

THE KITCHEN

CENTER FOR
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Dance Briefs

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TIM MILLER'S COST OF LIVING. THE KITCHEN, APRIL 20.

Cost of Living is an evening-length work about flying, suicide, and perseverance. It is the second of Miller's works I've seen. The first was *Survival Tactic*, and it has something to do with hamburgers and lawn mowers. Miller mowed the wooden floor of The Kitchen and cooked and ate a hamburger, parts of which had been scraped up off the floor. I left the theater feeling disgusted and a bit queasy. Now that I've seen *Cost of Living*, I'm convinced that my reaction the first time was just what Miller would have wanted.

Cost of Living has three major components, which become entwined and interrelated in a way that seemed perfectly logical during Miller's performance, but which defies logic and description now. I guess Miller's work must be seen in order to make sense.

The three components: All the performers took part in a parachute jump before the production was staged; Miller carried around a letter about a young man who had committed suicide for 10 years—it helped him *not* to do it; Miller sent out a Survey of Human Happiness, the results of which were revealed during the performance.

To summarize: People die; people are born; some things are "really important"; people run by with suitcases; a man runs by with a gigantic key; Miller's friend in Seattle had painted on her wall all the things she could do when she was depressed; people climb up on ropes; people swing on swings attached from the ceiling; 12 percent of those who

responded to Miller's survey had tried to commit suicide; and the thing that keeps most people going is H-O-P-E. Sounds crazy? A bit frantic? Disorganized? Well, that doesn't begin to explain it. I found Miller scary, wild, childishly optimistic, and thoroughly exhilarating. I loved every insane minute of it.