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Sunny's Nights: Lost and Found at a Bar on the Edge of the World

Tim Sultan

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Imagine that Alice had walked into a bar instead of falling down the rabbit hole. In the tradition of J. R. Moehringer's *The Tender Bar* and the classic reportage of Joseph Mitchell, here is an indelible portrait of what is quite possibly the greatest bar in the world—and the mercurial, magnificent man behind it.

The first time he saw Sunny's Bar, in 1995, Tim Sultan was lost, thirsty for a drink, and intrigued by the single bar sign among the forlorn warehouses lining the Brooklyn waterfront. Inside, he found a dimly lit room crammed with maritime artifacts, a dozen well-seasoned drinkers, and, strangely, a projector playing a classic Martha Graham dance performance. Sultan knew he had stumbled upon someplace special. What he didn't know was that he had just found his new home.

Soon enough, Sultan has quit his office job to bartend full-time for Sunny Balzano, the bar's owner. A wild-haired Tony Bennett lookalike with a fondness for quoting Shakespeare and Samuel Beckett, Sunny is truly one of a kind. Born next to the saloon that has been in his family for one hundred years, Sunny has over the years partied with Andy Warhol, spent time in India at the feet of a guru, and painted abstract expressionist originals. But his masterpiece is the bar itself, a place where a sublime mix of artists, mobsters, honky-tonk musicians, neighborhood drunks, nuns, longshoremen, and assorted eccentrics rub elbows. Set against the backdrop of a rapidly transforming city, *Sunny's Nights* is a loving and singular portrait of the dream experience we're all searching for every time we walk into a bar, and an enchanting memoir of an unlikely and abiding friendship.

Praise for *Sunny's Nights*

"Fantastic . . . [Sultan takes] material that might seem familiar and [mixes] a perfect, insightful cocktail: full-bodied, multitextured and delicious. . . . Simply beautiful."***—The New York Times Book Review***

"Sultan's love of Red Hook shines through, and it's hard not to be swept along on the ebb and flow of his emotions. . . . Sultan's book is, among other things, a meditation on the fragility of the moment and the passage of time. . . . Wistful, funny and biting, *Sunny's Nights* rewards you with its evocation of a certain place in time and, as Sultan calls him, 'the most original man I have ever met.'"***—Newsday***

"An affectionate portrait of the idiosyncratic Sunny's Bar."***—USA Today***

"Sultan finds Sunny . . . a real character, a poet, a cinephile, a philosopher, bluegrass maestro and (Rheingold) beer server."***—New York Post*** **("Required Reading")**

"Captivating . . . a classic story about a local bar."***—The Buffalo News***

"An enchanting memoir, a profound meditation on place and a beautiful story of an unlikely and abiding friendship."***—Brooklyn Daily Eagle***

“[A] polished, affecting look at remarkable barkeep Sunny Balzano . . . In elegant prose, Sultan deploys laconic humor, an instinct for telling details, a taste for eccentricity, and above all, clear-eyed compassion for our all-too-human failings.”**—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)**

“Beautifully wrought . . . an indelible portrait of an unusual man and a nearly forgotten part of NYC.”**—*Booklist***

“More than an elegy for a bar and a neighborhood—it’s also a vivid and loving portrait of the larger-than-life eccentric who gave the bar its name and its spirit.”**—Tom Perrotta, author of *The Leftovers***

From the Hardcover edition.

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