

An Interview With Andrew J Wilt

Publisher at 11:11 Press

**ABP- Thank you for taking the time for this interview, Andrew. First, your press 'name is something that resonates deeply for me, and I think for a lot of other people. What does 11:11 mean to you, and how does the name relate to your publications?**

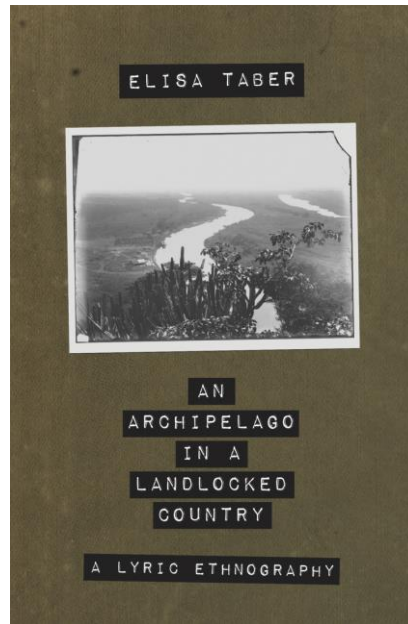
AW- Symbols can be powerful, even if they are only meaningful to the people who find meaning in them. Many numerologists believe the number 11 has a high vibration, and it becomes more powerful when it's repeated: 11:11. According to many ancient traditions, 11, 1111, and 22 (11+11) pass through the physical and into the inner person, tapping into your personal power, your inner soul, your great mission or life's purpose. Channeling into the frequency of these numbers is symbolic to going to the deep parts of one's self, and we strive to publish books about these deep human places.

**ABP- I see that you are located in Minneapolis Minnesota. What is the art and lit scene like there?**

AW- It's thriving! Minneapolis is a city full of art, music, and books. A good gauge for any city is to look at what people are doing on public transportation, and it's awesome to see so many people reading books. It's something that I never saw growing up in Michigan. The award-winning powerhouse Graywolf Press is also located in Minneapolis, and they reached out to us last year to welcome us to the publishing scene. Even though our presses are quite different, they have been kind and helpful, which is so refreshing. In the other industries I've worked there's always been an uneasy feeling of competition. In the indie/small press space, even though we are all on super tight budgets, all the presses I've talked to view the scene as a community space. It's not capitalist competition: eat or be eaten. My impression is, if we share tools, resources, and experience, everyone will benefit.

**ABP- Lets talk about some of your books. What can you tell us about *An Archipelago in a Landlocked Country* 'by Elisa Taber?**

AW- Elisa Taber has an incredible knack for storytelling. In *An Archipelago in a Landlocked Country*, She draws on her background in anthropology and personal experiences in Neuland Colony, a Mennonite settlement in Paraguay. The book's structure attunes readers to absent presences and the narratives render other kinds of realities—Nivaklé, Paraguayan, and Mennonite ways of being made over—and her own. This "unweaving" technique is inspired by Ñandutí—a spider web pattern created by unraveling threads from a piece of fabric.

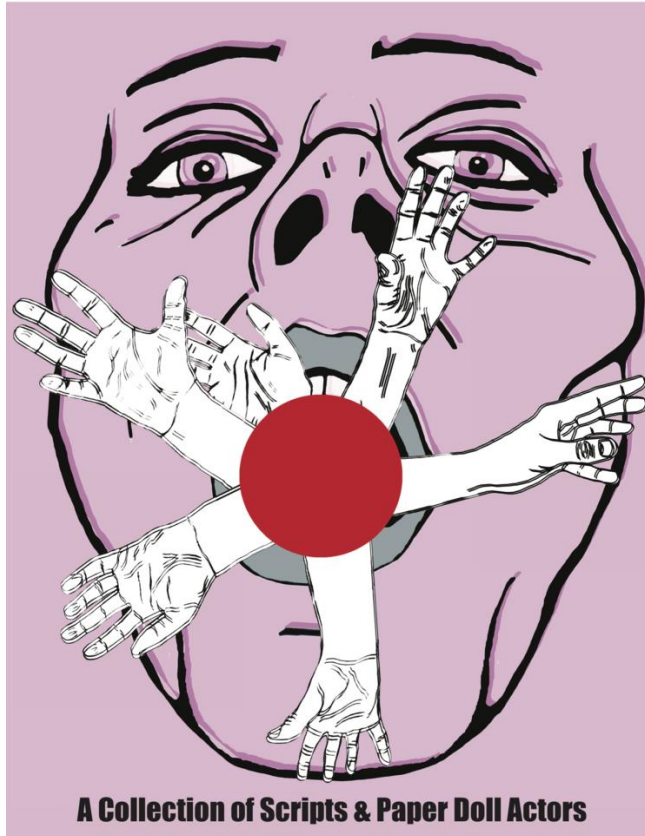


**ABP- I am interested to hear about '*Little Hollywood*' by Jinnwoo, because ABP has a poetry book with the same title, by Erie PA's Luke Kuzmish.**

AW- Like most of our lives, Jinnwoo's *Little Hollywood* is sad, uncomfortable, and hilarious. It's a collection of short scripts that are intended to be acted out by paper doll actors (attached at the beginning of each script). The scripts are normal everyday reflections on day-to-day life, but the way it's written made me think: "Wow, these are things I've thought and never shared, and it's sad and funny at the same time." It's silly and deep, which is way harder to pull off than it looks. It's as if the humor is able to lead the reader to places in themselves they wouldn't normally be able to go on their own. *Little Hollywood* is one of the most creative concepts I've ever seen, and it was a pleasure working with Jinnwoo and Tyler Crumrine (who formatted the book).

by JINNWOOD //

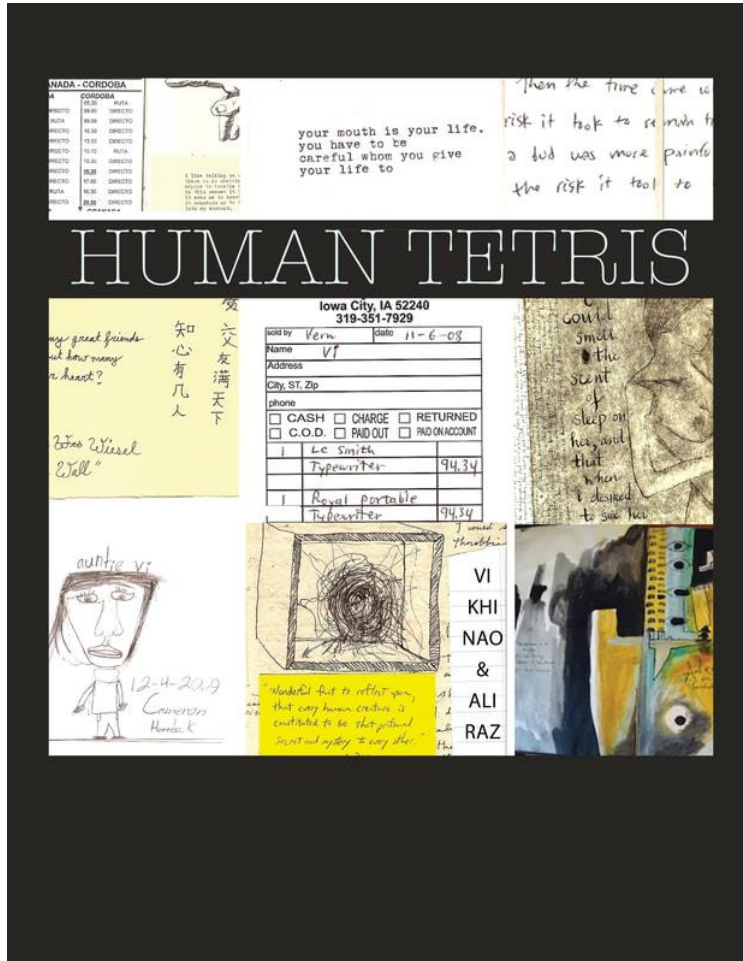
# LITTLE HOLLYWOOD



**ABP- How about '*Human Tetris*' by Vi Khi Nao & Ali Raz? What can you say about this book?**

AW- Vi Khi Nao and Ali Raz both have strong voices and it was an honor to work with both of them. Their book, *Human Tetris*, is a cross between the genre of newspaper personals and the self-display of online

dating and comprises a series of calls for lovers: whimsical, serious, mournful, thirsty, trite, and true. *Human Tetris* is a book that seeks not so much connection as an understanding of the shape of desire. Basically, it's honestly written dating profiles that make you squirm and giggle.



ABP- Any other books that you would like to mention?

AW- We have some exciting books coming in 2021 and 2022. Our 2021 line up is: Mike Corrao, Dylan Krieger, Evan Isoline, David Leo Rice, Candice Wuehle, Logan Berry, Sean Kilpatrick, and Gary J. Shipley.

**ABP- 11:11 press has some rad cover art. Do you work with many cover artists, or is one person doing all of these?**

AW- We've had a variety of people work on covers. *Sam*, *Starving Romantic* (cover art by Zoe Beaudry), *Gut Text*, and *Memorabilia*, were designed by J.N. Habiger. Jennifer Cralley and Ashley Bernhardt also worked on *Memorabilia*, doing some of the cover work and they worked together on the layout (and they did a fantastic job). Vi and Ali came to us with a cover concept for *Human Tetris* and J.N. Habiger and Ashley Bernhardt polished it. Tyler Crumrine worked on *Little Hollywood*, *Early Stuff* (including the hardcover, which has some great flaps—Sam Pink did the cover art), *Works* (Sam Robertson, cover art), *The Garden*, *After Denver*, and *An Archipelago in a Landlocked Country*. Mike Corrao put together *Collected Voices in the Expanded Field*, and he worked with Jake Reber on *ZER000 EXCESS*. So, there have been a lot of hands working together on our covers/layout. As much as we're taught not to, people will judge your book by the cover; after all, that's why books have covers. It's like news headlines, if it doesn't grab your attention, no one is going to look at it. When people walk into a bookstore, we want them to stop and walk towards our books.

**ABP- How many people are on the 11:11 team? Do you have any staff shoutouts?**

AW- We are a team of five. Megan and I are the founders and we oversee all the projects and do all the business behind the scenes stuff. Hanna, Mike, and Sam, each work on various projects in the role of associate editor, and also wear other hats for the press. Hanna does marketing and outreach, Sam is the web lead and is a stellar copyeditor, and Mike does covers, design, and book formatting. It's a real team effort and I'm so thankful we found each other because 11:11 couldn't exist without all of us working together.

**ABP- What do you have planned for the rest of 2020?**

AW – I'll give you a run down for the rest of 2020

This September, we're reissuing Louis Armand's first book, *The Garden*, which was first published twenty years ago. It was written in an unconventional style, so the first publisher cut/rearranged/redacted the text, and this is the first time it will be in print as it was intended to be published.

In early October, we have Big Bruiser Dope Boy's *After Denver*, which is a collection of poetry and prose. *After Denver* has gotten positive reviews from Gari Lutz, Elle Nash, Bud Smith, and others.

In late October, we'll be publishing Jake Reber's *ZER000 EXCESS*, an ambient body horror book with advance praise from Tan Lin, Amy Ireland, M. Kitchell, and others.

The final book of 2020 is Elisa Taber's *An Archipelago in a Landlocked Country*, a book that shifts in genre from ekphrastic descriptions of 30-second films shot in the Paraguayan villages of Asunción, Filadelfia, and Neuland; to a collection of short stories inspired by metonymically translated Nivaklé myths; and finally, a novella that mythologizes the life of a third-generation Mennonite woman. More info about all of these books is available on our website.

**ABP- Thanks again for making the time for this, Andrew. The floor is all yours for announcements or anything at all that you would like to share with ABZ's readers.**

AW- Our mission beyond publishing is to encourage people to write in a way that is true to their inner-most self. We want writers to know that it's ok to go to those deep dark places of themselves and pull out whatever you find there hiding in those uncharted territories of the self. What you find might be drenched in an oily film or covered in seaweed. It might even be hard to look at. And that's ok. With your pencil, pen, laptop, phone, you can start pulling back the layers, searching for the beauty in the things everyone else tries to hide.

As a writer, I don't think the goal should be to publish, it should be to write something that is true and honest and genuine to yourself. That's the highest form of art: to create something beautiful and let it go. It's like the monks who spend days creating a sand mandala only to destroy it once it's finished. Have you ever whispered a secret into the cavern of a mountain? Gone swimming in a lake and told the water something you've never repeated? Try doing it with your art. Write a poem or story, and really put yourself into it like you would a meaningful prayer. Don't show anyone or tell anyone what you're doing. Print it off if it's on your computer and delete the file so you only have the one copy. Now, go on your favorite hike, river, lake, etc. and let it go. Bury it, throw it into the water, light it on fire, or fold it into a paper airplane and toss it off a cliff. You made something you loved and now it's your secret with the earth. How special is that?