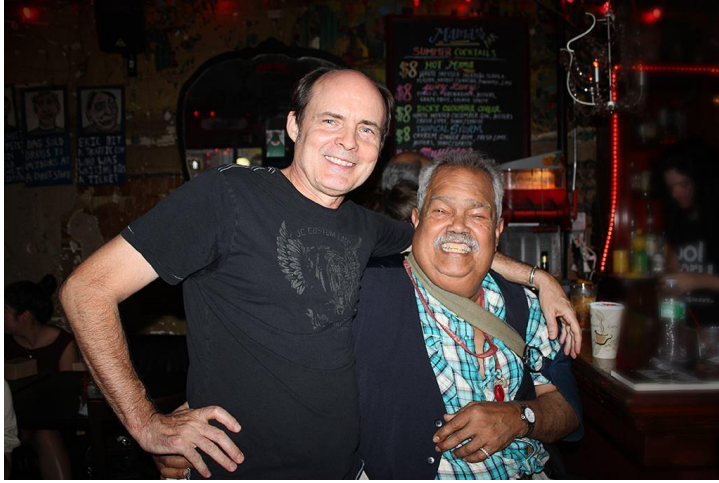


Jeffrey Cyphers Wright A Moment with the Great Miguel Algarín



“Cowboy Bob” Holman invited me to be a judge at one of the early Spoken Word slams at the Nuyorican Cafe. I was lucky to snag a seat right beside Miguel at the bar. We’d been friends ever since 1984 when I heard him read at Elena Alexander’s bookstore on West Broadway and wrote a poem for him called “Saturday at Biblio’s.”

We had a fun relationship – him flirty and me cocky. Our dialogues flickered between dirty talk, high poetics, and personal history. He was always

upbeat, warm, and sincere. He made me feel like a winner, lucky to have such a dazzling friend.

That night on East Third Street, as the artists held forth on the stage, Miguel and I swapped bon mottes and wicked asides. This one young gun decided to end his set with a bang and knocked over the mic stand. Miguel wasn’t amused. He leaned over conspiratorially and told me to give the fucko a zero (out of ten). Which wasn’t done.

So I made up a three point grading system and gave him like four points for content, five points for imagery – but ZERO points for performance – amid glares and gasps, the dude’s dagger stare, and Miguel’s pearly whites.

Jeffrey Cyphers Wright got his MFA in poetry after studying with Allen Ginsberg. He is a publisher, critic, eco-activist, impresario, and artist, best known as a New Romantic, Post-Surrealist poet. He is author of 17 books of verse, including *Blue Lyre* from Dos Madres Press and *Party Everywhere* from Xanadu. Currently he publishes *Live Mag!*, a journal of art and poetry. He is a Kathy Acker Award recipient and recently produced a film highlighting his puppet shows called “Pandemic Puppet Jam,” on Youtube. www.jeffreycypherswright.com