her three firecracker kids, one very patient husband, and an apparently immortal hermit crab.

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# Ullster COMPILED BY FLORENCE WANG

rooklyn summers are hot. There's no denying it. To be honest, once the weekend is upon us the last thing I want to

do is hop on the hot, oppressive subway that seems to defy any semblance of a schedule. Leaving the borough during summer weekends is nothing short of an adventure. Luckily, everything you need can be found within walking distance. Now that the city has brought the Fourth of July fireworks display back to its rightful home, there really is no reason to go anywhere else. Here are our suggestions for some fun, enlightening, and tasty things to check out this

#### Piper Theater Productions

#### Old Stone House

Producing free outdoor theater at the Main Stage at the Old Stone House, Piper Theater Productions lives up to its mission of "creating free and dynamic theater for families." This year their production of Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson runs Thursdays through Saturday nights (excluding July 4). It's an unexpectedly fun and informative musical about our seventh president. Bring a blanket and watch the performance under stars. More information can be found online at pipertheatre.org/performances.

#### Brooklyn Unicycle Day

#### August 29

This event is proof that Brooklyn truly offers everything. Join in the "one wheel madness" during this thirteen-mile ride, starting at City Hall in Manhattan, crossing the Brooklyn Bridge, and ending in Coney Island under Deno's Wonder Wheel for fireworks to commemorate the day. It's part of the three-day 2014 Unicycle Festival, which continues for the next two days on Governors' Island. For a full list of events and tour route visit nycunifest.com

#### Ai Weiwei: According to What?

#### **Brooklyn Museum through August 10**

Spanning twenty years and a variety of mediums, this show features the work of a highly-respected artist. Inherently Chinese, with influences from ancient dynasties as well as modern daily life, Ai Weiwei's work is thought-provoking and beautiful. He is most noted for designing the Bird's Nest Arena for the Beijing Olympics, but is also widely known for his unapologetic criticism of the Chinese government. As a result, this artist is unable to leave his country. His works in According to What? speak volumes in his absence. For more information, visit the museum's website, brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/ai\_weiwei.







#### Banhmigos 178 Lincoln Place

What's better than a picnic in Prospect Park? A picnic that involves no cooking whatsoever! Banhmigos' offerings represent my favorite hot-weather eating. Vietnamese sandwiches filled with cool, crisp veggies paired with a refreshing bubble tea will leave you satisfied without feeling stuffed. Their menu is extensive, offering a variety of salads and sandwiches for carnivore, vegetarian, and vegan tastes. Don't leave without ordering a bubble tea; rather than using powder, theirs are made using green or black tea. You can see their menu and order online at banhmigosbrooklyn.com.



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Jay Friedenberg, 2011.

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# TTA SIGHT

WHEN ROSA TOOK HER FIRST STEPS, MY INSTINCT WAS TO PUSH HER BACK DOWN. I DIDN'T DO IT OF COURSE.

Still, the fear that filled me was powerful and persuasive.

"You are screwed!" Fear cackled. "Good luck with that."

Immediately, Guilt popped up, sounding eerily like my mother.

"What kind of a mother lets Fear in, at a moment like this?" she chastised, clucking her teeth, "Some people should never have kids."

Then, just in the nick of time, Joy rushed in, doing back handsprings and waving her pompoms madly, and soon I was shrieking and applauding, oohing and ahhing, repeating incessantly "What a BIG GIRL!" which is precisely the protocol detailed in the Milestones section of the Mother of the Year Handbook.

This will be fine, I thought to myself, I can handle this.

I was, of course, dead wrong. I couldn't even begin to handle it.

The problem wasn't just that Rosa was learning to walk, it was that in doing so, she was coming into her own, blossoming into the girl she was destined to be.

People have different names for the category of child my daughter fit into as a toddler. Laissez-faire folks called her "a free spirit," artistic types considered her a "firecracker", the practical-minded thought she was "high-maintenance" and old-school disciplinarians deemed her a "hellion." But the phrase just about everyone agreed on is "a handful." When Rosa was between the ages of one and three, you could count on someone observing, "Wow, that one is really a handful, huh?" every single time we stepped outside.

except from NOW I SEE YOU (St. Martin's, June 24, 2014)

Hilarious and profoundly heartwarmin by her collar before she stepped into oncoming traffic, or yanking her back from petting a dead rat, or knocking a shard of glass out of her hand before she swallowed it.

> Don't get me wrong. From the start, I loved my daughter's exuberance. I was awe-struck and inspired by her spirit. Which is why it was really too bad that I had to spend every waking second trying to crush it.

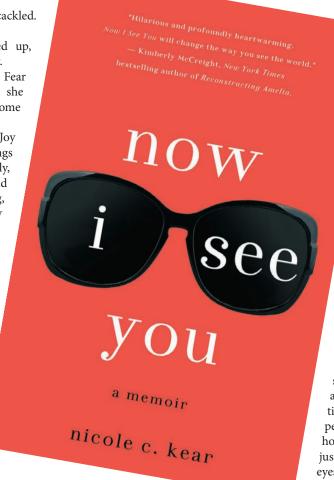
I'd be too busy grabbing her

I was spared having to think of a reply because

What else could I do? I wanted to keep the kid around, after all. Shielding that whirling dervish from harm would have been an uphill battle for a parent with all their primary senses intact, much less a mom who was losing her vision. The deterioration of my eyesight had been slow but steady since my diagnosis at nineteen with a degenerative retinal disease; by the time Rosa was mobile, I'd lost all my peripheral vision, so that I was like a horse wearing blinders-except not just on the sides, but on top of my eyes and below too. If I wasn't looking directly at Rosa-nice and close, too-I wouldn't catch whatever new trouble

was in up to her elbows. Take the tunnel s h e vision, thrown in a kid with zero impulse control, factor an older sibling into the equation, and what you get is one big problem.

It's not a problem unique to visually-impaired people. In fact, everyone that has more than one child but still only one set of eyes encounters the same challenge. Every parent has, at one point or another, lost track of their child in some crowded, public space, whether it's a playground or a zoo or a supermarket—not in a serious way, not long enough to call the authorities or anything,





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but long enough to make you scared, sick-to-your-stomach, bargaining-with-God scared. It happens to everyone. It's just that it happened to me on a regular basis.

I hadn't run into too much trouble keeping up with Lorenzo, even with my tunnel vision, but he was a clingy kid with a strong Back-to-Mommy boomerang.

Rosa was another story entirely. Before she could walk, she cleaved to me, but only because I was her ride. Once she got mobile, she was off like a bottle rocket, and I swear I could hear her hissing, "See you suckas!" as she whizzed past, shimmering golden hair flowing behind her like melted metal.

So if Rosa vanished from my field of vision it was reasonable to assume that she was making tracks for the playground gate, and after that, who knew where?

Sometimes though, Rosa vanished from my field of vision by just sitting down or taking a few steps away from me. Then she'd fall into one of my blind spots, which kept growing larger and less manageable like a run in a stocking. She'd be gone, even though she was just an arm's length away. The only way to prevent this from happening was to never, ever take my eyes off her, not even to look at my watch, not even to retrieve a dropped sippy cup.

Unfortunately, this made me what I'd learned from the Park Slope parenting listserv was called a helicopter parent. A "Helicopter Mom" is one who hovers, like a helicopter, over her child, providing constant supervision and surveillance. The opposite is a "Free Range Mom," who gives her children the freedom to explore, manage themselves, and make mistakes.

My mother has a different word for the latter, and like much of her lexicon, it's not fit for print. According to my mother, you don't just hand over freedom to kids; you keep a vise-like grip on their freedom until they wrest if from your cold, dead hands. And even then, you haunt them until their dying day, hovering over them from the afterlife.

As far as my parenting was concerned, I was still trying frantically to keep the ugly truth of my blindness hidden under my sleeve... The trouble was, after so many years, the hiding gesture had become instinct.

When I hear fellow parents hearken back to the good old days when they were kids—how things were different then and they could walk to school alone, could play stickball in the street, could run to the corner for mom's cigarettes—I am dumbfounded. I didn't even get to take candy from strangers on Halloween. My mother not only chaperoned our trick-ortreating in Bensonhurst, she chauffeured us to it, driving us from one family friend's house to the next. And even then, she checked our candy before we ate it, because while one could be fairly certain Nonny's 87-year-old neighbor didn't put razor blades in the Twix, one could never be positive.

"Don't you trust me?" I'd protest, desperate to escape her force

"Of course I trust you!" she'd exclaim. "It's everyone else I don't trust!"

One of the biggest perks of becoming a mother is that you get to show your own mother how much better you can do the job. When I was pregnant, I thought that one of the ways I was going to do this was by affording my children the freedoms I hadn't been given. Let them learn from their own mistakes. Give them space to grow.

And I might have, too, if it hadn't been for my eyes. I might have shaped up to be one cool, confident, relaxed mom, standing on the sidelines at the playground, sipping my latte while chatting about gluten-free snacks or whatever the hell SuperMoms talk about, looking up every so often to locate the kids, but generally doing my own thing and letting them do theirs. Sounds dreamy. I bet my hair would have been fuller and my skin clearer and my ass tighter, too.

Instead, I ended up a greasy-haired, baggy-eyed, wilted-ass ,helicopter mom.

I suppose there are worse things.

Except that hovering is too gentle a word for what I did. "Pursuing" is more like it. As soon as I set those kids free, my goal was to catch them back up again, which entailed endless Keystone Cop chase scenes on the playground.

I don't get to select a parenting style, I realized, I don't have that luxury.

As I gradually lost vision, I gradually lost choices, too. It was always little, trivial things, none of them important except when you put them all together. I didn't get to choose whether to wear heels or flats anymore; it was hard enough handling stairs and curbs in sneakers, much less teetering on four-inch stilts. I'd stopped wearing eye shadow after the third time a friend pointed out it was a bit, um, uneven; now I was forced to go bare because it was better than wearing a clown face. If it was a rainy day I couldn't opt to take the kids to their doctor's appointment with the car; it was always the bus.

One little concession that didn't feel little at all was not being able to choose what kind of watch to wear. The Swiss Army

watch my grandmother had given to me at college graduation had been getting hard for me to decipher and when I'd gone to Target to replace it, I'd found there was exactly one watch with numbers large enough for me to read and it was about the biggest eyesore in manufacturing history: An oversized round watch face studded with rhinestones, with a pink pleather band. The only choice I had was whether I'd hide it under my sleeve or

wear it with pride, as if it was a fully intentional fashion choice.

I chose the latter—with the watch, at least. As far as my parenting was concerned, I was still trying frantically to keep the ugly truth of my blindness hidden under my sleeve. Little hints of it kept peeking out though, like when I knocked the toddler down, and I knew I couldn't keep it under wraps for much longer. The trouble was, after so many years, the hiding gesture had become instinct.

Pull the sleeve down. Cover up. O

Nicole C. Kear's memoir, Now I See You, comes out June 24th by St. Martin's Press. You can order the book and find more info at nicolekear.com.



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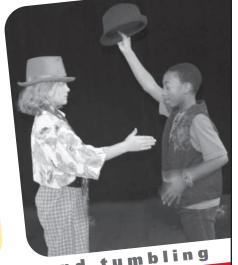
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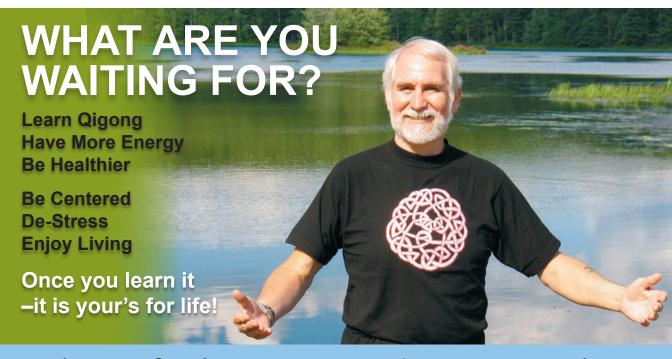
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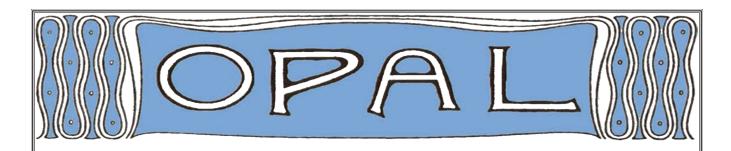


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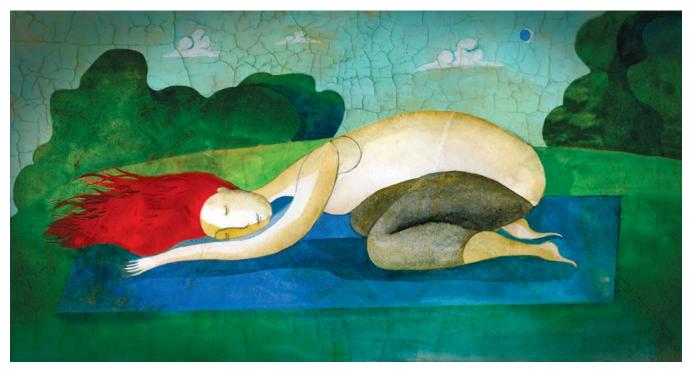
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# KEEPYOURCOOL

By Veronica Carnero | Illustrated by Yevgenia Nayberg



are finally starting to shed, and going outside in the sunshine is replacing the winter norm of cocooning myself into what I like to call a "couch nest".

We were so eager to feel warmer temperatures that at the first sign of above fifty degree weather, people were literally shedding and wearing shorts, dresses, and flip flops. We wanted to feel the sun on our skin and breathe in the new fragrances of spring. It was so sweet!

Higher temperatures and longer days are sure to affect our physical and subtle bodies. Our physical bodies may feel looser and our overall moods might be a little cheerier. I feel like this happens every year; we have our honeymoon stage with spring and as we enter June, we still relish in the warmer temperatures. But by mid-July and certainly by August, we are over the heat waves and intense humidity that characterize a typical New York summer. We crave the AC and the only way we can sleep is in a chilled room. If you have AC in your home, the thought of going outside reminds you of visions of *The Walking Dead*—overheated zombies gasping for some cool air.

But how can we use this heat to our advantage? What can we learn about balancing ourselves in dealing with yet another extreme? The practice of yoga and its sister-science Ayurveda

offers tools on how to keep cool, not only physically, but emotionally as well.

#### FIRE

Heat and light are characteristics of the fire element. We have internal fire which regulates our digestive system, self-confidence, sight, action, and emotions. One can have too much or not enough of the fire element in each of these areas.

Not enough digestive fire will bring feelings of bloating and constipation. Too much fire in the confidence arena can translate into someone being egotistical, single-minded, and easily frustrated when things do not go their way. On the contrary, if someone has a hard time feeling good about themselves, they are lacking fire. If you suffer from migraines your eyes can be too sensitive to light, meaning you have too much fire in your system.

One of the biggest imbalances with this element relates to our emotions. I find myself getting more frustrated and easily angered in the summer time. Too much fire either from my food, activities, or the colors I am wearing in an environment that is already too hot, will cause me lash out at innocent strangers. The city term "murder heat" starts to make a lot of sense when I am waiting on the subway platform in mid-August and there is not a train in sight.

Sun salutations, twists, arm balances, and most inversions will naturally warm you up, and you will need some variations in your yoga practice to sustain a nurturing summer practice. Explore moon salutations instead of sun salutations, where instead of lowering halfway to the ground, you take a child's pose. Cleansing and detoxing are some of the benefits of twisting poses and I invite you to experiment with open, seated, and reclined twists. Shoulderstand, Salamba Sarvangasana (All Parts Supported pose), is a cooling inversion for those who still want to feel the benefits of going upside down. An advanced practice is one that changes and morphs to suit the individual in the present moment. What felt good two weeks ago may not feel the same now. Stay aware and present with how you respond to changes in your practice.

Having a balanced fire element will allow for proper digestion, a steady stream of motivation, and a general sense of well-being. Because our external summer environment is very hot, we will feel less over-heated if we keep our internal fires at bay. We can turn to other natural elements that exist within our internal and external worlds to balance us out. The other elements of water, earth, air, and ether will help us offset too much fire and prevent us from burning out.

#### WATER

We want to look to things that are going to cool us down. When I think of cooling down, I think of jumping into a pool or the ocean. Our bodies are innately asking us for water. I don't have a pool in my backyard, so I have to get creative with how I integrate water into my everyday.

Drinking lots of water is a great way to start. Sweating is an involuntary way for your body to release excess heat, so you want to re-hydrate any lost fluids. Eat more foods like fruits and vegetables that have a high water content. Cucumbers, melons, summer squash, grapes, and berries are great examples of summer-friendly foods. Fried, very spicy, and sugary foods are big no-nos for summer eating. They tax your system and generate too much internal heat.

The element of water rules the area of the hips. Explore more hip-opening poses in your yoga practice. These poses act as an exhaust for the body, allowing for excess heat to dissipate. A fantastic hip-opening pose, Eka Pada Rajakapotasana (One-Legged King Pigeon) is commonly referred to as Pigeon in class. The genius of this pose is that one hip is externally rotated and the other hip is internally rotated. So one will feel a stretch on the outside of one hip and the front the other hip.

#### AIR & ETHER

It's not only the heat that is overwhelming: the humidity makes NYC summers extra burdensome. We should turn to the element of air and ether (space). A fan is essential in keeping the heavy air moving. Set up good airflow in your home and work space. Going to the beach or the country will cool down the fires by offering you more space to move and breathe. Movement is the key word here in bringing a sense of lightness to your everyday. The practice of Pranayama, breath control, teaches us how to use our breath to find balance.

My saving grace lately has been this cooling Pranayama practice called Sitali Pranayama. In Sanskrit, sita means cool. Find a comfortable seat and take a couple of inhalations and

exhalations through the nose, closing the mouth. Then stick out your tongue and let the outside edges of the tongue come together, creating a taco shape. Inhale through your taco tongue, take the tongue inside the mouth, seal the lips and gently exhale through the nose. Try nine rounds of this, seeing if you can slow down the inhalation and exhalation. You can feel the cool air enter through the tongue. I call this my natural air conditioning.

Some people can not make a taco tongue. So as an alternative, make a small circle with your lips like you are about to whistle and inhale through the small hole.

#### EARTH

Do you remember your middle school fire drills? If you were in a fire and smoke was filling the room, you were instructed to get low to the ground because heat and smoke rise. Spend more time on the ground or close to it where it is cooler. Going to the park and sitting in the shade or lying in the grass are great ways to do this. After a long day, coming home and lying on your back on the living room floor for ten to fifteen minutes will do wonders to restore balance on all levels.

This earth energy inspires us to ground a bit more and slow down. We can overheat ourselves by packing our schedules too tightly and running to and from many places. Take it down a notch, and as the body slows down, so will the mind.

Forward bends are grounding and cooling poses to focus on during the summer. We can take advantage of the external heat that loosens our muscles and spend more time diving deep into the land of forward bending. A wide straddle stretch, Upavistha Konasana (Wide-Angle Seated Forward Bend), simultaneously releases any stagnant energy in the pelvis, stretches the back of the legs and opens the back body. Find a comfortable seat, let your legs come out in front of you, and create a V-shape with the legs. Flex through your toes so they point upwards. For more support I have been enjoying putting pillows or folded up blankets under each knee, allowing them to bend slightly. Reach your hands up and tilt forward with the finger tips touching the ground and gently walk the hands out. Let the head release and breath into the spine and the back of the chest. Stay for twelve rounds of breath. If the head needs support, stack a couple of books and place them under your forehead.

#### **CELEBRATE!**

Summer is a time of celebration and abundance. Fruits and vegetables are starting to reach their peak and be harvested-

see how this can mirror your own life's fruitions. Savor the opportunity to be outdoors and around nature. Take refuge in the company of friends and family. Outside gatherings are a fun and inexpensive way to gather people together. Use these tools to cool down so you have the energy and space to celebrate your beautiful life!





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# EATING YOUR WAY PARK SLOPE

Macaron of the Day

of all the things there are to do on a summer weekend in Park Slope, eating ourselves into a stupor ranks ranks as one of the highest. While it's easy enough to order Seamless and re-heat the leftovers until you need to open the door for the sushi delivery guy once again, getting out and taking advantage of the neighborhoods restaurants is way more fun. From Michelin-starred five-course gastronomic pre-fixes to creative, ethnic, and local eats; from the pop-up Brooklyn Porridge Company to the crocodile sausage at Kiwiana, Park Slope is an ideal neighborhood to explore new foods and re-discover old favorites. Get your stomach ready for this day-and-a-half food tour that will give you a new appreciation for the kitchens and tables of the neighborhood.

**BUTTERMILK BAKESHOP** 

#### **COFFEE**

Start your morning at **Gorilla Coffee**, an independently owned and operated coffee shop and micro-roastery. Sip on one of their unique signature brews or a not-too-sweet maple lattes. You can grab a bag of their beans to go, so you can enjoy Gorilla Coffee all week at home.

#### **BREAKFAST**

Compliment your caffeine boost with a morning sugar high and swing by **Buttermilk Bakeshop**, which bakes up fresh, flaky croissants, light macarons, and an incredible chocolate chip cookie that put many other bakeries to shame. Be sure to stock up on some sweets to go!

#### MID-MORNING SNACK

Next, head over to Bergen Dean for your mid-morning sandwich. Owned by the personable Rafael Hasid of Park Slope's Miriam and Wolf & Deer, this sandwich shop features Mediterranean by Melissa Kravitz | photos by Kristen Uhrich

and classic American fare, all with a gourmet twist. Opt for the chicken schnitzel, a nearly flawless sandwich prepared with fennel, arugula, pesto, relish, and honey mustard all accenting the fried-to-order chicken.

#### LUNCH

Keep the dream alive and shuffle over to **Luke's Lobster**, the local seafood mini-chain that recently opened a location in Park Slope. The buttery lobster and crab rolls are certainly the fameworthy item here, but lobster grilled cheese and New England clam chowder are also menu highlights and make for a great summer poontime feast.

#### LATE-AFTERNOON SNACK

Time to start downing the booze! Hit up **Taco Santo**, Palo Santo's more casual younger sibling for a 5 p.m. margarita. For a light nosh, snag yourself some made-to-order tacos on freshly-pressed corn tortillas. Our favorites include lobster with butter, lemon, and avocado, and beer-battered fried avocado with aioli and cabbage. Sit outside on a picnic bench and take in the Park Slope breeze while ordering tacos a la carte until your heart's content. And if your heart isn't content, there's a pharmacy just down the corner where you can pick up some Alka Seltzer to ensure the continued enjoyment of your eating adventure.

#### COCKTAILS

Take a short break from eating and walk to Morgan's Brooklyn BBQ, a Prospect Heights neighbor that feels like it belongs in the Deep South. Cool down with a refreshing sweet tea on the patio or go for a spiked version with bourbon. The smells of



BBQ may be tantalizing, but you need an empty stomach to truly appreciate the masterfully 'cued brisket and chicken. Opt for a small side of corn, fluffy cornbread, or Frito Pie to qualm your hunger until dinner.

#### **DINNER**

For dinner, venture to Brooklyn's new, elegant Grand Central Oyster Bar and start with a dozen East Coast oysters and a glass of wine or beer on tap. Oysters Rockefeller, Clams Oreganata, and popcorn shrimp are also great small plates for those who prefer their seafood cooked.

#### **DRINKS**

It's time to go out! Visit McMahon's Public House, a new addition to the Slope with an extensive draft list of craft brews, as well as the old Guiness and shot of Jameson standby. With a new roof-top tiki bar in the works, this bar is a great option to enjoy the sights, sounds, and good company of Fifth Avenue.

#### LATE NIGHT

Got the late-night munchies? Pork Slope is the ideal venue for your last bites of the evening. Their buffalo fried shrimp—with a side of tater tots, of course—is your best option to slip blissfully into a food coma for the night.

#### **BRUNCH**

After a good night's sleep on a full belly, wake up to Juventino, a farmhouse-chic brunch favorite specializing in sustainable, slowfood style cuisine. Grab a seat in the gorgeous backyard garden and try the renowned buttermilk pancakes or huevos rancheros with a pot of French press coffee.

#### AFTERNOON TEA

Tea Lounge is a great option to sit and work on the Sunday Times crossword over a pot of freshly-brewed, artisanal tea. If you're feeling a little worse for the wear after the night before, try the Hangover C, sure to set you right for the rest of the day.

#### LUNCH

Time to turn up the heat for lunch! Order a Tex-Mex style burrito at the newly-opened Calexico and be sure to drown it in



their special chipotle "crack" sauce, or give the Buffalo chicken wings with bleu cheese sauce a go to get those spice-induced endorphins pumping.

#### DESSERT

To complete your 36-hour food tour, venture to Four and Twenty Blackbirds' new location in the Brooklyn Public Library. Indulge in a slice of strawberry balsamic or pink peppercorn chocolate from their summer pie menu. You'll be in close proximity to wander into Prospect Park for a long afternoon stroll, and maybe begin to walk off some of your 36-hours of eating.

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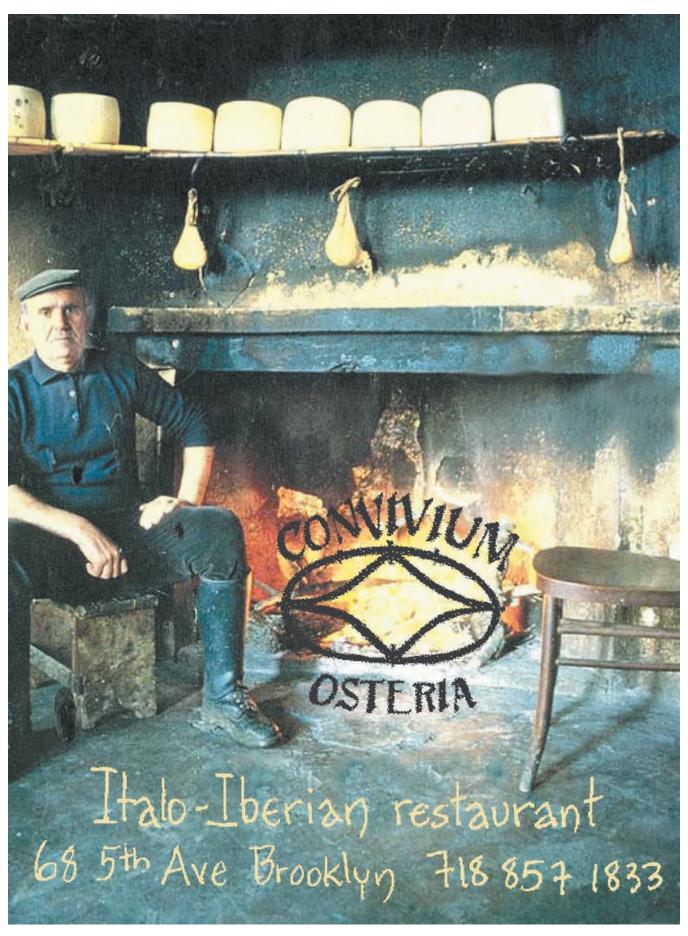
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# BEYOND SUCCESSFUL

#### 15 YEARS OF AL DI LA: A RETROSPECTIVE

By Sarah Telzak | Photograpghs by Maria Cobb



hef Anna Klinger, of the reputable and always-packed Al Di La, attributes her love of cooking to her mother. Having grown up in Westchester County, food played a large and important part in ✓ Klinger's family and early life. Like many women of her generation, Klinger's mother taught herself to cook by reading Julia Child classics and watching the six-foot-two Californian whip up omelettes and beef bourguignon on television.

During high school Anna Klinger began cooking rather seriously, making meals for her friends after school. Upon graduating, Klinger moved to the big city to attend NYU where she studied art history and anthropology, disciplines that Klinger observed, "seem to often overlap with careers in food and cooking." Anna Klinger's post-college years led her to San Francisco, where she started working in the kitchen of the renowned French restaurant, La Folie.

Not everyone in Klinger's life understood her choice to pursue a career as a chef. The crazy hours, the financial riskiness, and the challenge of having a family were all potential issues that concerned the people who cared about her. Ultimately, however, they came around and were happy that she had discovered a passion and were supportive of her pursuit.

Klinger loved food right away. Looking back on the emergence of her culinary career, Klinger reminisced: "[Cooking] clicked and felt right immediately. I loved everything about it. I sort of dropped everything else in my life and dove in." She loves the generous act of making a meal for someone else, the speed with which everything happens (ingredients chopped, heat applied, and diners served), and the creativity involved. Klinger also finds the camaraderie and adrenaline rush of working in a kitchen to be unparalleled.

San Francisco was Klinger's home for several years before









she transplanted to Italy. A friend was moving to the beautiful Northern Italian heartland to teach at a cooking school in Verona, and Klinger traveled with her planning merely to visit. As it turned out, the school was understaffed so Klinger decided to defer her return home and lend a hand in the kitchen. It was here where she met Emiliano Coppa, the manager of the cooking school, who would eventually become her husband and business partner.

Klinger moved back to New York in the early nineties, and during this period she and Coppa maintained a long-distance relationship. Emiliano would come to NYC for a few months, return to Italy, and then travel back to the states again. The bouncing back and forth worked for awhile, but once Klinger stumbled upon a great apartment on Sterling Place in Park Slope, it finally made sense for Coppa to move to New York permanently.

The apartment was lovely, and, as was typical of Brooklyn apartments in the mid-nineties, actually affordable. Once they settled in Park Slope, Klinger and Coppa took a closer look around; despite the high demand one might expect from the influx of young people moving into the neighborhood, there wasn't all that much available in the restaurant department. Aunt Suzie's, Cucina, and Lemongrass Grill were considered Park Slope's gastronomic highlights at that time. It would be entirely accurate to say that there was a niche to be filled, and Klinger and Coppa happened to be the ones to fill it.

To this day, fifteen years after opening, Al Di La is considered one of Brooklyn's original pioneering restaurants. Klinger explains that "[Al Di La] was not the first...but we were the beginning." When the duo first told people about their plans to open up a restaurant on Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn, they were met with many raised eyebrows. People responded as though it

would be "crazy" or "dangerous" to open a restaurant in "that part of Brooklyn."

Yet Klinger and Coppa weren't deterred by the skeptics and purchased the former Tofu Garden space, a Chinese, Thai, and Spanish restaurant on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Carroll Street. They were at once tasked with the daunting, yet exciting work of a major rehab. Coppa, who had a background in woodworking and food styling, went to work on the space with a friend. They peeled off pictures of crabs from the awning outside, built long wooden tables, and removed dropped ceilings to expose a beautiful tin ceiling from which they hung an elaboratelydecorated chandelier that belonged to Emiliano's grandmother in Venice. The former Chinese-Thai-Spanish formica palace was transformed into the rustically-styled Al Di La trattoria.

Al Di La's menu is comfortably Northern Italian, with strong odes to the region of Veneto. Many of the restaurant's staples have received a fair amount of media attention in the past. Braised rabbit with black olives and creamy polenta; stewed cuttlefish and oxtail with garlic and chili; and the swiss chard-ricotta malfatti in sage-infused brown butter could even be called classics. Klinger has received occasional criticism for not modifying the menu more, but she is quick to point out that Al Di La's offerings actually do change as certain dishes (or componenets of dishes) vary according to what is seasonally available.

From 1998 to 2006, Anna and Emiliano were content and busy with their one small Venetian restaurant; Coppa managed the front of house, while Klinger oversaw the kitchen. Eventually though, they grew increasingly aware of just how popular their restaurant had become. They wanted to make sure more people had the opprotunity to experience their cuisine, so in 2006, they opened Al Di La Vino, a wine bar next door on Carroll Street. Then in 2012 and again in 2013, Anna and Emiliano partnered with the long-time manager of Al Di La to open Bar Corvo and Lincoln Station in Prospect Heights.

According to Klinger there aren't any new plans for opening additional restaurants in the near future, but she alluded to another upcoming project: a cookbook. Having attempted the project two times previously, Klinger hasn't yet been able to write the type of "crafted and personal" cookbook she wants to publish. But the idea is quite presently on the table.

When asked whether she feels she made the right decision to purchase the dumpy Hispano-Asian fusion restaurant and transform it into Al Di La, all Klinger can say is, "Yeah. I feel really lucky. Things fell into place in a great way. We were just so fortunate." And so are we.



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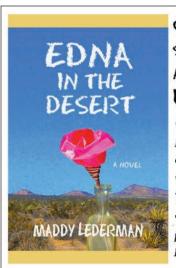
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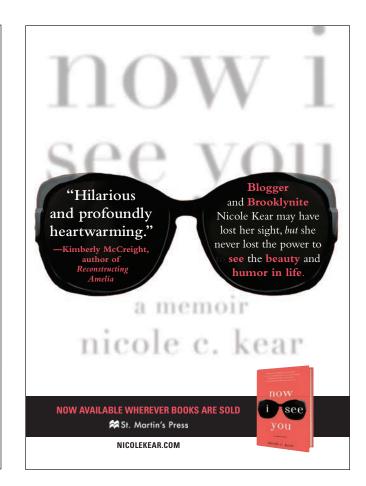
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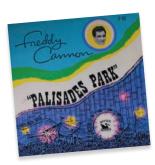
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ack in the 1980s and 90s I spent hours in front of my tape deck, pressing record and composing the perfect soundtrack to the season: Summer road trips, cook-outs, and afternoons at the beach. The Northeast holds a unique relationship with the summer. It promises three to four months of sun and much cherished warmth; concerts in the parks, rooftop movies, sprinklers in playgrounds. Things tend to slow down, work is less hectic, and we go outside to play for a bit. We welcome it with open arms, but our opinion changes somewhere in the middle. Like a guest over-staying his welcome, we become aware of its flaws—fatigued by the swelter, the heat, and the persistent odors. But we hang on through those last weeks until it bids us adieu and we pull out our jackets and get back to business.



"Palisades Park" Freddy Cannon (1962)

How perfect is this song? It holds all of the promise of summer in a nutshell. The carousel-like opening just begs a trip to an amusement park. The singer takes a walk in the dark with all the optimism of the summer in his heart, after all "that's where the girls are." I can't get to Coney Island fast enough.

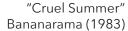


"Rockaway Beach" The Ramones (1977)

An ode to your favorite weekend retreat. As Joey Ramone describes, the concrete is hot and the bus ride does feel too slow. It's time to get out to the water and this breezy song is the anthem to get you there. The beauty of most Ramones songs is that the repetition makes for easy learning, put this on your iPod and you'll be singing along in no time.

"Summer of Love" The B-52s (1986)

Kate Pierson and Cindy Wilson buzz around downtown with orange popsicles and lemonade. Even the rain doesn't spoil their spirit. It's time to throw on a brightly colored dress and pick up a refreshing beverage. Leave the umbrella at home.



In the video, three of the cutest (and most inept) auto-mechanics frolic in the streets of DUMBO until a kindly, bearded trucker drives them off to a roof-top dance party (presumably to Williamsburg if his facial hair is any indication).



For the 1990 benefit album, the techno pop duo offered this interpretation of Cole Porter's song from Kiss Me Kate. It just proves the clever timelessness of the song-writer's lyrics. Andy Summers would like to "coo with my baby tonight, pitch the woo with my baby tonight," but "Mister Pants for romance is not."

#### "Brazilian Girls" Tourist Trap (2006)

Everyone needs a good summer samba. This is the updated New York version. Percussive and fun, it shares the good and the bad as making the experience whole.

"Ice Cream" **Battles** feat. Matias Aguayo (2012)

Frenetic and catchy at the same time, this song is the sonic marriage of a NYC-based experimental band and Chilean techno master. No matter that the song's lyrics aren't in English, you will still be singing along. Never has a song about ice confection been so infectious.

















Beastie Boys?

dancehall beats capture the

sounds of cook-outs gone into the

and moving, like a busy sidewalk.

What's more Brooklyn than The

late night, cars driving by with

windows down, and somehow the sound of sirens. It's aggressive

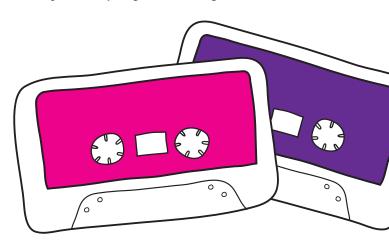
There's something so distinctly New York about this song by Brooklyn band !!! (pronounced Chk Chk Chk). It's a danceable ditty for the end of a hot evening with its refrain, "I'll swim even when the water's cold, that's one thing that I know." It feels gritty, almost seventies, and definitely urban.



"Water Fountain" tUnE-yArDs (2014)

This is my song for summer of 2014. It's the audio version of hopscotch. It's another light, simple tune. You want to sing along, clap your hands, and dance at the same time. The lyrics make absolutely no sense, and for me that's just fine.

If you like the songs and want to hear more, tune into to my radio show 3-6 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 24 on wxci.org





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I'm one of many who've lived with a destabilizing, chronic disease and no insurance; been rejected by private insurance companies and their bottom lines; been rejected for expensive therapies; and paid thousands in one month for my

medications. I've also partaken, reaped the benefits of, and been screwed by federally and/or state funded insurance. In three years my illness snowballed (a piss-coated, gray, lumpen New York snowball) into a litany of side effects and related issues, my paperwork and medical records strewn from Palo Alto to Katonah. I've also been healthy. I understand health is a matter of choice, chance, and luck, and that health does not last forever.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been a hopeful but complicated prospect for myself and many others. But when the site went up (and down and further down, and up and down), the corporate loopholes started emerging and my state-funded pre-existing insurance plan was cancelled in preparation for the transition, I began defending the ACA like a new boyfriend at a cocktail party. I'd whisper to my moderate friends, "No, no! Obamacare's not that bad. You just need to get to know it, or meet in a different setting where it's appreciated. Or at a smaller party... it's... it's bad in groups."

> But it's important to be hopeful; today, because of the ACA, I have hope.

> > In October 2010 I ran four miles a day and over-practiced yoga with other ferociously fit Brooklyn women. I worked, wrote, had a decent savings account, and my own apartment. No insurancedidn't need it,

> > > couldn't

it anyway-but 1

afford

was aware of and engaged in discourse on public vs. privatized healthcare. Watching my mother, who was dependent on Medicare yet deteriorating from Multiple Sclerosis, I understood how degrading illness can be. But I was healthy, foreseeably so. And at the end of October, I took a two-day vacation in the Maine woods.

A week later, I woke up with a stiff, painful neck. Unable to turn my head, I returned to work assuming it was a yoga injury. The pain progressed down my arm, occasionally spreading into numbness; I struggled with opening doors, picking things up, and washing dishes. Within weeks, pain zipped up my spine in electric currents. Then, neurological oddities: One night over burgers with my new boyfriend, I suddenly couldn't swallow. My brain was a like camera with no card, the shutter clicking meaninglessly and my throat forgetting how to work. Next were cognitive problems, spelling words backward and looking at maps uncomprehendingly. My glands were on fire and I vomited every day, but nothing compared to the pain. Back spasms so prolonged and agonizing, I slept on the floor while my skin burned like parchment paper and my legs ached. Healthcare? Magically, instantly now mattered.

My indoctrination into the US healthcare maze began with sliding-scale clinic GPs whose cursory glances at my symptoms concluded with a shrugging "Fibromyalgia—a lot of women have it" and a bag filled with cheap antidepressants and depression pamphlets. I saw specialists, never requiring a referral because it was out of pocket. Rheumatologists, neurologists and PT's didn't have the time to solve me, only offer their singular perspectives. "In the US, specialists have no incentive to talk to each other," a mystified chiropractor put it, "So, to me? Alignment issue". A cheery Russian rheumatologist in Gravesend diagnosed

my pain as "sad, pretty girl" with a raised eyebrow and prescribed me with Date Night. "Have your boyfriend take you to movie."

I got shots, acupuncture, steroids, muscle relaxers, and lab work; new credit cards paid for everything and there were records on me everywhere. I let doctors and PAs administer any test they liked, once spending \$3,000 for a four-minute nerve test. A famous therapist, trained under John Sarno and a grave sphinx in Hermes, charged me \$180 a session to solicit my emotional eureka. Physical pain was a manifestation of stress, anxiety or grief; though worth a try, stress didn't explain why I couldn't spell anymore. I was obviously crazy. This was obviously in my head.

Previously, willfully ignorant to the language of deductibles, premiums, and co-insurance, I now begged for help like an enlightened and desperate Aesop character. But this was a preexisting condition so I was routinely turned down.

It was August 2011 when a friend reminded me of the camping trip a year and lifetime before. I contacted a reasonably-priced specialist named WebMD about Lyme Disease, something I'd proposed to the Bellevue doctor. He'd scoffed, "Doctors take advantage of women like you. It's a completely rare, overdiagnosed disease."

It's neither, I'd learn. In November of 2011, a series of tests from a private, expensive California lab confirmed four tickborne co-infections. I sobbed with vindication and relief in front of BAM when they called with my results. Lyme Disease, a politicized, controversial disease I'd only heard about from Irene on The Real World is tough to detect, a monster to combat, and unprofitable for insurance companies and providers. Due to this, I was untreated for thirteen months while it damaged my joints, nerves, and endocrine system. This was due, in part, to Lyme's ability to disguise itself as other ailments; but moreover it was due to bureaucracy, a systemic 'patients come last' mindset, and the tendency to inaccurately medicate and ignore what's difficult to diagnose, especially in Stressed Out Women. Though I had my answers, that Maine weekend would prove hugely pertinent to the conversation on pre-existing conditions and the CDC and American insurance companies' callous refusal to simply learn anything new.

My treatment—daily antibiotics and injections—cost up to \$1,000 a month. Crying in public was now regular; pharmacists handed me tissues with my receipt for the \$597 Bicillin injections that had, overnight, gone up to \$641. I applied for assistance programs, none of which covered weird antibiotics; Lyme's Disease is considered treatable with a thirtyday course of antibiotics, with anything generally beyond that "medically unnecessary"; the CDC refers to a nine-year-old study recommending merely four weeks of treatment for persistent symptoms. Even if I'd had insurance, most Lymeliterate doctors (the few there are), don't take it because they won't be reimbursed for treating a disease uncategorized as chronic. My doctor charges \$550 an appointment; I'm one of hundreds of patients.

In September 2012, I made a generalized Facebook plea when letters to doctors, agencies, and my legislators failed. A friend I hadn't seen in years saved my life. She, magically, worked for the NY Bridge Plan, a state-run and ACA-funded program specifically covering uninsured people with pre-existing conditions. Approved just one month later, the sky opened up, and I was suddenly allowed into the pageantry of the covered, Charlie Bucket with a golden insurance card. I could pay for



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#### HELPING PARK SLOPE FAMILIES RESTRUCTURE SINCE 1995

meds and rent, and my antibiotics now cost in the double digits, not triple. In the home stretch for Obamacare, I was grateful. I was covered.

Until nine months later, when the plan was cancelled. In June 2013, I received a letter explaining the Bridge Plan was being eliminated. In its place, a vague and disorganized federally-run program evocatively named the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP), an interim transition plan to the Marketplace running through December 31st, 2013. As it was a new plan changing all benefits I'd received thus far from EmblemHealth, it would also hit a reset button on my deductibles, add 30% fees on covered services, and an out-of-pocket maximum of \$6,250. Premiums were mailed to New Orleans, claims to Salt Lake City, and auto-enroll requests to St. Louis. The website was rudimentary and poorly detailed. Under the "what's covered?" tab, it helpfully offered: "The PCIP covers a broad range of health benefits, including primary and specialty care, hospital care, and prescription drugs." That's it.

There was no network of providers, only the website's recommendation you call your doctors and ask if they took the plan. I ended up back at clinics while paying for insurance. An ER visit (a hellhole and centerpiece of the ACA debate) resulted in an \$11,000 bill.

I once asked a PCIP phone rep if she was glad this mess was ending. "Not really," she replied, in what I thought was Company Man loyalty. She finished, "I mean, I'm going to be out of a job." I, however, marked 12/31/13 in my calendar with three exclamation marks. Almost there, even though nobody, even the Administration, could really explain where "there" was.

But I chose my silver plan, took a believe-it-when-I-see-it approach to the tax credit, and a deep breath on January 1st. This time, I knew the language and loopholes, made receptionists list accepted insurances and covered treatments, repeat them, and then send them to me in writing.

In three years, I've been denied care and compassion, conquered physical devastation, and was charged sixty grand for the privilege. I have two jobs, a declining credit score, and seven credit cards; every time I do a balance transfer, I imagine droplets of red food coloring dripped into a teaspoon of water, then a glass, a bathtub. With each avoidance, my debt grows abstract, pinker, the number becoming practically conceptual.

But people are in far worse circumstances than I, who has healed significantly and would've sucked up the mandate even before that Maine weekend because I am aware the American system has been less of a market than an abattoir. The privatization of wellness, the suffering of the elderly, poor and chronically ill-these matter. We all pay for facets of infrastructure we don't need right now. Everyone will need healthcare someday. Those who prefer to pretend they will never ride the roller coaster of healthy, sick, covered, not covered and sorta covered better recognize. I did

Today, my plan is a medley of improvements and annoyances. And it makes me happy. It makes me normal. I have some normal problems, plus the persistent swollen glands, empty checking account, and a personal and political understanding of this fraught issue, one that bankrupts and humiliates. And I'm grateful.  $\bigcirc$ 

### **STREETSCAPES**

#### Photo and Poem by Joe Linhart

It's the sidewalks that make for busy streets, not the byways covered by cars.

It's the sidewalks that are draped in awnings, adverts, and neon lights, with street signs cobbled amongst newsstands and abandoned bike frames, and rooted shading trees sheltering dogs that lie in wait for absent masters.

And amongst those verdant sidewalks,

amongst all sidewalks, both wide and small,

there are stairwells to the underground alongside doorways to a walk up, and children tracing leaves with chalk underneath a watchful eye sitting by the stoop.

There are parents pushing strollers, people pushing carts,

bus benches in want of patrons, and used books in want of new readers.

There are venders pushing fresh food, metal cans collecting old food;

and street preachers mingling with street peddlers,

one looking for lost souls, one looking for loose change.

Elsewhere are artists counting cards alongside builders bounding scaffolds, even while lonely standing hydrants go longing for summertime use.

#### These sidewalks...

they serve as pulpit, playground, and theatre; stand in for living room, kitchen, and bedroom; a public and private life conjured side by side.

It's a truly authentic tapestry of human activity an audaciously woven canvas, girded by a laugh, a lark, and a honk.

Yes it is the sidewalks that make for busy streets, never the byways with its fly by cars. And just from walking I get to see it all.

-November 2013





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#### READER INTERVIEW



# Nicole C. Kear Out of the Dark

INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY NANCY LIPPINCOTT

icole Kear has been a beloved columnist with us a Park Slope Reader for more than a decade. Little did we know, though, that during the past twelve years with us she was hiding a big secret. Back when Kear was in college, she was diagnosed with a degenerative eye disease which doctors told her would eventually lead to blindness. Over the course of the next fifteen years, Kear had kept this diagnosis a secret from everyone except for her immediate family. That all has changed, however, with the release of her debut memoir, Now I See You, a comedic, yet endearingly honest account of love, life, and starting a family before the lights go out.

We sat down with Kear to discuss her new book and "coming out" with her disease.

#### Park Slope Reader: When did you decide you were going to write this memoir?

Nicole C. Kear: Maybe five years ago I started working on a proposal for a different memoir—a mommy memoir, essentially like the stuff I wrote for Park Slope Reader—without the entire component of my eyes. I completely left it out of the 100-page proposal. My agent tried to sell it, and unsurprisingly was not able to. After that didn't work, I thought what can I add to this story to make it more compelling? It's like when you're watching a movie and are like, yea..duh!

#### PSR: Was it an active or unconscious decision to leave that out?

NK: It wasn't active at all. It was a total default...like a crazy

#### PSR: As a writer, did you journal every day?

NK: No, I don't even shower every day! The way that it came to be was my husband and I were going away for the night. Finally he was like, "Nicole, you can write about your eyes." "Of course!" As soon as he said that I was like, what's wrong with me?!

It's funny thinking about that now. When I was in college and I got my diagnosis and still fresh I took this seminar called 20th Century Feminist Spiritual Autobiography taught by a female rabbi and a nun and a minister. We read these amazing memoirs about women and had to write our own. I wrote this piece called "Star Light, Star Bright" and it as the college version of my book. But so that is kind of where it started...then I became crazy and didn't tell anyone for fifteen years so it became something that wasn't a possibility. So when my husband mentioned it I thought, that is not only a great idea, but the only idea.

#### PSR: That must have been terrifying though—this part of your life that you actively kept inside. How did you go back to your memoir and add that component?

NK: I didn't go back. I started from scratch. It's a completely different book. Even the characters are different. Because you know at first, it wasn't really me. It didn't have a huge lifedetermining factor to it. It was a completely different novel.

I started to write and it took me so long to write something decent. I had been writing for years and it had become so habitual to omit any reference to my vision loss.

So I was like, you know what? I'll write a scene. I'll tell the story of when my son was a baby and I was so tired that I tried to throw myself on the bed. I didn't see it, and I fell onto the floor. So I wrote that scene and literally, I didn't know how to write that and tell the truth of it. I was so used to telling people the fake version.

#### PSR: Was that an emotional experience for you?

NK: Yes. The good part about it was the humor. I was able to find the humor in almost all of it. It allowed me to feel comfortable doing it. It's depressing! But because I gave myself permission to share the humor of it, that really tempered it for me. It was difficult, but it was also enjoyable.

PSR: That was such a big component of the book. It's a heavy subject and a sad story. But you have this way of balancing it out and this ability to laugh at yourself. Was that something you always had with you growing up or did you develop that after your diagnosis as a way of coping?

NK: That's just an innate thing with me. I've always had that temperament. As I grew older, it's something that I strengthened and turned to. I've always been a person who likes to laugh, and frankly, make other people laugh. I genuinely do feel like an optimistic person. And it really does help just to laugh about it.

That was hard for me in writing about it, because there is a very fine line between being glib and humorous. I really feel like my book is a tragic comedy. It has both sides of the mask, and it is a delicate balance. The first iterations of the book were very funny—or pathetically trying too hard—but they were trying to

I would share my drafts with my friends and they would point out that I basically didn't talk about my vision. I really didn't want to discuss it! I thought it would be so heavy and depressing, so I put in as little of that as possible. My friends and my agent really had to press me. I was so scared of being too dark. Extracting the raw honesty of it was really challenging for me.

PSR: Why the ongoing secret throughout your life? Your career as an actress, as you explain in the book, prompted this decision. Why keep it going throughout your life after the fact?

NK: Really it was force of habit. In the beginning the reasoning was more that it was an irrelevant fact. In my early twenties it didn't hamper me at all. I didn't really need to tell people for any practical reasons...and then there were a lot of compelling reasons NOT to tell people because, as you say, I was an actress. It's so hard to get work anyway you don't want to give people extra reasons, especially when they're not relevant!

But then they became more relevant. And I had become so accustomed to not telling people and compensating. And it's hard this is the thing that's difficult about any progressive condition. It just keeps changing and it's hard to keep changing along with it in response. Change is difficult. I was waiting for an obvious cut-off point, or a breaking point. But it was more of a series of small rock bottoms, not enough to actually trigger any change.

And once you don't tell people something

like that, it becomes very awkward! Imagine telling people "Oh I've known you for ten years and we've lived together, we're roommates and I totally forgot to tell you this one thing!" So I didn't do it. But now I've HAD to do it. It's been so weird, but really good.

As I anticipated, it's an uncomfortable conversation to have... especially within the context of "I wrote this memoir!"

PSR: Now that your children are getting older, they must have known-it's something that has been part of their existence. Did you think about them eventually spilling the beans?

NK: It's true, it would have been untenable to keep this going. Kids are big blabbermouths. They were so young and they knew so little. I gave them little kid-sized morsels of information. Now they know more because they're older, and it's convenient because now everyone knows!

PSR: Was there any sense of betrayal from people that were close to you who didn't know?

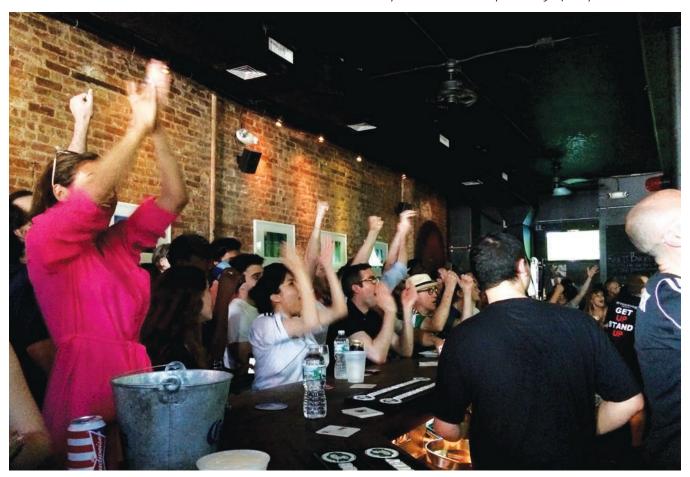
NK: There was no betrayal. People have been so understanding. Really. And I think because now they can read the whole book about why I didn't tell them and read the whole back story. The best part about it is A. the release—that conversation's over and I don't have to dread it anymore—and B. it's opened the door to new conversations and deepened friendships, as any act of honesty will. O



# ONENATION ONECOUNTRY

REFLECTING ON THE FIFA WORLD CUP 2014

By Vicente Revilla | Photograph by Caitlin Peluffo



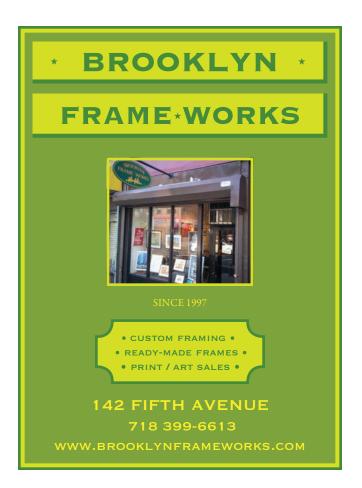
he FIFA World Cup 2014 is currently taking place in Brazil for this summer month. It touches the emotions of the entire world. Where to watch it? The venues are endless in Park Slope. The place, however, doesn't matter.

Where to play it? It can very well be Prospect Park or Red Hook where Mexican street vendors offer us tacos and enchiladas... I remember growing up amid the Andean range in Cusco, Peru. No, we didn't care if it was freezing cold or about the high altitude. We didn't understand that concept. We were convinced that we had more red blood cells than other humans and were

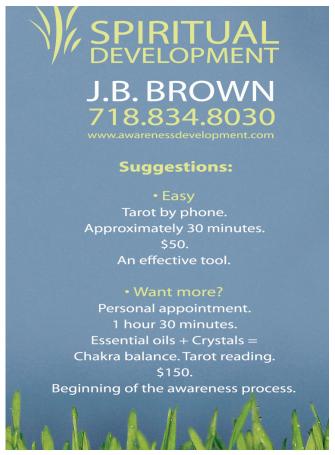
built physically to cope with those minor intangibles. We loved the game and were brought up understanding that it was the only game that really made mattered.

Recently I watched a movie titled The Cup. It was about two young Tibetan refugees arriving at a monastery, which was a kind of boarding school. The young monks were determined to watch the World Cup. After various comedic circumstances to achieve their goal, their leader, the Lama, is perplexed about the young monks seeming to move away from the teachings of Buddha.

Growing up around the Andean landscape, we did likewise. I







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remember the Spanish literature teacher doing her best to teach us Don Quixote. The knight-errant was, nonetheless, irrelevant for us. If Don Quixote was a dreamer inventing his own world, we were likewise, dreamers trying to escape the confines of the school and watch the games. Don Quixote? No. we didn't care much about his own perceived foes. They weren't ours. Furthermore, the poor fool was for us a perceived hero in his own mind, and the plot of the story was boring as well. No we weren't ready yet to understand at that young age the existential and philosophical teachings of this knight-errant who rode an old horse called Rocinante. We were just ordinary children moving through the streets, creating mischief, and learning on the streets what was real and what was fantasy. We would, of course, find in the end a place to watch the World Cup. We were delighted and happy until someone would expel us from the place.

According to David Whelan from the Belfast Daily Telegraph "A street in west Belfast has caught the attention of passers-by after residents hung the flags of all thirty-two nations competing in Rio from their homes-even the St George's Cross of old enemy England." Likewise, most folks around the Andes will never root for Spain...it was an old colonizing enemy. We knew as children what they had done to us as colonizers—not only destroying the previous religious faith (sun worship), but using the existing temples to build their own churches.

Reality for the protesters against the World Cup in Brazil is also different. They do not see the World Cup benefiting the folks living in the "favelas," where living conditions counter the happiness surrounding the World Cup. The real world that surrounds us remains uneven, not flat (full of Starbucks) as a book has suggested.

The World Cup in Brazil does not cure the wounds of the past and those of the present as Franklyn Foer explains in his book How Soccer Explains the World. It has indeed become a religion for many around the world. Thus, the World Cup 2014 unites us briefly, and in a tribal way we carry our national jerseys. But, is it all real or a distraction for a world being constantly engineered and controlled? The tribes of the world, in that context, are allowed this moment to unite for a month and around their flags and national anthems. Is it all an illusion that we have created? Like that of Don Quixote?

The movie The Cup makes me also wonder about the team the two monks where rooting for. Was it Brazil? Do Tibetan children have a team to root for? Like those two young monks, we children in the Andes cheered for Brazil. I am sure about it. We wanted them to win it...but why? It was because Brazil was a tribe closer to our own and their game wasn't mechanical. It was more Pina Bausch dancers than that of Twyla Tharp. It was Sergio Mendes' "Mas Que Nada", not Wagner's "Valkyries." The Brazilian game had more heart than brain in its movement. We children understood that. It was knowledge by observing. We related to that kind of game.

So now, many years later I understand the young teacher's agony (Teresa was her name) in wanting us to understand the meaning of illusions and dreams through the life of a knighterrant and his tag-along Sancho. A knight-errant determined to fight his own dreams. I understand the teacher's agony, but ours was to escape the confines of the school and live another dream...the dream was the World Cup. It was the only game that made sense in our young lives. O

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