

sensing

3

Featuring

Why I Ride the Bus
Mina Leazer

Every Stop Made a Sound Like Home
Kelly Karst

How I Finally Got to Hunts Point
Xinan Helen Ran

Sentimental Business
Simi Best

How to look inside one's body
Caiti Borruso

search & discovery

Search & Discovery
Cross-Reference Chronicles 2

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Brendan Crain, Kassidi Shuron Jones, Kelly Karst,
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New York City Bus Maps for all five boroughs are laid out in a collage format with an M60 Select Bus at the center of the frame. New York City bus maps, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, "Bronx Bus Service," July 2024 "Brooklyn Bus Service, November 2023, "Manhattan Bus Service," January 2026, "Queens Local Bus Network," 2026, "Staten Island Bus Map," December 2025, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)'s 6164 (New York Official (MTA) plate BB7966), a New Flyer XD60, on route M60. Wikimedia Commons, June 16, 2024.

Why I Ride the Bus

Mina Leazer

Mina Leazer (she/her) is a school librarian at Seward Park Campus Library in Manhattan. Born in Seoul, she has lived and worked in Paris, Cairo, and currently resides in New York City with her husband and their two cats. Alistair and Saoirse.

In a city that values efficiency, I always plan my transit around New York City buses, even when that choice will cost precious minutes of my time. The closest Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) bus stop happens to be right outside my building door, along the slow and lumbering M20 line that goes up 8th Avenue and down 7th Avenue. Because this route traverses one of the most clogged thoroughfares of Manhattan—one subject to MTA-zoned congestion pricing—jumping on this bus can sometimes triple or quadruple travel times.



Right: The M20 bus pulls up to a bus stop. “Finally.” Photo by the author, 2026. Left: The stop requested sign on the M14-SBS bus with a computer error screen. “Stop Requested.” Photo by the author, 2026.

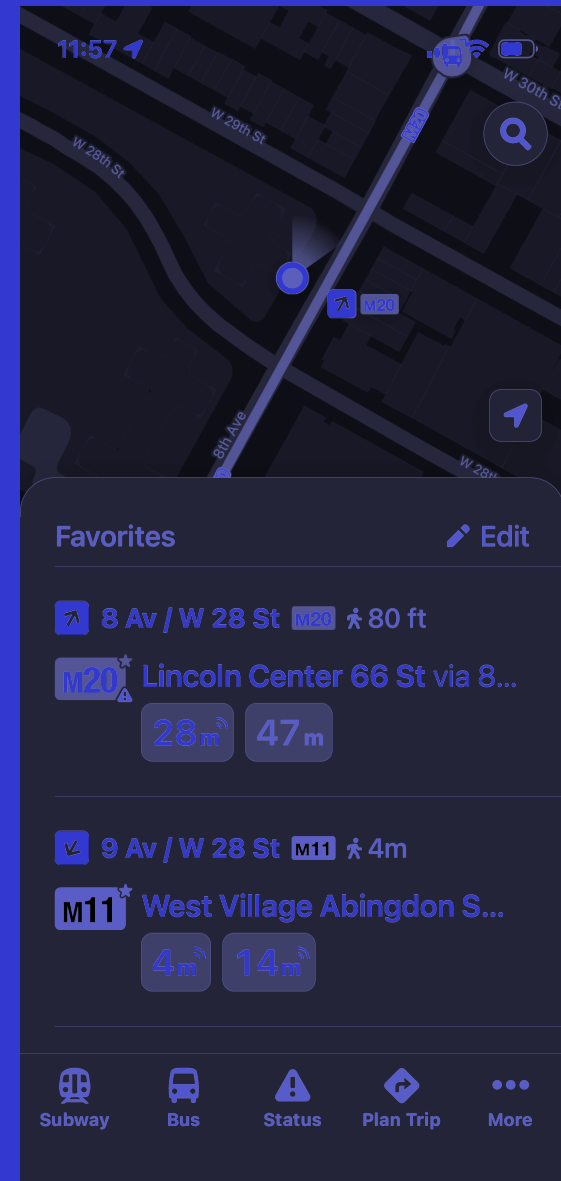


The route regularly experiences extensive delays, and missing a bus can sometimes mean a more than “thirty-minute wait” for the next one. These are not real minutes, but what I have dubbed “MTA minutes.” Several bus stops along the route have countdown clocks

that are meant to show real-time bus arrivals. Inexplicably, I have witnessed these bus times both augment and diminish during the passage of actual chronological time. According to my rough calculation, one MTA minute is about four actual Earth minutes. The MTA phone app provides a GPS map indicating the bus positions along the route. Here, I have witnessed “ghost buses” that disappear en route as I am actively tracking their approach. A bus that is supposed to arrive in ten minutes with six passengers will suddenly disappear off the map, only to be replaced by the next bus, which is 45 minutes away, waiting to leave the terminus. So the question remains:

given all of the
hassle, why do I opt
to take the bus?

For one, that same stretch of congested midtown is what tourists come to see—and even I, as the callous New Yorker, am still awed by the Broadway marquees and glitz of Times Square but would like to avoid the pedestrian-clogged sidewalks. In the winter, my trick to see the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center is to ride the M1 down 5th Avenue for a fleeting glimpse, sans wading in the crowd. This is just the right amount of sightseeing for me.



*A screenshot of MTA bus time.
“MTA Bus Time.” Screenshot by
the author, 2026*

I recognize that it is a privilege to choose to ride the bus, so while aboard I also observe those for whom accessibility makes the bus a requirement.

The buses' hydraulic systems allow them to raise and lower for patrons, and those who need wheeled access also benefit from its ramp system. This is why people in wheelchairs and parents with large carriages regularly choose the bus. For the otherwise able-bodied, the bus becomes a means of transporting larger loads. My Monday bus routine coincides with my grocery shopping day. Due to a lack of easily accessible grocery stores in my neighborhood, I've calculated that taking the M14 Select Bus Service to the M20 will get me from the Trader Joe's in my work neighborhood, the Lower East Side, to my home in Chelsea in roughly an hour—three times the amount of time it would take for me to ride the subway. However, with three bags of groceries, I can take a third of the steps and avoid the stairs, which my forty-something knees thank me for every time I make this trek, even if it means melted ice cream as a casualty. Speaking of heat, in the summer, I will regularly hop on any air-

conditioned bus while running errands because it provides much-needed relief from the sun or, lately, shelter from torrential rains.

According to the latest MTA *Subway and Bus Ridership for 2025* report, New Yorkers take almost 2.75 million trips a week across almost 1600 miles of bus routes throughout the city. The top ten routes span four boroughs (excluding only Staten Island). The top bus route is the M15 Select Bus Service, with nearly 12 million rides in 2025. And this number includes only those who have registered a fare with their bus route, meaning it does not account for MTA employees, NYPD traffic authority, children under 44 inches, and fare evaders.

In 2023, five routes across all boroughs started a free bus line pilot program that would also add to total ridership if it were included in the tally. On July 8, 2026, the Office of the Mayor, New York State, the Department of Transportation, and the MTA jointly announced the “Next Stop: Fast Buses, Better Service” initiative to further improve the speed and ridership experience for New York City bus-takers, noting that our system provides more service than Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Philadelphia combined. New York State will invest a portion of its \$84 billion capital budget to purchase 2500 new city buses, while New York City will invest \$882 million of its budget toward improving the speed, accessibility, and infrastructure of the MTA bus system.

In looking at the mockups for the new proposed “rapid bus corridors,” I see a vision of New York City that is akin to other more bus-dependent systems around the world, for my love of the bus is not limited to the MTA. Whenever I travel, I make a dedicated effort to use the bus system when I can, so I have experienced the efficiency of a highly functional bus system. Anecdotally, when I ride the bus in New York City, I often notice foreign tourists who seem to expect that the buses will serve them just as well as those in their home countries.

Here in New York, a redesign of our roads would create bus islands and bus-only lanes that would speed buses along their routes.

We get a preview of this with Select Bus Service (SBS), a current MTA offering that operates on dedicated bus lanes with fewer stops and allows riders to board the bus from all doors. Before the OMNY card tap system was put into usage, riders could prepay their fare at bus kiosks at each station, further streamlining the boarding process. The institution of the tap, however, has brought new fare checks, wherein a team of MTA bus officials enter the bus at random to verify that patrons have paid; this

new and ostensibly more efficient fare system thus creates new trammels that impede bus speeds. During these checks, I’ve witnessed people being pulled off the buses to receive warnings and summons, which can result in more than one-hundred-dollar fines. As many people tap with their phones, there’s also a question of what data is ultimately being collected by the MTA fare evasion readers.



An interior shot of the M14A+ Select Bus Service. “Over the Shoulder.” Photo by the author, 2026.

While the bus is not always efficient, it always affords a human experience—an opportunity to continually discover the city from a slower but more colorful angle, one that’s always tied to the social fabric of the city. From the moment of entry, you are instantly reminded that a person is

driving the bus. When the rear exit doesn't open, you're dependent on the chorus of your fellow passengers to yell "back door!" Because of the particular angles of the seats, the bus is an intimate ride, and I often find myself, for better or for worse, in the middle of conversations, phone calls, and soliloquies. The bus requires a kind of communal dependency because, even as you're looking out the window, you're also looking out for one another—who might need a seat, who is trying to exit. The bus provides a moment of light-filled solace in the midst of a chaotic urban existence, and until the "Next Stop" plan is fully executed, it injects some friction into your daily commute or weekend sojourn. I take the bus because of its invitation to engage with the city at a purposeful, deliberate, and slower pace—even if it means that I need to leave an hour earlier than I meant to.



*Sunset from a bus stop.
"Sunset." Photo by the
author, 2026.*

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Every Stop Made a Sound Like Home

Kelly Karst

Kelly Karst (she/her) grew up in Panama City, Panama, and is the mother of four-year-old Margot, a true New Yorker. Kelly lives with her family in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and is a Librarian at CUNY Brooklyn College. Kelly enjoys sifting through archives to find lost stories and hopes to bring to light forgotten moments of joy and resilience from the past.

Beep,
Beep,
Beep;

whoosh,

whoosh;

clink,

clink

These were the sounds
I heard as I was born and
became a New Yorker at
the NewYork-Presbyterian
Alexandra Cohen Hospital
for Women and Newborns.

WAAAAAAH

And that was the first sound I made, letting all the doctors, nurses, and my parents know right away that I was going to be a fierce New Yorker.

i

ARCHIVAL ASIDE Did you know that the NYC Health Department issues birth certificates for all people who are born in New York City (The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island)? You can order copies of New Yorkers' birth certificates from them, unless they were born before 1910, in which case you can view or order birth certificates from the New York City Municipal Archives via their NYC Historical Vital Records Project.

HO
OO
OOOO
OONK

Before going home, I needed some extra time at NYU Langone's Hassenfeld Children's Hospital. My mom was worried about me, but we felt better hearing the ferry zoom across the East River, honking its horn, reminding us that the city keeps moving no matter what, and that I was going to be okay.

i

*ARCHIVAL ASIDE Although the blue and white NYC Ferry that we know today started in 2017, the city has a long history of ferries. Learn more about them in the book *Over and Back: The History of Ferryboats in New York Harbor*.*

Beep, Beep!

I couldn't see too much out the window on the drive home, but I could hear the beeps from the cars going over the Brooklyn Bridge.

i

ARCHIVAL ASIDE If you ever want to take a deep dive into the history of the iconic Brooklyn Bridge, you can book an appointment to view the Brooklyn Bridge drawings and plans at the The New York City Municipal Archives or construction records and photographs at the Center for Brooklyn History.

As I got stronger and a little older, I was ready for adventures. Let me take you on a magical day (through space and time) to share some of my favorite sonic adventures on the NYC subway.

Bing Bong!

Stand Clear of the
Closing Doors,
Please.

First stop: Flatbush Avenue/Brooklyn College (2/5 Train)

Ding Ding Ding

My mom works at the Brooklyn College Library, but I love to hang out by the College's Lily Pond as the Library's golden clock tower rings out, the turtles splash into the water, the koi gulp, asking for snacks, and the birds sing overhead.



ARCHIVAL ASIDE Brooklyn College is part of the CUNY system and was opened in 1930. It was known as the "poor man's Harvard," providing an excellent education for working-class students and still ranking as a leading college for upward social mobility. Learn more about Brooklyn College's history through the Brooklyn College Library's Archives and Special Collections.

BING BONG

Let's get on the Q train and stop at Prospect Park for a ride on the Prospect Park Carousel! Once I get close, I can close my eyes and follow the sounds of the vintage Wurlitzer Organ cheerfully tingling out tunes.

Ding Ding

The carousel bell signals to riders that the ride is about to begin.



ARCHIVAL ASIDE If you've ever been curious about carousels, CarouselHistory.com has all the fun facts and includes 28 years of back issues of The Carousel News & Trader to browse for free! My mom also helped create carouselsofnyc.com with a map and information on all the carousels in NYC!

Bing Bong!

Let's ride on the 2 or 3 train to Wall Street for an Easter Egg Hunt at Trinity Church!

clang, clang, clang

The church bells ring! The annual Easter Egg Hunt at Trinity Church is open to anyone from the community. Hurry to get those eggs before the bell stops ringing, or they may all be gone!

i

ARCHIVAL ASIDE Bells have been ringing at Trinity Church since 1698. Thanks to the Trinity Ringers, the bells can still be heard throughout the Financial District. You can also sign up to learn how to be a Ringer!

Bing Bong!

Hickory,
Dickory,
Dock

Now on the 4 or 5 train to 59th Street and the Central Park Zoo!

After watching the penguins splash, we stop on the way to the petting zoo to hear the Delacorte Clock put on its dazzling show of spinning animals and clanging tunes.

i

ARCHIVAL ASIDE The Delacorte Clock is an NYC public monument; you can find more public monuments and art via the NYC Parks Public Art Map and Guide.

Bing Bong!

Back on the 4 train to Yankee Stadium!

Take me out to
the ball game...

I love to go to root, root, root for my home team, the Yankees! But I especially love the sounds of the music, chants, and, of course, Ed Alstrom playing the organ, which fills the stadium with joy.

i

ARCHIVAL ASIDE Curious about the New York Yankees' earliest days? You can visit the Yankee Museum in the stadium during games, and The New York Public Library has the Yankee baseball collection, 1913-1950, to view by appointment!

Bing

Bong!

Now onto the D train to 59th Street-Columbus Circle to head to the Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center!

Tink,
Tink,
Tink,

Ah—hear that? The Met's chimes have sounded, meaning the show is about to begin! Ever since I can remember, I've loved *The Magic Flute*. I try to keep up with the opera, doing my best to sing along to the arias of Papageno and The Queen of the Night.

Bing Bong!

What a day! We get on the 1 train and transfer back to the 2 or 3 train to get closer to home and go to the Stroud Playground in my neighborhood.

Tee Hee Hee,
Wheeeeeeee!

I meet with my friends, and the sound of children's glee fills the air!

clang, clang, clang

We play until the church bells at St. Teresa's ring, sounding the alarm that the day has come to an end. It's time to go home!



ARCHIVAL ASIDE Take a deep dive into the Metropolitan Opera's Archives or go next door to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts to view recordings of previous shows across New York City's theatre scene! (Just remember: after creating an account, you can watch each video only one time!)

Zzzzzz

Time to get some rest, because tomorrow I'll start Pre-K at P.S. 316 Elijah Stroud Elementary. The school bell will ring, welcoming me into a new world where I will start lifelong friendships and go on more adventures with other wonderful New Yorkers like me!



ARCHIVAL ASIDE New York City offers free, full-day Pre-K for every NYC resident child turning four years old. Make sure to sign up your New Yorker at MySchoolsNYC!

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How I Finally Get to Hunts Point



Xinan Helen Ran

Xinan creates scalable, research-driven installations and searches for the point where trauma, nihilism, and humor converge. Ranked "Highbrow and Brilliant" by the New York Magazine Approval Matrix, she is a MacDowell Fellow, a More Art Commission artist, and a NYSCA grant recipient with exhibitions nationally and internationally. Xinan is an arts educator, a set designer, and the Program Director of Franklin Furnace. xinanran.work

Part 1 [context]

I grew up following my dad through markets at the edges of town. Raised in the mountains of northern China, he is a man of strong instincts—and a lifelong affirmation that he was charged too much. In his twenties, he traded pine lumber and deer antler velvet used for medicine. In his thirties, after our family moved south, he began salvaging secondhand materials from construction markets to renovate and flip apartments. We once drove four hours to Danyang, where much of the world's eyewear is made, just to cut out the middleman—and to buy backup glasses for our backup glasses. I may have inherited from him the peculiar joy of memorizing supermarket prices, everywhere I go.

After more than a decade in Brooklyn, I have found markets of my own, each with a distinctly New York twist:



Refrigerated units in stages of packing and being unloaded. Photo by the author.

returned-product chaos at Sunset Park Unbox, heaps of unsorted textiles at FABSCRAP, random branded objects at Materials for the Arts, and houseplant bargains at Brooklyn Terminal Market. I often wonder whether the deal is worth the journey—though the experience usually feels more valuable than whatever I bring home.



Entering Hunts Point. Photo by the author.

At the height of the pandemic, when restaurants emptied, wholesalers quickly began selling directly to individuals. Stuck at home, with food at the center of my solitary life, I religiously followed *Eater's* articles on restaurant suppliers offering groceries to the public. The quantity and quality were remarkable, and the prices were often far lower than at local stores. I was finally rich in basil and shiitake mushrooms.

It was during this time that I caught a glimpse of how business was done the old-fashioned way: logging into a Google Doc for Hong's Seafood's massive, daily updated list of fresh catches. In fact, you can still order through that same document.

Part 2 [NYC]

Processing Fee: x 1	\$4.99
Tip x 1 \$5	\$5.00
 French Beans x 1 5 LB	\$16.00
 Shiitake Mushrooms x 1 3 LB	\$14.00
 Green Mango x 1 1 LB	\$5.50
 Shallots x 1 2 LB	\$4.00
 Baby Bok Choy x 1 2 LB	\$6.00
 Red Thai Chili Pepper x 1 1 LB	\$16.00
 Driscoll Raspberries x 2 1 CT	\$7.00
 Basil x 1 1 LB	\$11.00
Subtotal	\$89.49
Shipping	\$0.00
Taxes	\$0.00

My Pepper Pantry order during the pandemic. Screenshot by the author.

Part 3 [Hunts Point]

While working towards my Mandarin Project in the winter of 2025 (upcoming at Parent Company, January-March 2027), I attempted to find every single type of citrus that is being traded in NYC. This quest finally brought me to **The Hunts Point Food Distribution Center (FDC)**:

The Hunts Point Produce Market

(formerly the New York City Terminal Market) moved to Hunts Point in 1967 after operating in Manhattan for more than 150 years. It now sits on 103 acres of land and operates as a cooperative comprising approximately 25 merchants who transport fresh produce from 49 states and 55 foreign countries and distribute it to wholesalers, retailers, independent grocers, and restaurateurs throughout NYC and beyond.

The Hunts Point Cooperative Meat Market includes 52 companies employing 2,400 individuals on 60 acres of land and produces \$2 billion in annual revenue. It is primarily involved in the processing and distribution of meat and meat products in the Tri-State area, with customers consisting of large chain store supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, and country clubs, as well as independent butcher shops.

The Fulton Fish Market Cooperative is the largest fish market in the US, and the second largest in the world, after the Tsukiji Market in Japan. It has been open since 1822, originally operating at South Street Seaport in Manhattan before moving to Hunts Point in 2005. The Fish Market occupies about 36 acres, receives 2 million pounds of seafood every day, and generates \$1 billion in annual revenue.

In addition to these three cooperatives, the FDC is home to many other major food businesses – Citarella, Sultana Distributors, Baldor Foods, Anheuser Busch, Krasdale Foods, Meade Enterprises, and Chef's Warehouse. (Sheldon 2024)

For the next six months, as I walked around the city, visiting Hunts Point became an important side quest. As my research continued, more things began to make sense: how the Korean grocery chain KiCoPi—which includes shops like Mr. Kiwi, across from the Dunkin'/Checkers/Popeyes holy trinity at the Myrtle-Broadway JMZ stop—kept its outdoor produce affordable across Brooklyn, even inspiring fans to visit all thirteen locations through a tribute marathon; or how street vendors selling cheap, ripe fruit seemed to be the only ones able to undercut Trader Joe's across town.



Reddit • 3y ago

It's NYC so it's a lot of bullshit. Idiot drivers listen to the unloader and sit in front of busy intersections waiting to get offloaded. You have to pay to get in. They want you to leave immediately after. Don't and nothing happens. Go around and spend your 34 seeing nyc. They have a cafeteria that I only found out about before leaving. There's barely room to maneuver. All those trailers in the back have been there since Kenan and Kel. If you can actually find a parking space the mall cop will harass you to leave. Lock your truck and leave. He can't do shit.

There was virtually no information online about how an individual could visit Hunts Point Market without being a wholesaler. The logistical knowledge newcomers need was treated as trivial experience or common sense, and left under-documented by insiders. I read truck drivers' complaints on Reddit, which left me with a frightening impression of the market. I joined the Produce Pros Facebook group, where industry members proudly display their well-stocked fruits and vegetables, and DMed people who mentioned stocking from Hunts Point. I also searched Craigslist and online Yellow Pages for New York's Chinese community, hoping to hire a driver who would let me tag along. All was in vain.

Part 4 [The Trip]

I tried my local street fruit vendor once again. This time, I spent all the cash I had on me just as a sandy gust began blurring the street ahead of a massive storm. I held up my phone, showing the market's location on the map, to the vendor in the khaki utility vest.

"Do you get your fruit here?"

"Yes, this is where we go." He was trying to cover the mangoes with clear plastic.

"When do you usually go? Can I come with you? I can pay."

I pointed to the box truck parked behind the stand.

"Why? You can go yourself. Just go."

He did not have time for this conversation. The trees and street signs were shaking in the wind, and the summer sky had darkened into a winter afternoon.

"I don't have a license. Don't I need one, or a vendor account to be allowed in?"

"No. You just go. Pay the (entry) fee, buy what you want, and pay. You can go yourself."

"When do you go? At midnight? Early in the morning?"

"We usually go later in the evening, in a few hours. We're going today."

"Can I go with you?"

"You can go yourself. You don't need me."

How I Finally Get to Hunts Point | Xinan Helen Ran

That was the end of the one-sided, cyclical conversation. The rain began pouring down.

I walked away quickly and dictated a note on my phone: "They go between six and eight and they don't really go in the morning because the market is not selling in the morning the best time they go is in the evening they don't



Apple display. Photo by the author.

know when they close in the evening. They not only go to Hunts Point but they also go to some other places before and they don't really want to take me there. I need drivers to get in and five dollars. It sounds like you can do transactions in cash."

"Much easier than applying for a wholesaler licence."

I assured myself. I went two weeks later with no further preparation.

Three of us finally made the trip: artist Gabriel Baribeau drove, and Simi, my fellow Search & Discovery teammate, joined us quickly. We arrived at the gate at nine on a Sunday night, paid five dollars each, and drove through the gate sandwiched between bigger, longer trucks. By the end of the evening, we had walked through most of the complex, located two of its three cafeterias, and brought back eight boxes of figs. I will leave the rest undescribed.

This is a story about hunting, and ultimately reaching, Hunts Point, where the market eventually became a real place filled with helpful people busy doing their work. What we learned, smelled, and saw there will remain unshared until you make your own trip. After six months of circling its virtual image, I arrived at the final lesson, and it is embarrassingly simple: sometimes you just have to go.

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Sentimental Business

Simi Best

*Simi Best is a
librarian and archivist.*

I don't remember where I
heard the words first, an object
signifying days gone by, the
wistful stuff of struggle meals,
lunch hours, first visits to the city.

Cream cheese sandwich with nuts on date-nut bread

Cream cheese and nut sandwich

Nutty cheese sandwich

Datenut bread and creamed cheese

Nutted cheese

Cream-cheese-and-date nut bread sandwich

Cream cheese on date-nut bread

But I would bet it first permeated my mind
and took shape as a memory through the
nostalgic recollections of the poets and New
York writers I'd been reading for years.

book, and he'd be back to yell at me after lunch. I ate my 35¢ cream-cheese sandwich at Chock Full o' Nuts, then phoned the office manager to say I had just quit. That week-end I composed a letter of resignation, enumerating my boss's flaws of character and ending with: "I know you don't care what happens to your employees after five o'clock, but I found that I felt so dead and dispirited after a day in your office that I couldn't even read a newspaper, much less work on my novel — and I've come to the conclusion that even if you paid me \$100 a week, it couldn't compensate for that."

*Figure 1: Joyce Johnson, Minor Characters
(Houghton Mifflin, 1983), 206.*

year, at Christmas. We had a set of ritual stops that strikes me now, knowing the city better, as a funny, oddball itinerary. We always went to Ohrbach's basement (Macy's being more than we could handle). We always hit a shop uptown that sold nothing but buttons, not so much because we needed buttons, I see now, as because we found there another basic element of the New York shopping experience: specialization. We ate date-nut-and-cream-cheese sandwiches at Chock Full O'Nuts. We rode buses and subways, never cabs. I remember affecting a blank, bored expression as we rattled uptown, staring out the windows of the Fifth Avenue bus, hanging onto my mother's purse strap

Figure 2: Joyce Maynard, "A Mother Introduces the City," The New York Times Magazine, November 4, 1984.

Eating a sandwich in Chock Full o' Nuts was about as close as you could come to eating it on the run in the street. One sat surrounded by strangers, all intent on their food and their *New York Times* or *New York Post*. The counters were arranged in rows, and the picture windows made the city outside at least as vivid a presence as any in the room, with the possible exception of the air-conditioning. The place was kept very cool. Entering through the revolving door, one knew instantly, and with genuine relief, that one had escaped the heat. And yet by the end of the brief meal, one almost looked forward to going back outside, to being enveloped by the heat again.

Figure 3: Aram Saroyan, Friends in the World: The Education of a Writer (Coffee House Press, 1992), 4.

Two franchised locations of Chock full o'Nuts remain in New York City, both in Midwood, Brooklyn, on Avenue J and Avenue M.



Figure 4: Sign outside 1508 Avenue J, 2026. Photo by the author.

Once they were ubiquitous. Now they're novelties.

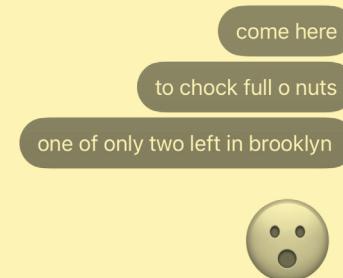


Figure 5: Text messages sent by the author, January 4, 2022.

For the past five years I've been visiting both locations occasionally.



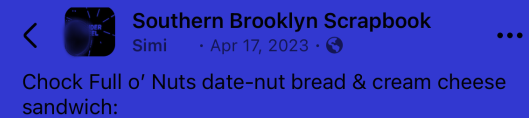
Figure 6: Hand-painted sign outside 1611 Avenue M, 2026. Photo by the author.

You guys have the cream cheese sandwich today? “No, no, not today.” We’re both choosing to let me believe it might be back tomorrow. No worries, just a small coffee with milk, please.



Figure 7: Menu at 1508 Avenue J, 2026. Photo by the author.

I started asking older people what they remembered. Did they know where I could get my hands on a nutted cheese?

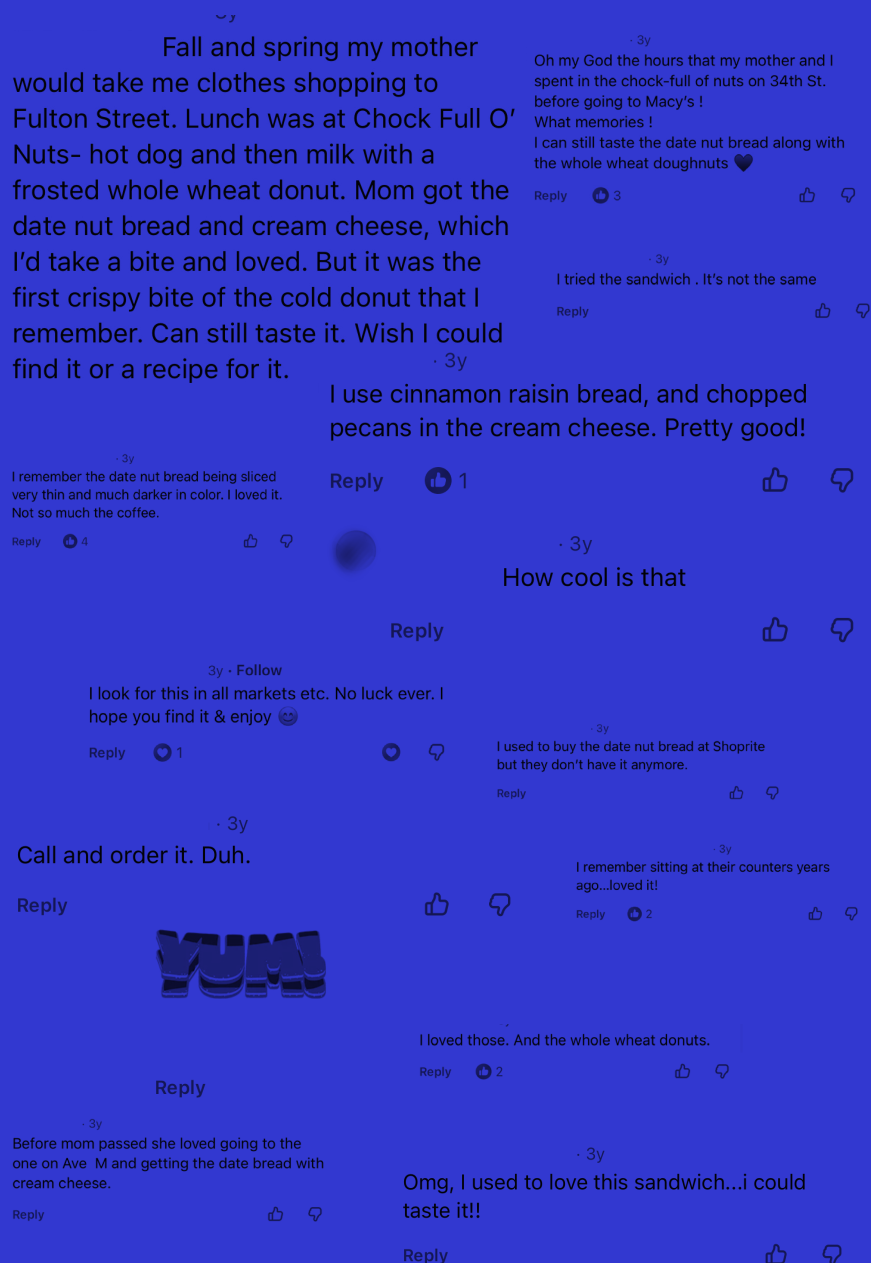


Help! There are two remaining Chock Full o' Nuts locations in Brooklyn — both in Midwood, Ave J and Ave M — and I'm looking for a date-nut bread and cream cheese sandwich like they used to make. If I recall correctly it's listed on their menus (at least at the Ave J location) but they've never had any of the bread when I've been by. Does anyone know if this is something they ever even make anymore, and if not, if there's anywhere to get the closest thing?

Figure 8: Post by the author, Facebook, April 17, 2023. Screenshot by the author, 2026.

Online, I was met with yearning.

Sentimental Business | Simi Best



Figures 9-22: Replies to query by the author, Facebook, 2023. Screenshots by the author, 2026.

It's not exactly a home-cooked meal,
but it might be home.

lmgabeacspk

walks into [favorite deli](#) or [bodega](#) Lmgabeacspk

Figure 23: "lmgabeacspk" entry, Urban Dictionary. The sweet sound of New York City.

As soon as I sat down, he said he was sending out for sandwiches from Chock Full O' Nuts, and, turning to his typewriter, asked me what I would like. After several lunches with him at the Algonquin, I had finally found a dish I liked that was easy to eat in his presence—corned-beef hash. But I had no idea what sandwich to have, so I was determined not to order before he did. I asked him what he was going to have.

"Cream cheese on date-nut bread, and some coffee," he said.

"I'll have the same," I said, wondering what date-nut bread could be.

"Anything to go with it?" he asked after typing our order.

"No," I said, and he typed, "No garnishes."

Figure 24: Ved Mehta, Remembering Mr. Shawn's New Yorker: The Invisible Art of Editing (The Overlook Press, 1998), 130.

A few years ago I spent time living outside the tri-state area for the first time in my life.

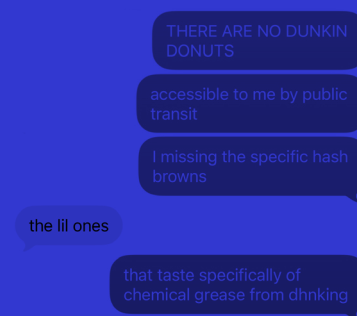


Figure 25: Text messages sent by the author, September 26, 2023.

I think I can understand how destabilizing it is when something that's always been there is gone.

Jeannette Paladino's voice changes when she talks about the sandwiches of cream cheese on date-nut bread that she ordered daily at Chock Full o'Nuts in the 1960's. "I still think about them," said Ms. Paladino, a marketing and communications consultant, "and I still get an urge for one."

Figure 26: Enid Nemy, "Bygone Food, Chock Full o' Memories," The New York Times, April 8, 1992.

But sometimes, you can go home again.



Figure 27: Dunkin' Donuts hashbrowns, 2026. Photos by the author.

I like to frame a free day in the city with a search for something lost but remembered. The dish my friend ate growing up across the world, the fruit I saw pictured in medieval tapestries, the soda I tried once on vacation.



Figure 28: A handful of unripe medlars, 2025. Photo by the author.

It's a comfort to live in New York, where lost things can usually be found.

The diner I worked at in high school had a thick spiral-bound menu full of pictures of beautiful food completely unlike the plates I balanced on my arms. Who cooked that food, who clipped those photos?



Figure 29: Brooklyn deli, 2026. Photo by the author.

Along with the juices and milkshakes, the diner menu promised egg creams. In the years I worked there, the only person who ever ordered one was my dad, once or twice.

The scaffolding of the city is so much a part of us that we barely notice it's there til it's gone.



Figure 30: Church Avenue, Brooklyn, 2026. Photo by the author.

In 1957, the day the Dodgers traded him to the Giants, Jackie Robinson secretly signed a contract to become an executive at Chock full o'Nuts. At the time, the company's workforce was more than 75% Black (*Lanctot 2011, 356*).



Figure 31: Still from an episode of "Biography" featuring Jackie Robinson, 1963. fair use.

Look magazine broke the story that Robinson would be retiring from baseball, prompting anger from some in the sports world who perceived his exit as cold and abrupt.

Dodgers. Young was more upset that Robinson, in his *Look* press conference of January 6, had criticized baseball for lacking sentiment. Rallying to the defense of the national pastime, Young argued,

So Robinson should have quit, which certainly is his privilege, without smearing the game that has earned him \$500,000 in ten years. Baseball has as much sentiment as any business he can name, much more than the cream cheese sandwich business, for one.²³

Figure 32: Ron Briley, “‘Do Not Go Gently Into That Good Night’: Race, the Baseball Establishment, and the Retirements of Bob Feller and Jackie Robinson,” in Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports, and the American Dream, ed. Joseph Dorinson and Joram Warmund (M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 200.

When Chock employees were fired for organizing in the 1960s, Robinson, the Vice President of Personnel, was excluded from the decision. His contract was not renewed (*White 2026*).

the sparkling glasses and silverware. Throngs of people with heads bowed as Father Divine gave the blessing. When Big Boy had put down the bat and put on a bow tie to work on Colonel Black's plantation, Chock Full O' Nuts, he'd once been invited to the estate for a picnic, along with relatives who'd come north on the Dixie Maid "express" and wound up behind the Chock Full counters after years of standing on the corner designated by the Dixie Maid agency for white folks to look them over and maybe give them a job, for which the agency got cash and they got old clothes. The colonel's spread, for all his fanfare, couldn't hold a candle to Father's banquets.

Figure 33: Toni Cade Bambara, Those Bones Are Not My Child (Pantheon Books, 2000), 431.

More than memory, more than metaphor, a sandwich might provide the structure of our days.

TORTS / 251

“fit for human consumption”? What about a walnut shell in a Chock Full o’ Nuts “nuttet cheese” sandwich? When Marjorie Stark broke her tooth on one, could she recover? A difficult question. Is a walnut shell “foreign” matter? A New York appellate court adopted the so-called “reasonable expectation” doctrine, according to which a person can recover for a breach of the implied warranty of fitness if it is found that the natural substance was not to be reasonably anticipated in the food, as served. \$575 for Marjorie.

Figure 34: Roy Cohn, How to Stand Up for Your Rights—and Win! (Simon & Schuster, 1981), 251. Cohn himself was well-known to dine at Chock. (“In a Neutral Corner; Roy Marcus Cohn,” 1960.)

On Avenue M, a piece of white duct tape covers a few words of the menu.

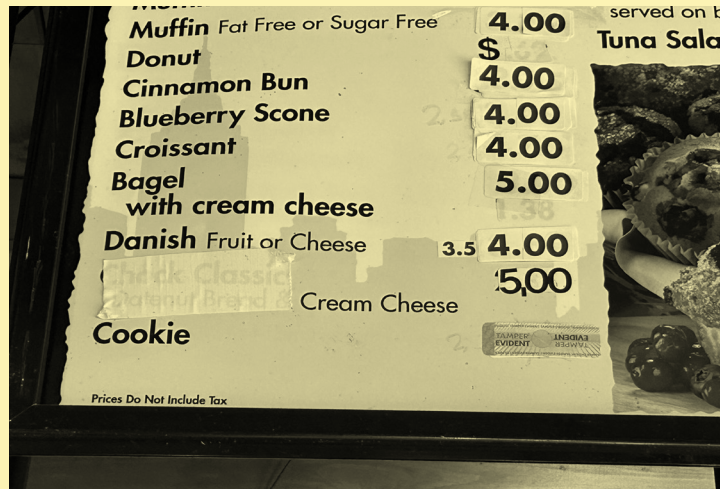
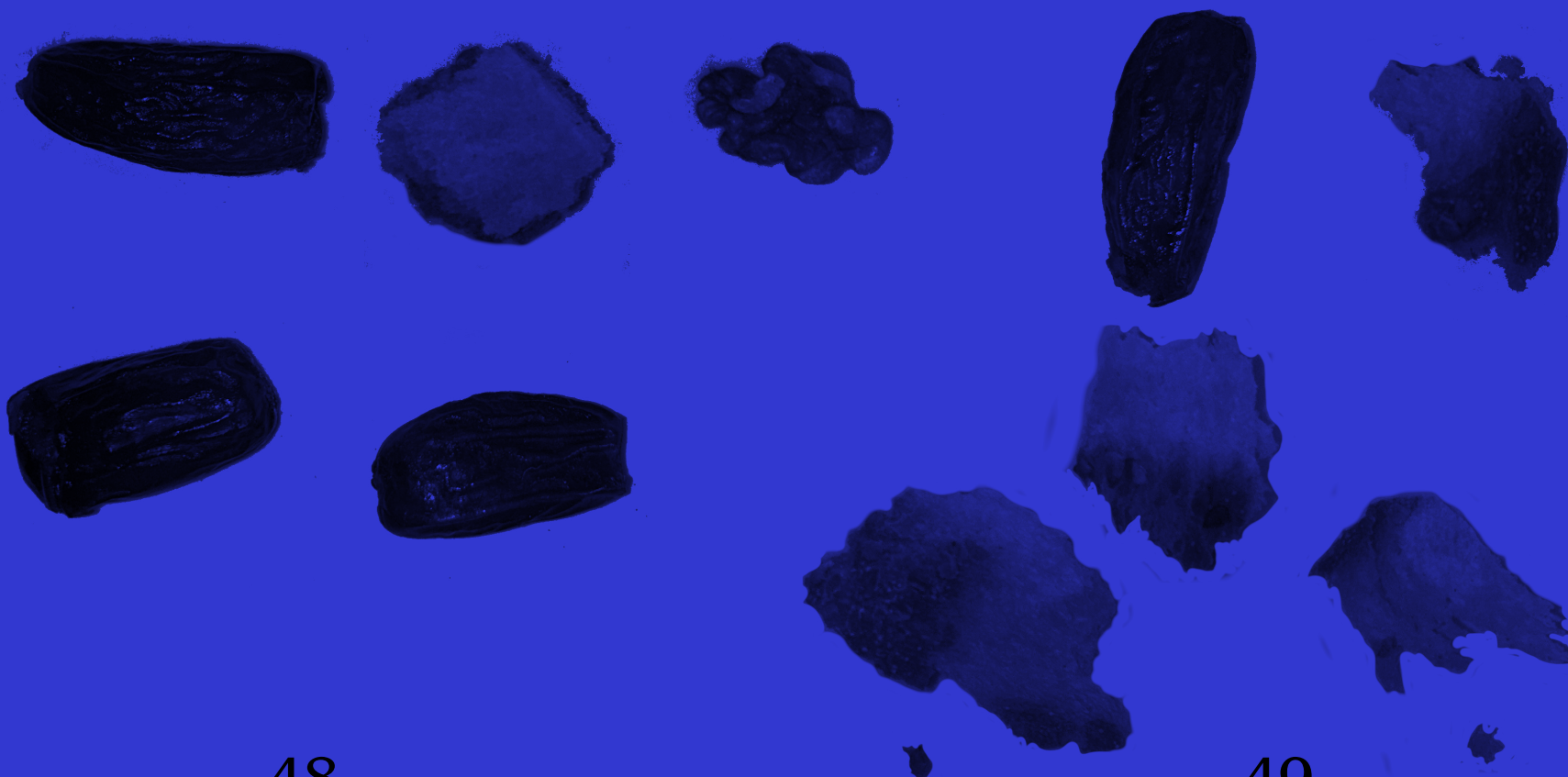
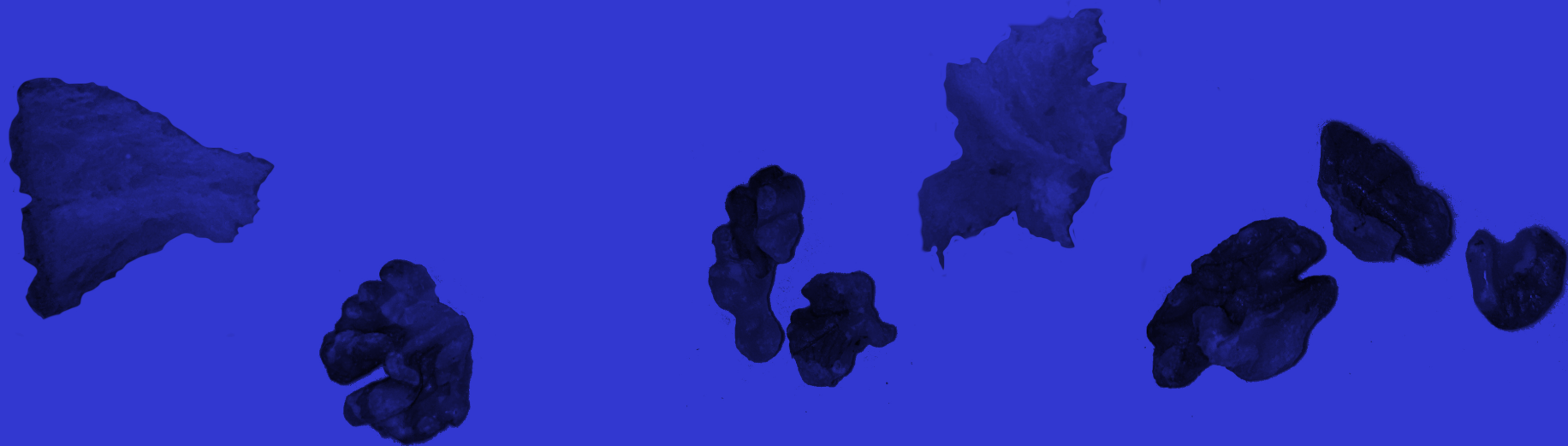


Figure 35: The menu at 1611 Avenue M, 2026. Can you read what's written underneath the tape? Photo by the author.

A paper with images of various pastries is taped onto the corner of another menu board.



Figure 36: Menu at 1611 Avenue M, 2026. Photo by the author.



48

49

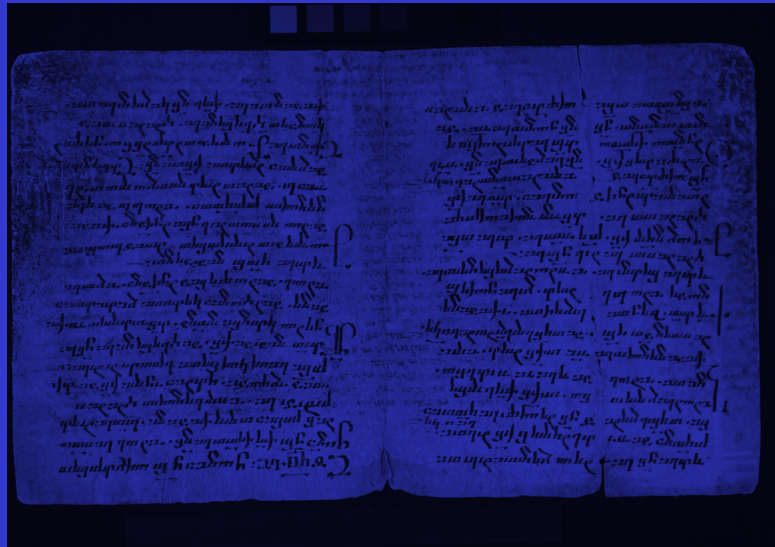


Figure 38: Page from the HMML Palimpsest, multispectral imaging showing two layers of early Syriac (6th- and 8th-century) undertext and 10th-century Georgian upper text. Collection of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Ms. Frag. 32 (HMML 00654), 448G-012.

The owner climbs onto a chair and peels the tape up to show me what's underneath.



Figure 37: Owner of Chock full o'Nuts Avenue M location reveals what's hiding beneath the posted menu, 2026. Photo by the author.

The cafe is around the corner from Edward R. Murrow High School. It's busiest in the mornings and afternoons, packed with kids wearing huge backpacks and ordering sugary drinks.



Figure 39: Posters at 1611 Avenue M, 2026. Photo by the author.

The owner tells me I'm not the only one to ask after the Chock Classic recently. He's happy to tell me he's found a new baker. It'll be back on the menu by the start of the new school year.

NYC Public Schools (NYCPS)

School Year Calendar 2026–2027



Date	Weekday	Event
September 10	Thursday	First day of school

Figure 40: NYCPS School Year Calendar 2026-2027.

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How to look inside one's body

Caiti Borruso

Caiti Borruso is a writer and photographer currently based in Boston, Massachusetts. She holds an MFA in Image and Text from Ithaca College and writes a monthly column about the Picture Collection at the New York Public Library.



*Figure 1: Photographs by the author.
New York City, NY. April 15, 2026.*

On April 15th, our Search & Discovery cohort went to the New York Academy of Medicine's Drs. Barry and Bobbi Collier Rare Book Reading Room. Arlene Shaner, the Historical Collections Reference Librarian, guided us through eight books and two artifacts; we looked inside the bodies of the books, which were themselves books of bodies—illustrations and diagrams and paper models of human beings and their insides. The books Arlene showed us were very old, from times before we could look inside the living body without cutting it open. In some sense libraries and archives are also bodies, containers that hold. There was a tenderness and carefulness with which Arlene handled the books, using a small metal spatula to lead us deeper into the gatefolds and cutouts, their lacy layers of organs and bodily systems. She handled the books with more care than the medical system has handled my body. I felt deep jealousy and understanding; I, too, have handled books with more care than my own body.

Fifty blocks south and years prior, surgeons handled my mother's nose with precision, removing small layers of the skin on her nostril to find the edges of the basal cell carcinoma residing there. Her team had planned on one outpatient surgery, but as they cut, they found that the cancerous cells had skipped across layers like a rock flung across a lake, which was abnormal. She was awake for the surgery, coming out to wait with me periodically as they sent another slice of her to pathology. Mohs surgery is often used to spare healthy tissue in areas of the body that can't experience radiation. The results from her initial surgery necessitated thirty-six more procedures to extricate the cancer, rebuild her nose and reestablish blood supply to the area, and make her look human. She had a flap of skin from her forehead stitched to the empty part of her nose, and for a few months she looked like there was a handle to her, a way to move her around the world — if she would ever let anyone close enough to try.

The longest image of my own life was a test I endured over the course of two hours, alone in a basement while the camera watched for signs of activity in my gallbladder. I was not to move for the length of the image, and in this way it was like early photographic portraits, which required that subjects be propped up to maintain stillness. I maintained stillness. At the hour mark, a nurse pushed a trace amount of morphine into the IV to stimulate activity in my gallbladder: instant pain. The test was considered *nuclear* medicine, and the whole day I kept repeating nuclear softly to myself. One of the only pictures I took was of the CAUTION: RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS sign, with my feet tucked under a blanket, and another of my blanketed feet on the gurney in an elevator. I cannot interpret most of the images of my body. They are all black and white, which I prefer. And if I move my fingers on the trackpad I can watch myself breathe, or watch the tracer dye zoom around my insides and remember the warmth I felt when the image was created.

Following page, Figure 2, from left to right: Photograph by the author. New York City, NY. April 15, 2026; Image from the NYPL Picture Collection, filed under "Medical – Tests." Credited to the International Press Service; Abdominal CT scan of the author's body. San Diego, CA. 4:42 AM, July 3, 2025; Photograph by the author. New York City, NY. April 15, 2026. Credited to the International Press Service. April 15, 2026.



How to look inside one's body | Caiti Borruso

I saw an acupuncturist in New York twice, up a flight of metal stairs above a bakery in Chinatown. The whole place felt red to me: the red gingham of the massage room's curtain, the glow of the heater she aimed directly at my abdomen, the small sparks of blood at the needles. Her technique was unlike that of previous acupuncturists I'd visited: she palpated my stomach, pressed hard on distal points that incited pain, and then needled the stomach—a method known as Kiiko Matsumoto Style. I lie there with a ring of needles around my belly button, a ring of needles around a ring of scar tissue around a place where I'd been turned inside out, the gallbladder emerging and then, again, sent off for inspection.

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Ivory anatomical manikin set from the Jerome P. Webster Collection (ca. 1680): 5.5 x 10.5 x 3.5 inch wooden box contains two ivory manikins, one of a man and one of a woman, each 6.5 inches long, lying on couches with ivory pillows.

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Figure 3: Book and hand photographs by the author. New York City, NY. April 15, 2026; MRI with contrast of the author's body. San Diego, CA. 5:22 AM, June 13, 2025; Image frame from the NYPL Picture Collection, filed under "Medical – Tests." Credited to the International Press Service.

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sensing

Colophon
DGM Saffron
Rosette
Bogart

Edition of 200
Printed on 70lb Lettermark Text,
65lb Astrobrights Cover, 60lb
Astrobrights Text and 27lb Vellum.

Risoprinted and handbound set
of four zines.

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search & discovery