

Danny Shot
Copy Editor

Hail Mary



There are many moments and experiences with Miguel that I can share, many of them public, some of them private. I'm going to tell you about Miguel Algarín and football, because there are only three or four living people who've shared this experience. I know that the names Miguel Algarín and football seem almost oxymoronic, but trust me there is a connection. My wife Caroline and I regularly invited Nancy Mercado and Miguel over for Thanksgiving dinner. Nancy and Miguel always were gracious guests, especially if there was a bottle of Absolut for Miguel. But in 2008, the NY Giants made it to the Super Bowl to face the then undefeated New England Patriots. My friend, poet Jack Wiler often came over to watch major sporting events, and Caroline thought

that since this was a special occasion (local team in the Super Bowl) we should have a Super Bowl party.

Our guests arrived about an hour before kickoff and we got to work tail-gating in our living room. Miguel was thrilled to be taking part in such an exotic All-American ritual for the first time. Granted, Miguel didn't know anything about football, but that did little to dampen his enthusiasm. He asked many questions during the game such as "why are those men bending over like that?" and "isn't Tom Brady too pretty to play football?" and "when is he going to give it to the tight end?" Nancy, Caroline, my son Levi, Jack, and I did our best to answer his many questions. At one point during a particularly dire stretch for the Giants, Jack threw up his arms and said "Miguel quiet, you don't know dick about football." Miguel came right back at him "Yeah but I know dick about tight ends."

Somehow, the Giants hung in there against the heavily favored Patriots and with about two minutes left, Eli Manning threw a seemingly ill-fated pass to David Tyree that the receiver caught by making a leaping catch and securing the ball against his helmet in one of the most improbable and greatest catches of all time. We jumped up out of our seats exchanging high fives and hugs. A few plays later the Giants scored and won the game against their seemingly insurmountable foes. About half an hour later, I walked Miguel and Nancy to our Hoboken bus stop with a drunken (wasn't everybody?) Miguel singing "We are the champions! We are the champions of the world!!" as the streets outside were filled with revelers, fireworks and blaring car horns.

Four years later, the Giants made it back to the Super Bowl again against the heavily favored Patriots. Caroline immediately said we have to invite Miguel and Nancy if the Giants have any chance of winning. I knew she was right, as Miguel was clearly the Giants lucky charm.

Unfortunately, Jack Wiler had passed away a few years earlier (2009), so there wasn't quite the same verve to our Super Bowl party. However, there was the bottle of Absolut and lots of good food to eat. Miguel was slightly more knowledgeable about the rules of the game, and still obsessed with Tom Brady. Yet he did have some insights: "Now he has two tight ends to pitch to. Look at those gorgeous slabs of meat" and "If this were a beauty contest Tom Brady and the Patriots would win hands down. Eli Manning can't compete." Fortunately, it wasn't a beauty contest and Eli Manning and the Giants pulled off another late improbable win. A more subdued Miguel was ready to leave as soon the game was over. Miguel was a little slower of foot as I walked Nancy and him back to the bus stop. "Tell your wife I thank her with all my heart for her hospitality and opening up this part of your life to me."

I didn't have the heart to tell Miguel that I wasn't really a Giants fan, or much of a football fan for that matter. I said we'd do this again next year during the Super Bowl. Since that time, the Giants have only had one season with a winning record, and haven't gotten close to the Super Bowl. Let's not talk about my Jets. But when that time comes, the first person I'm going to call is Nancy Mercado so we can eat and drink and watch football and remember old friends and sing "We are the Champions"!

Danny Shot's WORKS (New and Selected Poems) was published in March 2018 by (CavanKerry Press). Danny is currently an Associate Editor of A Gathering of the Tribes (<https://www.tribes.org/>) online He was featured on the television show State of the Arts, NJ in July 2018. Danny lives in Hoboken, NJ (home of Frank Sinatra and baseball) where he is poet-in-residence of the Hoboken Museum. Danny Shot was longtime publisher and editor of Long Shot arts and literary magazine, which he founded along with Eliot Katz in 1982 in New Brunswick, NJ. Check out his website: <https://dannyshot.com/>