

STORIES

*The Princess  
of Herself*



ROBERTA ALLEN

*The Princess of Herself* by Roberta Allen

ISBN-10: 1-938349-70-9

ISBN-13: 978-1-938349-70-6

eISBN-13: 978-1-938349-71-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017939950

Copyright © 2017 Roberta Allen

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Layout and book design by Roberta Allen and Mark Givens

Artwork by Roberta Allen

First Pelekinesis printing 2017

For information:

Pelekinesis, 112 Harvard Ave #65, Claremont, CA 91711

USA



[www.pelekinesis.com](http://www.pelekinesis.com)

PRAISE FOR  
THE PRINCESS OF HERSELF

“I love this book. The writer is always visible as one of the characters, trying to sort out reality and memory. She keeps collapsing her own life into her stories and in doing so creates a wonderful picture of the way our minds actually work. Everything merges and the act of writing and remembering is the real subject here.”

—Laurie Anderson

“Roberta Allen’s sharp, jarring stories are bitingly honest and funny as hell. These sixty-ish characters grapple with messy pasts, simmering rivalries, and longings both sexual and transcendent. Rarely has anyone written so frankly about aging, and the ways we create our own past.”

—Dawn Raffel, author of *The Secret Life of Objects*

PRAISE FOR ROBERTA  
ALLEN'S PREVIOUS BOOKS

“Her stories intimately convey the spiritual malaise of people at odds with... their own deeply shrouded impulses.”

—The New York Times Book Review

“Allen’s gift is for showing how things go sour between people unexpectedly.”

—Gary Indiana

“Roberta Allen transmits the pain and compensating strangeness of living in vignettes as urgent and enigmatic as telegrams.”

—John Ashbery

“In these short, often poignant fictions that disclose an adumbrated ‘self,’ otherness becomes the measure of life — the unexpected.”

—Walter Abish

“Allen is also a visual artist of some renown, as one might guess from her painterly style, which delivers a slashing detail here, a dab of color there, and an economy of line that is frequently wondrous.”

—Steve Almond

“Snapshots of the ineffable. Roberta Allen manages to tell with the language of subtlety the most poignant of stories.”

—Luisa Valenzuela

“Roberta Allen writes like a latter-day Boccaccio.”

—Library Journal

# Every Man's Nightmare

After listening to her obsess for an hour on my speaker phone, my ex-boyfriend called her “every man’s nightmare.” I don’t remember exactly what she said, only her hysterical voice as she spoke about the man she’d gone out with the evening before, a man she *liked* who, in the moment of trying to kiss her goodnight, unleashed every demon she

normally drowned in red wine, but, evidently, she hadn't had enough red wine to drink, or maybe there wasn't enough red wine in all the liquor stores combined in the county to drown the fear his attempted kiss let loose, which made her tell him, probably with the same breathless rush of words I was hearing on the phone, that another woman they both knew was much better suited to him than she would ever be, and that she'd be happy to give him her number since she was incapable of having an intimate relationship or, for that matter, a casual relationship with him or anyone else, so sure was she that she'd wind up ruining everything, which is exactly what she did, without even having, what could have been for someone else, the sweetness of a kiss.



112 Harvard Ave #65  
Claremont, CA 91711 USA

[pelekinesis@gmail.com](mailto:pelekinesis@gmail.com)  
[www.pelekinesis.com](http://www.pelekinesis.com)

Pelekinesis titles are available through Small Press  
Distribution, Baker & Taylor, Ingram, Bertrams,  
and directly from the publisher's website.