

May 13, 2021

Dear Maira:

We have never met but I know your story: From your books, from your paintings and illustrations, from the videos of you on youtube, and from interviews I have listened to on the radio. How I came to know your story is because a graphic designer I worked with at Apple Computer in 1987 brought your book "Stay Up Late" to work to show me your illustration style. She was also a fan of Tibor and M&Co., like most of the designers who plied their trade on the Apple campus in Cupertino.



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I was not a graphic designer. I did not study at Art Center in Pasadena or Yale or the California School of the Arts. I did not know Paul Rand from Milton Glaser or Saul Bass from Tibor Kalman. But I was learning, and falling in love with design. And I absolutely adored "Stay Up Late" and immediately went to the bookstore in Palo Alto and bought a copy.

I studied writing and literature and served as the editor of the campus magazine. So I did know how to create a page layout, typeset the text, work with illustrators and photographers, use a dark room, paste-up the elements, and prepare the art boards for the printer. I can now do all those tasks on a computer using a page layout program and an internet connection.

But I digress.

"Stay Up Late" led to "Hey Willie, See the Pyramids" which led to "Sayonara, Mrs. Kackleman" which led to "Max Makes a Million" which led to more books I would give away to people who did not know your work. How is it possible you do not know the work of Maira Kalman my not-meaning-to-be-snobby brain would think. A girl I once mentored went to Brown University. In 2014 she gave a presentation on Maira Kalman in her art class. Not one student knew her work. Not even the professor knew her work! Did no one

read *The New Yorker* or the *New York Times*? Did no one watch TED Talks? Did no one browse bookstores or visit a library and peruse the K bin in the children's section? But, then, how do we come to know the art and literature and music and movies and theater that we do? I knew nothing of the world of art or literature or music or movies or theater until I went to college and took classes that introduced me to those worlds. And they are worlds, cultures with their unique adherents, unique mores, and unique languages and histories. But I always felt the outsider. But not with you.

Your art makes me feel free, free to laugh and cry and sing from rooftops; free to jump and dance and fall in love every day; free to read Proust and Stein and Woolf and talk about reading Proust and Stein and Woolf; free to contemplate the principles of uncertainty and the meaning of the pursuit of happiness; free to see the vibrancy of color, the art of objects, and the design of everything; free to eat cake, parse sentences and celebrate the ordinary and extraordinary; free to love someone's work and imagine being their friend (Oh Jane! Oh Ruth!); free to look at Lincoln and experience awe, but also to experience grief and find solace in a world filled with love and joy and Lincoln and dogs and trees and hats and grilled cheese sandwiches and broken chairs and extinct dodo birds and pleated green skirts and Toscanini's pants and Matisse and Mozart and

And Maira.



Thank you.