

## Series Takes Laughable Look at Large Letdowns

By Paul M. Davis

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Disappointment, shame, desperation, and embarrassment: This is the stuff of great storytelling, subjects as engaging for the audience as they are uncomfortable for the teller to recount. Laced with humor of the blackest variety, "Funny Little Stories About Big Disappointments," Wednesday at CounterPULSE, features tales about a suicide, a has-been showgirl, a failed actor, and a young Vietnamese immigrant adapting to America while contending with Orange County evangelicals.

Paolo Sambrano's "Bi-Poseur" is a tale of a suicidal hypochondriac whose bipolar disorder prevents him from writing the perfect suicide note and doing the deed. Thao P. Nguyen's

"What's Jesus Got to Do with It?" is an account of Nguyen at age 7, a Buddhist immigrant under siege in Bible-thumping Orange County, trying to wrap her head around a religion that celebrates the zombielike rebirth of its undead lord and savior. Bruce Pachtman's "Solo Show #2: A Comedy" details his ignominious acting career, from appearing in a student film by director Chris Columbus (who would go on to make Gremlins) to attending dispiriting auditions while serving as a towel boy in a spa. Actor Joya Cory's "The Most Beautiful Showgirl in the World" is the tale of has-been showgirl Elayne, who opens up to an opportunistic tabloid reporter. It's dark stuff, but the laughs that come from strife and disappointment are often the hardest.

"Funny Little Stories About Big Disappointments" starts at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at CounterPULSE. Admission is \$15.



A Buddhist says, 'Oh, Jesus!' Photo by: Beth Griffin. Pictured: Thao P. Nguyen