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 **Spin Art**

Brenda Miller

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Spin Art

Brenda Miller (bio)

I'm spinning in a circle—five years old—in the backyard of that Amestoy Avenue house. Alone, save for the eucalyptus trees, still young and thin, watching in their soldierly line, and the orange trees, the grapefruit. The

walnut tree too, with its fuzzy covered fruits. I'm spinning and spinning, arms flung out wide, feet in dirty red Keds, the lawn dry and almost green.

Anything that spins has, paradoxically, at its core, something quite still. Something spinning whirls in on itself, but at the same time shoots energy outward. A spinning thing—like a *dreidl*—never knows where it will land. It must acquiesce to the force of orbit. A spinning thing is isolated and connected at once.

I'm spinning and thinking of the carnival at the synagogue, walking among the games of chance until I arrive at the Spin Art machine. All the colors aligned in squeeze bottles like ketchup, while the canvas spins on its peg, so fast it's only a blur, and your job is all timing and finesse: knowing when to squirt in a bit of red, a glob of yellow. The machine itself has no intention; it's all action, all centrifugal force. "Centrifugal," I learn years later, means *to flee the center*, and that's what these colors do once thrown into the mix. **[End Page 71]**

My job is patience. My job is quiet. My job is to go into the center of it without flinching, holding a color in each hand, waiting for the art to arrive. You can't see it while it's still spinning, the art hidden within motion. It will surprise or disappoint; you can't know ahead of time. Spin art is all about the unexpected. About what will be revealed once the spinning stops. Your own blueprint of the universe.

I'm spinning, and any minute now I'm going to fall down laughing, though there's no one to share the joke. But I know someone might be watching: my mother behind the sliding glass door, perhaps, or even from the kitchen, where surely she can't see me but can watch me nonetheless. Or something else—as invisible as my mother and as present—that keeps me always in sight, a force that nudges beauty out of chaos.

I'll fall down, laughing, and for a moment feel the way the eucalyptus must feel always: how movement never ceases. I'll hear the laughter of

other children nearby; they're close and yet so far. All I have to do is open the gate to join them.

Any two objects that pass one another will naturally begin to spin. Here, at the Grateful Dead show, you've become a physics experiment, your body gaining momentum from each body you encounter. Bodies thin and dry; bodies heavy and damp. Half-naked bodies and bodies swathed in scarves. Bodies that have flown off their handles—arms wild, bodies unnaturally arced.

You're all spinning off one another, flinging off layers like a tire on the highway losing its tread: big hard pieces littering the road, hazardous, until you're down to bare rubber and flying. Those Sufi whirling dervishes know the most direct way in to God is via a circle—you can't get there in a straight line, as the crow flies. All this spinning shears off the crust that keeps you separate from each other, and now you're all merging until the music stops.

But even then you keep spinning, out the door to the bathroom, where all those bodies that seemed so beautiful on the dance floor now look bedraggled in the fluorescent light: lips chapped, feet filthy, pupils too dark in pale faces, skin clammy. You catch a sideways glimpse **[End Page 72]** of yourself in the mirror: thin, gaunt, your hair in strings along your face—so all the treads start reattaching themselves, patching you up, re-armoring, until someone pulls you from the mirror, says gently, *don't look too long, man*. You spin back out into the crowd that's circling the stadium, a surge, and you...

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Spin Art, kotler defines it as: continuity the artistic process is available.
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