

*With Love*

*A letter to Cookie, and her stories*

Alice Butler

*Dear Cookie,*

*I knew your face from the pictures first.*

*No one looks as ravishing in red at 4 a.m. on a toilet seat, lacy red knickers stretched down to your knees, with triangles of skin peeping through the folds of red fabric you probably fashioned together a few hours before the party.*

*No one looks as “alive” dead as you do in your casket, with bangles stacked up to your elbow like a glistening, gold Cleopatra.*

*I knew your face from the pictures first, but then I found your books and came to your writing. It is this body that I long for, the body of your stories.*

*I long to touch those eyes, that skin, that face, that fabric, but instead it's my writing you that touches, a second skin.*

*It is a skin that scratches, to find the other you.*

Cookie Mueller and Nan Goldin became friends while staying in Provincetown in the summer of 1976, a wild and windy outpost for two young women breaking from their past. Nan had broken from the name Nancy, and Dorothy Karen somehow “got the name Cookie,” before she “could walk.”<sup>1</sup>

Cookie was having a yard sale, and Nan, a photographer from Boston's School of the Museum of Fine Arts, was enamored by her image: “a cross between a Tobacco Road outlaw and a Hollywood B-Girl, the most fabulous woman I'd ever seen.”<sup>2</sup> After their first meeting, Nan shot Cookie in various settings, dressed in disorderly silks, always *fabulous*. And so they became closer with each click of the shutter, as they traveled from Provincetown to Baltimore to New York to the Amalfi coast in Italy, in unpredictable zigzags.

Many of the photographs are part of Nan's 35 mm, soundtracked slideshow *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, while others are also to be found in *The Cookie Portfolio*, a collection of fifteen images later made into a book. The portfolio's pictures begin in Provincetown, with a sun-kissed Cookie locking her arms around her son Max in one picture, and her girlfriend Sharon in another, before moving through the New York party days, her mouth wide open in more than one picture; then her wedding to the artist Vittorio Scarpati, and the fairly sudden arrival of the symptoms of the disease that would kill her.

Her face becomes less clear, as the carefree cackle fades with stroke-induced pain. In many of the later photographs, we see her only in profile, in shadow, or abstracted by the scans of an X-ray machine. Nan's final picture of "Cookie" is of her empty apartment on New York's Bleecker Street: with no body present, it is the striped sofa that remains, framed by framed portraits, and the pointless stuff of the living.

Aged just forty, Cookie died from AIDS-related illness on November 10, 1989, just a few weeks before Nan took this picture, and just eight weeks after her husband, Vittorio. She missed the opening of Nan's "Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing" exhibition at Artists Space in New York, featuring Vittorio's drawings, as well as works by David Wojnarowicz, Mark Morrisroe, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia. The catalogue reprinted Cookie's text "A Last Letter," published a year earlier in the second issue of *City Lights Review*. As Nan Goldin writes in her introduction: "One of the writers for this catalogue has become too sick to write,"<sup>3</sup> and so, the title of Cookie's text became more prophetic, more painful, with time, as her death mirrored the fate of those to whom she was writing.

In it, she writes *in memoriam* to her friends, now dead as a result of the epidemic, and the pitiful care from the state:

*Each friend I've lost was an extraordinary person, not just to me, but to hundreds of people who knew their work and their fight. These were the kind of people who lifted the quality of all our lives, their war was against ignorance, the bankruptcy of beauty, and the truancy of culture. These were people who hated and scorned pettiness, intolerance, bigotry, mediocrity, ugliness, and spiritual myopia; the blindness that makes life hollow and insipid was unacceptable. They tried to make us see.*<sup>4</sup>

Cookie has helped me see; she has helped me *write* through seeing. For so long she has been historicized by the image, either as the blond and beehived Cookie of John Waters's early films (including *Multiple Maniacs*, *Pink Flamingos*, and *Female Trouble*) or as the Cookie in Nan's photographs: the girl laughing, or the girl clutching a cane, unable to walk because the disease was wasting her.

Born into the suburban enclaves of Baltimore in 1949, Cookie left home while still a teenager. As she writes in "Alien": "I was always leaving. Every time I left I had a different hair color and I would be standing on the porch saying goodbye to the older couple in the living room."<sup>5</sup> Dressed in colorful, thrift-shop chaos, her grimy glamour was a perfect match for the oddball love of John Waters's Baltimore Dreamlanders, whose alien arms she fell into when she "accidentally broke into show bizz."<sup>6</sup> An underground film career, together with all kinds of part-time jobs, from dealing drugs to working in a fish factory to designing clothes, saw her through the heady days of the 1970s.<sup>7</sup>

When she moved to New York in 1976, Cookie jumped into the downtown art world, what Robert Siegle has called "an alternative community but not an alternative state," in

which painting, performance, film, sculpture, and writing became a permeable mesh of activity.<sup>8</sup> Cookie wrote candidly about the artists she loved for Annie Flanders's *Details* magazine, writing about her friends, the artists Keith Haring, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose death became the subject of Cookie's November 1988 "Art and About" column-cum-memorial. "The host of the party looked sad," she wrote. "He was sitting in the corner on the gray wall-to-wall industrial carpeting watching his shimmering, gilded, celebrated guests with his sloe eyes full of apathy and his oft-kissed lips frozen into a disingenuous smile."<sup>9</sup>

For the artists and writers of Cookie's scene, dwelling in the murky "abyss of the Lower East Side tunnel of tenements," downtown New York in the 1980s was its venues—ABC No Rio and Area, the Mudd Club and Saint Mark's Church—and Cookie, in a sense, was New York.<sup>10</sup> She came out of the clubs at 7 a.m., and then went back to read in them twelve hours later, with figures such as Eileen Myles, Joe Brainard, Kathy Acker, and Gary Indiana. Billy Sullivan's photograph of her peeing outside a club with her back turned—wearing a full-length black coat, ankles slid into white stilettos—is suggestive of this history, and a suggestion of what was to come: the stigmatized fear of bodily fluids that would leave sick communities neglected and maltreated. The "AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power," also known as ACT UP, was a direct action group established in the spring of 1987 to fight for improved legislation, education, medical research, and treatment for AIDS patients. Protesting the government's treatment of the infected as a harmful and deviant "object of scrutiny," ACT UP staged public demonstrations and politicized the funerals of those who had died of AIDS.<sup>11</sup> Artist and ACT UP activist David Wojnarowicz writes in his contribution to the "Witnesses" catalogue: "I imagine what it would be like if friends had a demonstration each time a lover or friend or stranger died of AIDS."<sup>12</sup>

The scrutiny I bestow on Cookie is written from love. With Nan's pictures of her showing a life in discontinuous fragments, I turn to Cookie's writing: let us focus on the life-writing performances she enacted in words while alive, rather than the prologue of death that these photographs tantalize.

When I look at the photograph of Cookie's empty apartment, I try to imagine the ephemera of writing strewn across the floor, *outside* the camera's frame. The scattered fragments of plays, poems, stories, and novels. I picture her hands moving feverishly across the typewriter, after making loose, intimate scribbles in her notebooks. I picture her body *writing*, as the seduced, and the seducer.

Writing to the author in Cookie is a way of letting her touching texts speak anew. It is a way of saying that her words touch me in a way that no other writer's words have before, an embodied relationship that has only one cause: the loving mesh of correspondence. It is a protest of sorts, an activist scream at the society of hate that, to borrow the words of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (speaking of the art critic Craig Owens, dead from AIDS in 1990, and whose memorial was held at Artists Space), "finally found it (to put it no more strongly than this) so possible, so little painful to let" her die.<sup>13</sup>

I don't wish to simply ignore the photographs, and the laughter and loss they document, but I want to know how Cookie performed those narratives in her own writing when alive, before she was robbed of her future by the epidemic. I am the reparative reader, writing from love. As Sedgwick writes: "Hope, often a fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates."<sup>14</sup> As I feel for Cookie's body in writing fragments, hers and mine, I claim her in correspondence in order to enable a reclaiming of her work that might begin to understand her writing alongside (not after, or not without) her life cut short.

*Walking through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black* was the first major collection of Cookie's stories to be published, when Chris Kraus picked it up, after no one else would, as the first in her Native Agents series for Semiotext(e).<sup>15</sup> Alongside Ann Rower's *If You're a Girl*, Cookie's book would launch in spring 1990, and so she missed it, with Richard Hell and Sharon Niesp reading in her place at the New York venue Quick! (formerly the club Area) on March 21, 1990.

Arranged chronologically, *Walking through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black* comprises life stories from 1964 to 1989 that flirt with what once occurred: from Baltimore high school lust and a San Francisco peyote ceremony to an attempted rape in Maryland and a house fire in British Columbia. It is not so much the craziness of her tales that I find seductive, as the language and laughter with which she chooses to relay them. A lover of metaphor, her figurative sentences waver from haunting image ("There was no moon. The sky was like black cotton batting that felt like walking through clear water in a pool painted black.") to hilarious comparison, as when she raucously writes of the trauma of the attempted rape with affective young-girl innocence: "I felt very proud that I had melted so well into the underbrush, just like Bambi."<sup>16</sup>

If we take Cookie for her (written) word, she came to writing as a child ("I started writing when I was six and then never stopped completely."), later experimenting with a self-published novel around the time she hit puberty. She describes this stealthy act in cataloguing: "I wrote a novel when I was twelve and put it in cardboard and Saran Wrap, took it to the library and put it on the shelves in the correct alphabetical order."<sup>17</sup> It is possible Cookie's zine-like novel was the last long-form narrative she would piece together, in spite of her desire to write another one, and see it published. I "want to have a novel written in 2 months time," she wrote on a page in the back of her blue notebook, found in the Serpent's Tail/High Risk Archives at New York University's Fales Library and Special Collections, in which other fragmented attempts at this autobiographical novel, with allusive chapter subtitles, also appear.<sup>18</sup>

Cookie's novelistic desire belongs to an inventory of professional and personal longings, with other writing forms to conquer, and addictions to battle, filling out the numbered list. It is tempting to read Cookie's desire to write a novel as a craving intimately connected to her disease, which would later make writing difficult, eventually impossible.

But instead of an autobiographical novel, the short stories piled up in ad hoc fragments, a *nearly novel*, amounting to a form she calls, in a note for the “Semiotext” book, “Quazi-Auto-Bio-Etc.”<sup>19</sup> The many scribbled lists of stories found throughout the archive reveal the desire “to write” above all else, giving way to a life in textual pieces.

Or, as she wrote in a tiny text first published in the chapbook *Garden of Ashes*: “I believe that my short stories are novels for people with short attention spans.”<sup>20</sup> It’s from one of the little Hanuman Books that has Cookie’s face printed on its cover (like her *Fan Mail*, *Frank Letters*, and *Crank Calls* of 1988), her yellow hair matched by a yellow border, and a black ribbon tied around her neck. Founded by editor Raymond Foye and painter Francesco Clemente, the press published tiny, colorful books (only three by four inches) that promoted avant-garde writing by authors and poets such as Bob Flanagan, Eileen Myles, and Gary Indiana.

Cookie’s stories soar beyond their small scale, helping us to look and love closely, and to feel free and write freely. As Denise Duhamel wrote in a poem about Cookie: “Your rib cage lives on as a tree house for adolescent swallows / who, if they’ve never had a chance to rebel, do now.”<sup>21</sup> Cookie’s short stories, with narratives and forms that express adolescent tendencies, are like these adolescent swallows bursting forth, as rebellious now as they were in writing, helping *my* writing fly as I read her.

Published in downtown zines, artist periodicals, and Hanuman’s chapbooks, or performed at live readings in venues such as the Mudd Club (where the toilet-scene photograph with which I started was taken), Cookie’s autobiographical short stories might “fail” at the continuity of the novel, but they are illuminated by photographic detail, poetic lyricism, and feminist wit, as she turns the ephemeral autobiographical moment into ephemeral performative writing.<sup>22</sup> It is the passing of time that enables the writer in Cookie to pervert her own autobiography, as seen in the shameless way she writes shame, more specifically the vocation of go-go dancing: “I had decided to topless go-go dance when I first moved to New York from Provincetown. It wasn’t something I especially wanted on my resume but I had been casting around, looking for work...something to pay the bills while I was making a start at designing clothes, searching film parts and writing.”<sup>23</sup>

Cookie’s “Go-Going—New York & New Jersey—1978–79” is stamped with a time and a place, making it into a kind of retrospective diary entry of performed first-person desire. As an ephemeral smattering of textual fragments, the diary—like the letter and the list—is a form favored by the adolescent discovering writing: rapid and unfinished, rebellious in confession. And so I also turn to these forms to find her, to discover the writer in Cookie through the stuff of adolescent writing. The amateur, adolescent writer appropriates these forms as ephemeral outlets for the precarious, perverse expression of desire and love. And Cookie appropriates them, too, as an adult-adolescent, working against the neat order of things, as it relates to gender, sexuality, sickness, and writing.

It is also possible to read the form of the short story itself, as it is owned and appropriated by Cookie, before her illness and during, as “adolescent.” Many of her stories are rooted in her childhood and adolescence, and even those that focus on her later life, her twenties and thirties, remain adolescently charged, in their narratives and forms.

Indeed, when Carol Mavor writes in *Reading Boyishly* that “the adolescent wastes time,” yet “when one is old, one panics at the thought of wasting time,” the suggestion of a sickened temporality that touches death at the same time it touches youth comes to the fore.<sup>24</sup> With the pileup of stories that came thick and fast, Cookie’s determination in her later writing to document teen anecdotes suggests a queer temporality that strives for both adolescent brevity and lasting posterity.

Cookie’s short stories, with their diaries, lists, and letters, represent the “bit before” the novel, the in-between: the adolescent.

## 1. DIARY

Cookie’s diary-stories are littered with raw attachments to personal information, which she subverts in writing with tricky, feminist laughter. In “Haight-Ashbury — San Francisco — 1967,” for example, a story of her West Coast adventures and an LSD capping party gone wrong, Cookie confesses to her adolescent sexual antics in candid storytelling. She remembers passing a “gathering of women” in which the “blond in the center of the group was extolling the virtues of Jimi Hendrix, after having fucked him the night before.” “I walked on by,” writes Cookie, adding casually, “I’d fucked him the night before she had.”<sup>25</sup> The adult-adolescent writer in Cookie appropriates the conversational chatter of the young girl diary in the public, political space of the short story, teasing the reader with its languid, spoken confessions. This sex talk depicts a girl-adolescent in radical ownership of her own sexuality, but it also reveals a writer in ownership of her past, so that these confessions are not simply spoken, but written, too—in lasting, diary documents of first-person exhibitionism.

## 2. LETTER

Part of the reason why I have sought to get close to Cookie by writing a letter is because that’s one of the ways she discovered closeness for herself, as when she prefaced a letter sent to her by her friend Gordon Stevenson (the “last letter” she received from him before he died) with a text that works like an epistolary memorial to him, and to the thousands of others dead from AIDS.<sup>26</sup>

Showing the affective pull of correspondence, Cookie’s text becomes an open, public letter to Gordon’s singular, private letter, when she writes:

*“It’s like wartime now,” my aunt told me a few weeks ago. She lived in France during World War II. “You young people are losing friends and relatives just as if it were bullets taking them*

*away.” She’s right, it’s a war zone, but it’s a different battlefield. It’s not bullets that catch these soldiers, and there’s no bombs and no gunfire. These people are dying in a whisper.*<sup>27</sup>

As she thinks through the bodies of the dead through the living words of her aunt, Cookie’s epistolary storytelling is her attempt to increase the volume of this whisper. She writes on behalf of her friends’ sick bodies, aching to be remembered in their extended adolescence. She turns to the materiality of Gordon’s letter and describes it, makes it a metaphor: “It was the last letter I received from him. He died the day I got it. I still have it, it’s all frayed but the message is crisp.”<sup>28</sup> The epistle is weathered and worn, but its message and meaning are fresh and alive with political energy, in spite of its age. And Cookie’s reply sends this energy out into the world with a message just as crisp, just as close, driven by desire, perversity, grief, and love: we must write our deathly intimacies in public to make our sicknesses heard. My letter to Cookie is an imaginary chain in this vital correspondence; I reach for her in writing, to resurrect her whispers.

### 3. LIST

As a doodled indicator of desire, the adolescent’s list (often located at the back of a notebook, much like Cookie’s) is precarious in its permeability. And it is a form found in her stories, as well as her ephemera, as Cookie, with her artificial lists of clothes and objects, revels in its potential for riotous excess and infinite possibility. In “The Berlin Film Festival — 1981,” when Cookie is held at customs to be strip-searched (“carrying hashish, cocaine, MDA and opium, of course in small amounts, just tads really...”), she is specific in the details of what she was wearing, a cumbersome array of things to reduce the “bulk of my suitcase”: “tights, leg warmers, over-the-knee boots, a dress, two sweaters, a vest, a leather jacket, various fur pieces and a long black coat.”<sup>29</sup> Showing the jumbled chaos of her look, like the faulty, unfashionable adolescent, Cookie makes a joke out of her addiction to clothes with the unbounded form of the list.

In reading Cookie’s work, it is possible to see the list as a queer form of multiplicity—an “open mesh,” we might call it, to pilfer Sedgwick’s phrase in her essay “Queer and Now.” As she writes in full: “That’s one of the things that “queer” can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or *can’t be* made) to signify monolithically.”<sup>30</sup> The adolescent’s list, as it is played with by Cookie in writing, is open like this mesh, allowing for radical multiplicities. (The relationship between queerness and adolescence is already evident early in Sedgwick’s essay, with the much more melancholic recognition that: “I think everyone who does gay and lesbian studies is haunted by the suicides of adolescents.”)<sup>31</sup>

The form of the list is aptly used by Cookie in a story about her bisexual adolescence that begins, “I had two lovers and I wasn’t ashamed,”<sup>32</sup> one lover being Jack and the other being Gloria, whose hairstyles she catalogues like a hysterical archivist: “I watched her hair-dos from the back. Every day they were different: Beehives, Barrelcurls, Air-Lifts, Pixies, flips, French Twists, Bubbles, Doublebubbles.”<sup>33</sup> Gloria is the teenage girl

collector of hairsprayed images, queer in her awkward artificiality, her riotous multiplicity, her open mesh, which Cookie gives form to with enumerative words.

In 1997, eight years after Cookie's death, High Risk Books published the anthology *Ask Dr. Mueller*. Its epigraph, taken from Cookie's writings, reads:

*Fortunately I am not the first person to tell you that you will never die. You simply lose your body. You will be the same except you won't have to worry about rent or mortgages or fashionable clothes. You will be released from sexual obsessions. You will not have drug addictions. You will not need alcohol. You will not have to worry about cellulite or cigarettes or cancer or AIDS or venereal disease. You will be free.*<sup>34</sup>

Was this something she scribbled on one of the back pages of her notebook, feeling the destructive power of the disease? Another of Cookie's lists, it records her most toxic attachments, the things she loved and the things that made her sick, in her life as a writer and in her life *in* stories.

I go to her writing, to feel her fly.

*With love.*

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<sup>1</sup> Cookie Mueller, "My Bio—Notes on an American Childhood," in Cookie Mueller, *Walking through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1990), p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Nan Goldin, *I'll Be Your Mirror* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1996), p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> Nan Goldin, "In the Valley of the Shadow," in *Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing* (New York: Artists Space, 1989), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cookie Mueller, "A Last Letter," in *City Lights Review*, no. 2 (1988), p. 51. Earlier versions of this text, of which there are manuscripts in the Serpent's Tail/High Risk Archives, were given the title "Gordon Stevenson," suggesting a much more direct form of obituary. Mueller's preface to Stevenson's letter is shorter, with the focus almost entirely on Stevenson, and Mueller's relationship with him (rather than the AIDS epidemic more widely). In its published versions, it is a text that has gone through many changes. In *City Lights Review*, it is set entirely in roman type; in the Artists Space catalogue, the preface remains in roman but Stevenson's letter has now been set in italics; in the version that would be published posthumously in Semiotext(e)'s *Walking through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black*, the entire text is in italics. A date has also been added to the title of this last version, "Last Letter—1989." The essay does not even appear in a proofreading copy of this book, perhaps suggesting that its late inclusion was a response to Mueller's death, with the different wording of the title placing greater emphasis on Mueller's authorship, her life and death. Rather than "A Last Letter," it is now "Last Letter—1989," leading us to think of it as Mueller's last letter, her last word.

<sup>5</sup> Cookie Mueller, "Alien," in Cookie Mueller, *Ask Dr. Mueller: The Writings of Cookie Mueller*, ed. Amy Scholder (New York: High Risk Books, 1997), p. 201.

<sup>6</sup> Cookie Mueller, "Breaking into Show Bizz," in Cookie Mueller, *Ask Dr. Mueller*, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> As Mueller tells us in the autobiographical text: "Cookie Mueller, born 1949 Baltimore, Maryland," in 'Garden of Ashes' in *Ask. Dr. Mueller*, p. 199. Other jobs featured in the list include: "racehorse walker... go-go dancer... theatre actress, playwright, theatre director, performance artist, house cleaner... credit clerk, barmaid, sailor, high seas cook, film script doctor, herbal therapist, unwed welfare mother, film extra, leg model, watercolorist, and briefly as a barmitzvah entertainer, although I'm not even Jewish."

<sup>8</sup> Robert Siegle, *Suburban Ambush: Downtown Writing and the Fiction of Insurgency* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 3.



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- <sup>9</sup> Cookie Mueller, “November 1988,” in Cookie Mueller, *Ask Dr. Mueller*, p. 285.
- <sup>10</sup> The quotation is from Cookie Mueller, “Sam’s Party—Lower East Side, NYC—1979,” in Cookie Mueller, *Walking through Clear Water*, p. 115.
- <sup>11</sup> “Object of scrutiny” is a term from Cindy Patton, “Performativity and Spatial Distinction: The Ends of AIDS Epidemiology,” in Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds., *Performativity and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 188.
- <sup>12</sup> David Wojnarowicz, “Post Cards from America: X-Rays From Hell,” in *Witnesses*, p. 11. With Wojnarowicz’s essay criticizing Cardinal John O’Connor for keeping “safer-sex information off the local television stations ... thereby helping thousands and thousands to their unnecessary deaths,” and Senator Jesse Helms’s attempt “to dismantle the NEA for supporting the work of Andres Serrano and Robert Mapplethorpe,” it was the content of the exhibition catalogue, rather than the works on view, that caused the National Endowment for the Arts, under its chair John Frohnmayer, to rescind the grant given to Artists Space for the exhibition. Artists Space director Susan Wyatt challenged the decision with a great deal of support from the artistic community: the grant was partially restored, but to fund only the exhibition, not the catalogue.
- <sup>13</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Memorial for Craig Owens,” in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 105.
- <sup>14</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is about You,” in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, ed., *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 24.
- <sup>15</sup> As Chris Kraus told me in a telephone call on 12 December 2016: “The first book was Cookie Mueller’s *Walking through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black*, and I didn’t know Cookie personally, but I had heard her read at the Poetry Project, when she had already been diagnosed with AIDS. It was an amazing reading, and I’d heard through friends that she really wanted to publish this book, but despite her enormous popularity and her knowing everybody in the media and culture world in New York, nobody would publish it as it was. We went to her and said, ‘We’ll publish your book.’”
- <sup>16</sup> Cookie Mueller, “Route 95 South—Baltimore to Orlando,” and “Abduction & Rape—Highway 31 Elkton, Maryland—1969,” in Cookie Mueller, *Walking through Clear Water*, pages 34 and 51, respectively. The title of the latter story includes the city and state on the book’s table of contents, but on the story’s title page, it is given only as “Abduction & Rape—Highway 31—1969.”
- <sup>17</sup> Cookie Mueller, “Cookie Mueller, born 1949 Baltimore, Maryland,” in ‘Garden of Ashes’ in *Ask Dr. Mueller*, p. 199.
- <sup>18</sup> Cookie Mueller, notebook, undated, Serpent’s Tail/High Risk Archives, MSS 86, Box V.II.1, Folder 17, Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University Libraries. Reproduced with the permission of Ira Silverberg.
- <sup>19</sup> Cookie Mueller, handwritten page, undated, Serpent’s Tail/High Risk Archives, MSS 86, Box V.II.1, Folder 14, Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University Libraries. Reproduced with the permission of Ira Silverberg.
- <sup>20</sup> Cookie Mueller, “Cookie Mueller, born 1949 Baltimore, Maryland,” in ‘Garden of Ashes’ in *Ask Dr. Mueller*, p. 199.
- <sup>21</sup> Denise Duhamel, “Beauties Who Live Only for an Afternoon,” in Brandon Stosuy, ed., *Up Is Up, But So Is Down: New York’s Downtown Literary Scene, 1974–1992* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), p. 305.
- <sup>22</sup> Among the periodicals that published Mueller’s writing were the *East Village Eye*, *Avenue E*, *Verbal Abuse*, *Just Another Asshole*, *BOMB*, *Top Stories*, and *Wild History*.
- <sup>23</sup> Cookie Mueller, “Go-Going—New York & New Jersey—1978–79,” in Cookie Mueller, *Walking through Clear Water*, pp. 100–101.
- <sup>24</sup> Carol Mavor, *Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J. M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Marcel Proust, and D. W. Winnicott* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 339.
- <sup>25</sup> Cookie Mueller, “Haight-Ashbury—San Francisco, California—1967,” in Cookie Mueller, *Walking through Clear Water*, p. 8. The title of the story is rendered in this way on the table of contents, but is given as “Haight Ashbury—San Francisco—1967” on the story’s title page.
- <sup>26</sup> Cookie Mueller, “A Last Letter,” *City Lights Review*, no. 2, p. 51.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> Cookie Mueller, “The Berlin Film Festival—Berlin, West Germany—1981,” in Cookie Mueller, *Walking through Clear Water*, pp. 126–127. The title of the story is rendered in this way on the table of contents, but is given simply as “The Berlin Film Festival—1981” on the story’s title page.
- <sup>30</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Queer and Now,” in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, p. 8.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

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<sup>32</sup> Cookie Mueller, “Two People—Baltimore—1964,” in Cookie Mueller, *Walking through Clear Water*, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Cookie Mueller, epigraph to Cookie Mueller, *Ask Dr. Mueller*, p. v.