

Excerpt from *Sugar, a performance work-in-progress* by Robbie McCauley:

Standing on the bus one day going to Boston, the Fungwahbus, 15 dollars from New York at 1:00 p.m., had no business standing, but we're just crossing the Manhattan bridge. It's a great bus. I had on my fake ghetto cap, still not dressing my age. No matter I am I act like I'm at home, and the driver... people call it the Chinatown bus because it goes from Chinatown to Chinatown Boston and New York. (I am just as racist as anyone.) It's quite an enterprise. I was on one of the larger ones, before I'd got a smaller bus, not many people, 4:00 p.m., 25 dollars. So on the 1 o'clock bus, me acting like I'm at home... the driver like the thrill-ingly rebel-ious under-ground work-ing class speed demon I have nobusi-ness still fanta-sizing about, hit the brakes on the bridge, and I hit the floor on my back. (Does fall)

Light change, She moves back to Center.

I shouldn't be here. I'm older than all the wars. There are only accidents. The reason I keep living is my stubbornness.

Mother'n'em would've given up on me long ago. The day I told Daddy I had diabetes was the day he tore up the mimeographed Marxist fliers I'd brought home. I saw the righteous rage of an American patriot. Picking up the bits of paper, I looked in his face and said, "I went to a clinic today and they told me I had diabetes." He said, "You ain't got no diabetes," and he never mentioned it again. When mother's brother Bud died at 17, or was it 14.... There're so many myths about him, being the only boy and loving football so much he went out in a damp tee shirt to carry

water for the real players at Spencer High, and got pneumonia. Whenever my mother talked about the death of her only brother, she only expressed sympathy for the nurse who had to go tell Ma Willie that her only son was dead.

Light change, Stage Left.



The first thing I heard was "your back!" "My arms," I hollered. A clean-cut white guy with several earrings in his mouth and nose and two young women who'd been speaking Spanish stood weaving on the bumpy bus and pulled my arms, bless their hearts, hurt so bad I wanted to die, but I

know my body, knew I was dying, wanted to die of embarrassment. A coupla people from the back of the bus say, "You alright?" Stretched my arms out sideways, said "I'm a dancer," I said. Sister from the back of the bus say, "you better dance yourself to court." Sister wid her say "I know what you talk-ing

'bout." Nobody bothered to be a witness. Thank God I'd made a sandwich.

The cowboy Chinese bus driver pulled over, hit the brakes way softer off the bridge. Again, "you alright" he said. At least he's speaking English I thought just as racist as anyone. "I'm a dancer." Still de-

lirious I did Alexander Technique, thinking through my body. By the time my back started to feel longer and wider my brain was back and I checked my blood sugar which was 149...put my thumb on my pulse, figured vitals were okay. I shot up.

"You're cool," one of the girls said, "My aunt's a diabetic." That's when I wept.

Light change Up Center. She pulls out needles, prepares insulin, shoots up during this story.

When Nikos first met me, he thought I was a junkie. He didn't tell me 'til years later. It was about 1987 and we were on a bus to march to Washington against the war in Nicaragua. It was my last march until the one in Boston against Iraq. I'd just met him, flirt-ed with him. Like he found out I wasn't a junkie, I found out he wasn't straight. Now he's one of my best friends, I couldn't get through this war without him. Anyway, I pulled out my needle on the bus. I don't remember this because it was always such a no-no, but he said the bus was dark, and another friend I was with was helping me, 'cause I had to hold the needle up to the light to see the numbers, like I'm doing now, but when I think about it, now I do it every now and then, especially on buses because trying to get up to go to the bathroom is dangerous. I think people should just do it discreetly when they have to, and it should be accepted, like nursing babies.

Text by Robbie McCauley. Photograph by Marie Cieri. Graphic design by Andrew Liebchen.