



HERstory

The Open Book Press

March 2017

Welcome!

Thanks for picking up a copy of the HERstory zine, made as a labor of love for Women's History Month and the corresponding Open Book event on March 30, 2017. This event was created as a benefit for the ACLU as well as an attempt on the part of the editor to get to know the inspiring, passionate, artistic, and hardworking women of Nevada County just a little bit better! Let us continue to meet, mingle, and support each other ☺

How daring a feat, how great a transgression it is for a woman to speak—even just open her mouth—in public.

—Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa”

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- Contributors -

[Editor] **Angela Sells, PhD**, is a mythology and women's studies instructor at Sierra College and Meridian University. She is an emerging author, with her first book, *Sabina Spielrein; The Woman and the Myth*, due out in 2017 with SUNY Press. She is the Co-founder of the Open Book Press and Co-manager of the Open Book, as well as the Co-producer of Yuba Lit.

Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, **Grace Kelly Rivera** moved out to Northern California in 1984 and has enjoyed an incredibly rich artistic life. Her works have been part of group and solo shows in California, Toronto, San Francisco, Chicago and New York. She completed a series of pieces for a show at the Lush Life Gallery, part of the Filmore/Jazz Heritage Center in San Francisco. With these Jazz Art pieces, Rivera was able to find a visual language through which to explore and highlight the relationship of muse and the artist. This has also translated into works that focus on the Flamenco artist and muse, a form of dance she has studied and performed for over fourteen years.

- Our Wonderful Performers -

Sands Hall is a writer, theatre artist, professor, and musician. Her work includes the novel, *Catching Heaven* (Ballantine); a book of writing essays and exercises, *Tools of the Writers Craft*; the plays *Fair Use* and *Little Women* (an adaptation of the Alcott novel); essays and short stories; and a CD of her original

songs, *Rustler's Moon*. She works with the Community of Writers at Squaw Valley, for the Iowa Summer Writing Festival, and spends each fall in Lancaster, PA, teaching English and creative writing at Franklin & Marshall College.

Alicia Vandevorst's work has appeared in *The American Poetry Journal* and *Canary*. She has studied with Arthur Sze, Maxine Kumin, and Barbara Jordan. Also a playwright, she most recently participated in the 24 Hour Plays.

Judie Rae earned her Masters of Professional Writing from USC. In addition to non-fiction essays, she has also published three young adult novels and her poetry has appeared in *Nimrod*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Canary Online Literary Magazine*, and *Mudfish*. In 2014, Finishing Line Press published her chapbook, *The Weight of Roses*.

Isadora Goldschneider is a local to Nevada City, and grew up immersed in music. Living in The Netherlands as a teen, she was introduced to international styles of folk music. Inspired by Balkan, Klezmer and Blues, she harnesses those influences vocally and on accordion.

Sharon Winegar has been involved in local theater as an actress and director for over 30 years. During her long association with the Foothill Theatre Company, Sharon played "Sister Aloysius" in Doubt, "Dotty Otley/Mrs. Clackett" in Noises Off, the title character in Hedda Gabler, "Gollum" in The Hobbit, and "Amanda" in The Glass Menagerie. She holds an M.F.A. in Acting from UC Davis,

where she served for several years as a Visiting Lecturer, teaching Graduate Acting and Voice and Speech courses. An experienced Speech/Dialect Coach, she has worked with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival in Boulder, Napa Valley Conservatory Theater, UCD's University Theatre, and the Sacramento Theatre Company.

Jakki Garcia currently holds a third degree black belt in Kenpo karate. She and her husband started their own Kenpo school in Grass Valley. She will be leading a Women's Self Defense Class at the Open Book in the near future. Her student, **Cynthia Soszka** will give a demonstration on the Open Book stage in Jakki's stead.

- Our Beneficiary, the ACLU -

The American Civil Liberties Union has a non-profit scoring of 96 out of 100. Translation: Over **85% of funds raised** are directly distributed among education and programs. Less than 15% goes to administration and fundraising costs.

ACLU serves civil rights for women by fighting:

- Pregnancy and Parenting Discrimination
- Pregnancy Discrimination in the Workplace
- Breastfeeding Discrimination
- Violence Against Women

43% of women worldwide experience a form of physical or sexual violence; up to 70% in some nations.

- Title IX Discrimination
- Sexual Assault and Harassment in the Military
- Sexual Violence in Schools

and fighting for:

- Women's Rights in the Workplace
- Women and Physical Ability Tests

- Equal Pay
- Women in the Military
- Women's Rights in Education
- Single-Sex Education
- Pregnant and Parenting Students
- Equity in Athletics

Tonight also features a clip from *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*. Please stay tuned for the **Herstory Film and Discussion Series**, which will begin this fall at the Open Book.

Also, very special thanks to the owner of the Open Book, and to my love, Will Dane.

- Active Artists and Authors -

I've reached out to a few artists and authors who inspire me for Q&A, which will be featured in the next *HERstory* zine. Below please find a teaser of some of the artists' work as well as the fully transcribed Q&A with Kelly Carlin.

Katie Kurkky, Artist



“The Moment” (mixed media, refurbished guitar)

Note: online link to PDF will be made available through theopenbookpress.com for full viewing pleasure of artwork.

Orenda Ayashe, Artist



“Subway 1” (oil and acrylic)

Kelly Carlin, Performer and Writer (yes, that Carlin)

Can you start by telling me a bit about yourself, your background, and how you first became interested in comedy?

I was born into comedy both as a result of nurture and nature. In some ways, being funny was just the air I breathed. I never really thought about it. It's just something that you are, I suppose.

Were you immediately influenced by your father to embark on a career in the performing arts, or did you find yourself attracted to other professions?

I wanted to be Lucille Ball, Lily Tomlin and Carol Burnett. I never have wanted to be a stand up comedian. Oh, there was a few years when I wanted to live in Africa and help zebras and giraffes. I was eight. In my twenties, I wanted to be a photographer and an actress. Neither panned out for me. In my thirties, I wanted to be a screenwriter and filmmaker. But by 35, I knew I wanted to be like Spaulding Grey and tell stories about myself to let other people know that we're all a bit crazy and human.

Do you remember a moment when it “clicked” for you on stage, when you felt like you found your vocation?

It was at the end of my first performance of my first solo show. I knew I wanted to be on a stage giving people permission to feel things that they normally don't let themselves feel – grief, facing death and finding joy in the hard parts of life.

Your recent memoir, A Carlin Home Companion: Growing up with George, was released in 2015. When did you decide that this was the “right” time for the book? What do you hope to convey to readers through your work?

After doing my current solo show, and having really worked the material of my life into a cohesive narrative, I knew I was ready to dig deeper into it all, and write the 300 page version of my story. My biggest hope is that people find themselves in my story and are kinder to themselves when they feel lost.

You perform a solo show based on your memoir; what has your experience been on stage working with this material?

It's been life changing. I now feel like a performer that can breath, think and live on stage. I know I've just scratched the surface, but no longer feeling terror and being out of my body is a huge improvement.

As a graduate of the Depth Psychology program at Pacifica Graduate Institute, how is your work informed (if it is) by archetypes and mythic storytelling?

I mostly try and use it to educate people about The Shadow and the importance of owning all our parts. I try and find a way to communicate that we are poly-minded beings with all these aspects within us, and the more we embrace them, the easier life is.

We [also] studied Demeter and Persephone. I resisted at first, but I was abducted by it, much like Persephone, and she lingers by my side often. I ended up writing my thesis about the myth and how it reflects on human grief and the individuation process. [Persephone] moves into the Underworld, the unconscious, and comes out enriched by the experience – a sovereign of her own domain.

The most difficult thing was going back to the years just before my mom got sober. Walking through moments with her so sick and addicted was scary, but I used some active

imagination techniques, and was able to go into those scenes whole and not traumatized.

They say we live out our parents' shadows. I live out my father's shadow. I hold the grief, melancholy of my family. I feel deeply. I guess that's why I'm so fond of Persephone.

Your podcast Waking From the American Dream, explores a wide range of topics including comedy, art, spirituality, modern society, and sexuality. You also host a monthly "Kelly Carlin Show" where you have conversations with respected comedians. How did your podcasts develop? What do you like to explore through this particular medium?

I wanted to find a space for me to find my voice, and my podcast has allowed me to do just that. It's been a big sandbox for me. There are no rules, no bosses, no sponsors. It's very free. My show on Sirius with comedians is in service of supporting the channel I run, Carlin's Corner.

This Zine aims to spotlights underrepresented voices in the arts: women, people of color, and those across the LGBTQ spectrum. Is there anything in your own experience that has been affected by issues of one (or more) of the above?

Well, I am a woman. I've been in abusive relationships. I was a textbook co-dependent. I felt powerless much of my life, and because of that I'm still learning to fight for what I need, what should just be mine, and always for all people to have a voice.

You've stated that mainstream "showbiz" was not your scene. I really admire how you have created and claimed your own space as a performer and writer in the face of a homogenized Hollywood culture. How did you resolve to do this?

I had no choice. I felt trapped by the options it offered me – bimbo roles, watered down comedy, etc. For years, I felt very much like a failure because I did not jump into the mainstream and earn credits and a ton of money. But, now I feel grateful I can do it my way and make somewhat of a living out of it. It's a challenge though.

On your website, you use the word "disruptor" to describe an aspect of your personality. Can you elaborate?

I want to disrupt people's assumptions about myself, the world, each other. Like my father, I can't help but want to rouse the rabble.

Where can we go to support your work?

My website is www.kellycarlin.com. If you like my podcast, hit the donate button.

Michelle Peñeloza, Poet

“Family Kundiman”

Song crossed our threshold after the war—
face veiled, body battered—carried by our Tatay.

Song’s stewards followed, ang Hapón ibinigay:

three wounded pianos, soundboards scarred.

Tatay coaxed keys and tuning pins, nursed
strings and worn dampers to life.

Tataybade us play, till he wept for our Inay,
then, he lifted Song’s veil and kissed her.

What did we know of that war or his tears?

We only knew what the timber remembered:

Humming hornbeam and carved cariñosa;
love sung low through open window. Here,
within wing-shaped wood, his harana
and toil: her veil, flapping like surrender.

Wura Natasha-Ogunji, Artist



“The Kissing Mask” (mixed media)

Also:

Clare Johnson, Artist

Laura Da', Poet

Dawn Hall, Filmmaker

Sojourner Truth (1797-1883): Ain't I A Woman?

Delivered 1851

Women's Convention, Akron, Ohio

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where

did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.



Images in order of appearance on “Inspired By” handout (L-R) Audre Lorde, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Dolores Huerta, Angela Davis, (Bottom Row) Toni Wolff, Joy Harjo, Hélène Cixous, Yuri Kochiyama, Ida B. Wells

THANK YOU FOR READING

