

Published *New York Times Metropolitan Diary*:

April 3, 1985

DEAR DIARY: The balloon was sitting on the corner, waiting for us. It was spring green. It looked firm and happy. Because it was 7:30 Sunday morning and not another person was to be seen either on Broadway or Spring, we knew it was our balloon. Sally picked it up, held it for a moment, then gave it the gentlest of taps. Our balloon, catching a current of air, flew up two stories, paused to look in a window, and then floated back toward Sally's arms. Just as she reached out to enfold it, our balloon caught another updraft and, again soaring upward, found its sense of direction, like a bird heading north for spring, and flew away, out over the intersection.

It hit ground in the middle of Broadway and Spring, bounded almost to its original height and then headed west on Spring. We held our breaths as, part way down the block, a maroon van, followed by an old Chevy, headed directly for our balloon. Just as it seemed the van would crush it, our balloon, with city endurance, skipped to the sidewalk and continued on like a proper pedestrian. With a laugh and a hug, we headed east on Spring, hoping that some other New Yorkers would be lifted by finding their own balloon, would laugh though they, too, had a March cold and would know that, despite all other signs, gray would give way to spring green.

May 21, 1986

DEAR DIARY: Last Sunday, I took the subway to Union Square. Getting off the No. 6 IRT train in the middle of the uptown platform, I went up a stairway marked "Exit Only." A set of revolving bars led me into a Twilight Zone corridor, for directly ahead were two doors, shiny aluminum and frosted glass. Above them a sign announced "S. KLEIN" in large, clear Roman print and "Entrance" in smaller script. The sign was blue metal, a shade once called S. Klein blue. One door was ajar - an invitation, perhaps, to step in and shop?

Someone jostled me; the spell was broken. I turned and went up the stairs - into the open, out on the street. The next day I returned to Union Square, curious about the doors, eager for yesterday's enchantment. It was not to be. The glass in one door was shattered, revealing a plywood board. Through a crack I could see the builder's crane that stood in the hole that had been S. Klein on the Square.

September 16, 1987

DEAR DIARY: The cab flies up the Avenue of the Americas. The city seems to croon like the great Billie Holiday, "No regrets because somebody looks good to you. No regrets no matter what you say or do."

I had signed the movers' papers at 6:30 P.M. The empty apartment echoed. Why not try to get the 7:05 at Penn Station? By the time I check the closets, close my bag, leave the keys with the super and get to the corner of the Avenue of the Americas and Prince, it is 6:48. At 6:50 I get a cab. And for 35 blocks, right up to 31st Street, we never

stop, not a single red light, not even at 23rd.

How long had it taken me to become a New Yorker? Months to find the right place to live. Years before Mr. Dapolito called hello from the bakery and Mrs. Gazzoli waved from her window. Yet today, when I would welcome a traffic jam that would make me miss the train and give me one more dinner in the city, not even a red light slows our race up the avenue.

We go left onto 31st and cross Seventh in only one light. No Knicks game or Madonna concert ties up traffic. At 7, I'm out of the cab, down the stairs and through the sweltering Penn Station. I've made it. Made what? As the train picks up speed in the tunnel, the tracks sing: "I know our love will linger when the other love forgets. So I'll say goodbye with no regrets."