

## Jennifer Blowdryer Miguel Algarín



What a smile that guy had! Always at the Nuyorican on 3rd Street, near the bar – Miguel. I was around 3rd Street at the beginning, after maybe a year the air got bad, it was not my spot, but I continued to see Miguel around ‘the neighborhood’, Alphabet City, the East Village, whatever you want to call it.

One late afternoon or early evening I ran into Miguel on East Houston Street. We both have the gift of gab, the fine art of hanging out, so we scooted over to this bench that illogically faced – well nothing, really. He had a cane and I had a little dog, a scrappy foster who everybody urged me to keep, including Miguel.

“I THINK that’s your dog,” he said, “You should keep it.”

Miguel had the fragility of the older artist and drinker, it was lovely to me. I wanted to walk him places, once to Bowery Electric. He had a phase of day drinking at Double Down, a self-consciously created punk dive bar around the corner from me, down the block from him.

“I went to the public school system in New York. My father took me to everything free, the Opera, museums, all that – the teachers were Eastern European, and my parents invited them over to the house. They loved having this brown kid who wanted to learn.”

He didn’t mention that he was also smart, a future leading intellectual who brought awareness to Puerto Rican poets, including himself, Pedro Pietri, and the rancorous Bimbo Rivas, a stealth power in the poetry performance of the East Village when it was primarily Puerto Rican and Dominican.

Those teachers, the best and the brightest from Europe and Eastern Europe, gave Miguel all they had, which was considerable. They were diaspora intellectuals who had to leave their homes of origin, fleeing WWII genocide and discrimination, so their best was probably among the best in the world. I loved knowing that, part of the Miguel Algarín life story, and parents. His dad toting him to the last wealth of Civics available, also world class, back when rich people funded and made available art and the arts. When they gave a s-t.

I would have walked Miguel over to the last club on earth, any time, anywhere. You know you have to give up your seat for an elder like that, right?

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**Jennifer Blowdryer** moved to Alphabet City in 1985, in the grim period of drug patrol. They were putting junkies like George Epilectic in prison buses, toting them around, forcing them into nonsense drug diversion programs! She's had several books published, novels and creative nonfiction, and is a lyricist working with top nyc musicians and engineers. She loved Miguel.