

The Afterparty: Can't get you out of our heads

Compiled by Jenny Penberthy & Lee Plested
For our friend Kevin Killian (1953-2019)

[A party at Karen Tallman and Brian de Beck's house on Bella Vista for Kevin Killian and Dodie Bellamy. The front porch is filled with smoke and sizzle. Inside, uncountable bottles of wine and Brian's platters of grilled seafood circulate among Vancouver writers and artists. A wind storm rages outside with occasional branches thudding on to the roof and pine cones hurling at windows.]

[ANDREW KLOBUCAR (DJ RMUTT) is standing over his turntables.]

DANIELLE LAFRANCE: ...for example, I last a long time but, for how long? A long time is merely an opinion. For example, I die to finish.

TIZIANA LA MELIA: He handed me a ruffled pink dress for the role, or was it lace? Uncomfortable in my body as usual, a 50s-style gown would emphasize this.

JACQUELYN ROSS: The dressing up and playing down, the night walks, the toxic foraging...

TIZIANA LA MELIA: But on this stage, we were all bringing the glamour to grammar.

JACQUELYN ROSS: I remember how grateful I was when he walked over to me just to tell me a couple things real straight. Pop music really is good for the ears.

DJ RMUTT *(smiles knowingly)*: Have to be careful not to wear out my potentiometers...

GEORGE BOWERING: My head is going round in eddies, I've got to have a bowl of Shreddies.

WARREN TALLMAN: ...all those hungry hellos, those drawn out goodbyes. Don't worry, get the poets together.

DJ RMUTT: ...ruin them pretty fast if used in that way. Okay — how does this work? Let's layer that second beat!

GEORGE BOWERING: I'll hold you in my loving arms, if you gimme a bowl of Lucky Charms.

DOROTHY TRUJILLO LUSK: It's not very conversational to recall conversation. Perhaps I was fatuous to write "I wanna cheer up your dead."

DJ RMUTT: Come on. Spin it like you mean it. History repeats itself.

[We hear the sound of a falling tree; suddenly the lights go out. General consternation ensues: Oh no! Now what? Karen, where are the candles!! Oooh spooky!!!]

TURNTABLE (*slowing down*): pllsssss... o ah oah ooo... woah o ah ah sshhhh.

COLIN BROWNE: Instead of instead, instead. Instead of here, here. Not there, here, instead of here, here.

TURNTABLE: *zzzzzzzzzzz.*

GEORGE BOWERING: I tell you, my heart just aches and aches, for a heaping bowl of—

KEVIN KILLIAN: What are you doing? Shut up! Shut up, please.

JUDITH PENNER: ...he says it's making the gesture that matters, not whether it's good or bad...

GEORGE BOWERING: You're from San Francisco. For cripe sakes, you ought to know cereal poetry when you hear it.

PETER QUARTERMAIN: There's nothing like a sensitive and thinking gossip who actually cares about others—Kevin had no equal—

KEVIN KILLIAN: No, it's serial poetry, not cereal poetry.

GEORGE BOWERING: Not even (*pause...*) Special K, K?

KEVIN KILLIAN: Nope.

GEORGE BOWERING: How about a (*pause...*) Duncan doughnut?

PETER QUARTERMAIN: Throw the keys down to me.

[Guests grope their way past one another through the tenebrous living room, apologizing, cursing; the storm howls outside.]

AARON PECK: I read the pull quote: “Come Gabrielle, bring some Canadian freshness to this overheated piece of fat.” That was it!

TIZIANA LA MELIA: I didn’t know then that I wanted to make an appearance as a confection.

JACQUELYN ROSS: I was to conceive of myself as some kind of precious diary, a diary written in order to be read.

AARON PECK: He cranked the emergency brake to park the car. “You really must film yourself having sex while you’re young! You’ll thank me later.”

COLIN SMITH (*dancing in the dark*): Kevin, could I have a sip of your Tab? O mercy, thank you ever so. I’m tuckered out from this bit of business you’ve scripted me.

ROLF MAURER: I sure want to be there. I will keep my eye peeled, eh?

COLIN SMITH: I mean, the erotics are a labour to swoon for, but the gross grind of everything connected, good grief!

[Meanwhile, in the kitchen shadows]

SCOTT WATSON: Kevin and I are parachuting from a plane to go to a Jack Spicer conference in Bogota. As we fall from the sky, catcalls from the field...

LISA ROBERTSON: ...couldn’t find a blue gingham Dorothy dress in the thrift shop...

PETER QUARTERMAIN: Pretty weird plays in their unpolished state—I remember almost nothing of them, but fearless, scrupulous, insistently honest.

SCOTT WATSON: ...renowned poets with guns. There is always a new beginning. Alas.

LISA ROBERTSON: ...a pair of tight pinstriped trousers and a pair of brown backless sandals with teetering heels ...

JENNY PENBERTHY: You had tout San Francisco at your feet.

COLIN BROWNE: This slippage. Flights of steps, flocks on knees. Here, here, instead of here. Instead of here, here. He knew. He knew. Do you see?

[A flash of lightning illuminates the house in a short blast of technicolour]

MEREDITH QUARTERMAIN: OMG there's Karen Tallman with her puppets, which reminds, did you see that Kylie Minogue flick where she directed a con-man to have sex with a copy machine?

MICHAEL TURNER: ...because of the earthquake the apartment on Minna came up and had it not been for that, and for fear of a bigger one, he and Dodie might not have found the place.

CLINT BURNHAM: I was hooked by her combination of narrative simplicity and the fantastic screen of illusion a unicorn embodies. At a Honey Horn gathering and on the sixth day of their acquaintance they made love — a magical love never seen by any humans so I can't describe it.

MEREDITH QUARTERMAIN *(leaning into Michael)*: Hey honey, she purrs, you think he's just a copy machine, then bingo he stops pumping, and guess what, you're lost inside your machine, lost in *Mirage Periodicals*, with their arms forever wrapped around you.

MICHAEL TURNER: Just like that, with hands up and down, as if to conjure something, or make it disappear.

[A crash as something falls and smashes; shuffling sounds as people investigate in the dark]

FRED WAH: I knew it was Kevin by the smile on Spicer's face, "Oh! Mr. Adjacency, what synchronous foreignicity do you think to find here in North Beach?"

DOROTHY TRUJILLO LUSK: May trouble neglect you...

COLIN BROWNE: Descending, touching, rising. In the interstices, eternities. He was gnomon, you too. Like hands they say.

FRED WAH: Finally he winked at Spicer and, fetching into his pocket, set down a bright yellow lemon in the middle of the table.

RENEE RODIN: Kind. The way I want the world to be.

DOROTHY TRUJILLO LUSK: ...the angels respect you...

CLINT BURNHAM: Is there a place for a tan bearded male unicorn after the love is gone?

DOROTHY TRUJILLO LUSK: ...and heaven accept you.

[A group mills outside the bathroom, ghosting in the hall]

JUDITH PENNER: ...I obsessed on that young spelling bee champion: you took a breath, the audience held theirs, you exhaled the right letters one by one: *auslaut, erysipelas, bougainvillea, aiguillette, pendeloque, palama, cernuous, odylic.*

CLINT BURNHAM: Each one staggers on longer than the one before it so that ultimately we get a blast of psychedelic-sounding chapters that hint at early Pink Floyd. I feel sure this is probably a good handbook for girls (and boys too I guess).

COLIN SMITH: Enough frippery—I must flit. It's flirting time for the likes of me. May I have your autograph before I leave?

COLIN BROWNE: From here to here, we, instead of instead, here, instead of here, here, we, he, here, here, we.

DANIELLE LAFRANCE: But, are you in the ocean now? Do I look a fool? Of course not, you last a long time.

LISA ROBERTSON: ...made her exit very haunting...hypnotized by the red and blue lights...

JUDY RADUL: He enters carrying the outsider's enthusiasm for bright lights and remains shining. The illuminated may feel themselves a warmer edge, shaped and thankful.

[END]