



thisweek

Readings & signings on LI

Today

Peter Max shares his thoughts on creativity and his life as an artist; children are invited to take part in his art contest (download the drawing from the museum's website); \$10 (\$4 ages 12 and younger), plus \$8 per family materials fee, \$2 parking. *The event runs from 1 to 4 p.m., with signings of books and posters from 3 to 4 p.m., Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr., Roslyn Harbor; 516-484-9337, nassaumuseum.org*



Tuesday

Author **Mark Lewisohn** discusses and signs copies of his new book, "Tune In: The Beatles: All These Years" (Crown Archetype). *At 7:30 p.m., Port Washington Public Library, 1 Library Dr., Port Washington; 516-883-4400, pwpl.org*

Wednesday



Authors **Joanne Lipman**, left, and **Melanie Kupchynsky** discuss their book, "Strings Attached — One Tough Teacher and the Gift of Great Expectations" (Hyperion), free but tickets required. *At 2 p.m. Hewlett-Woodmere Library, 1125 Broadway, Hewlett; 516-374-1967, hwpl.org*

East Hills resident **Howard Kroplick** discusses and signs his book "North Hempstead" (Arcadia Publishing). *At 7 p.m., Book Revue, 313 New York Ave., Huntington; 631-271-1442, bookrevue.com*

Thursday

East Meadow resident **Matt Blackstone** discusses and signs his book "Sorry You're Lost" (FSG), a novel for young readers. *At 7 p.m. Book Revue, 313 New York Ave., Huntington; 631-271-1442, bookrevue.com*

reviews

How not to be a perfect mom

GLITTER AND GLUE, by Kelly Corrigan. Ballantine Books, 224 pp., \$26.

BY MARION WINIK
Special to Newsday

I know that my mother loves sauerkraut and anchovies and pearl onions," writes Kelly Corrigan in her third memoir, "Glitter and Glue." "I know she prefers mashed potatoes from a box, and when she wants to, she can peel an orange in one go. I know she likes her first drink to be vodka — one full jigger, over ice, with a lemon rind — and then she down-grades to chardonnay, which she pours into the same glass over the same ice with the same piece of lemon floating on top, one less dish to wash."

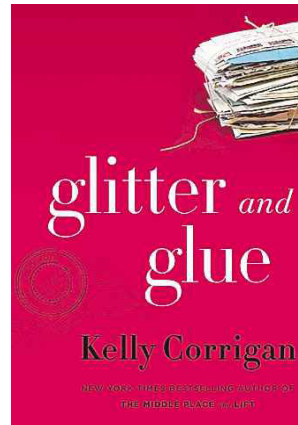
Mothers are characters by nature. We all love to quote Mom's pet phrases, describe her peevs and peculiarities and recall her ways of doing this and that, whether we religiously follow her example or define ourselves in opposition. The idiosyncrasies con-



Kelly Corrigan

verge: reading about Corrigan's frugal, tough-love Irish-Catholic Philadelphia mother reminded me of the Jersey Jewish one I lost five years ago. In her case, the first drink was Beekeeper gin, two fingers, in a Baccarat highball glass, with a capful of vermouth, over ice, three olives, then fill the glass with water. And aren't you now remembering your mom's drink, too?

"Glitter and Glue" ("Your father's the glitter but I'm the



glue," Mary Corrigan told her children) opens in 2012, when the author learns she has an ovarian cyst requiring surgery. When her mother arrives to help, Kelly — now the mother of two herself — confesses her greatest fear: that she will wind up like Ellen Tanner, whom she never met, but whose children she cared for.

In 1992, young Kelly was on a world tour with her best friend Tracy Tuttle. They ran out of cash in Sydney, Australia

and got jobs. Kelly was hired as a nanny by John Tanner, whose wife had died of cancer. Five-year-old Martin took immediately to "Keely," while 7-year-old Milly was stiff and distant.

Kelly's journal is put to use as she recounts the daily life of this wounded family, her Saturday-night bar tours with Tracy and her reactions while reading Willa Cather's "My Antonia." Then, Kelly didn't get along with her mom as well as she does now, but the experience of surrogate-mothering these bereaved children filled her with appreciation.

"The only mothers who never embarrass, harass, dismiss, discount, deceive, distort, neglect, baffle, appall, inhibit, incite, insult or age poorly are dead mothers . . . That's your consolation prize, Milly Tanner. Your mother will never be caught sunbathing in the driveway in her bra . . . or seen slamming the bedroom door in fury. Your mother will always be perfect."

But that's actually no consolation at all. What is a consolation is this warm, witty book.

A guilty soul on the couch

ANDREW'S BRAIN, by E.L. Doctorow. Random House, 200 pp., \$26.

BY ANN LEVIN
The Associated Press

The narrator of E.L. Doctorow's latest novel, "Andrew's Brain," is a cognitive scientist with a guilty soul. He blames himself for every bad thing that has happened to him in his lifetime, and that's a lot.

His first child dies, and his marriage falls apart. To escape his grief, he takes a teaching job out West, where he falls in love with Briony, a beautiful student half his age. They have a child, then Briony dies under freakish circumstances and he abandons the infant with his ex-wife.

After a brief stint teaching

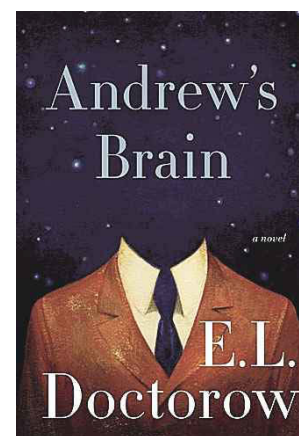
high school, Andrew goes to work in the White House as neuroscience czar for his former Yale roommate, scion of a famous American political dynasty. But that job ends badly, too, and Andrew ends up in a mysterious detention facility, the victim of his boss' war on terror.

Andrew's litany of failure and loss unspools in a series of conversations with an unnamed interlocutor, almost certainly a psychotherapist, over an unspecified time period, in largely unidentified settings, and in a variety of modes, including letters, phone calls and face-to-face.

The therapist, naturally, fights his profession's valiant but losing battle to get his neurotic client to be a little kinder to himself. "Do you think, Andrew, you may sometimes overreact?" he gently suggests.

Because this is Doctorow, Andrew's ruminations can be funny, and his descriptions gorgeous. Here he is on his students' religious beliefs: "God was an assumption, like something preinstalled in their computers." And on the approach to New York City from the New Jersey Turnpike: "past the oil refinery burn-offs . . . the planes dropping to the runways of Newark Airport . . . the turnpike risen now on concrete pillars . . . holding up the furious intentions of traffic."

Doctorow's most singular invention is Briony's family: two retired entertainers who once performed with troupes of midgets. They're diminutive, but she is normally proportioned. Andrew's dawning realization, on his first visit to their home, that something is slightly off is a tour de force.



In the end, though, Andrew's therapy sessions don't quite add up to a convincing narrative. We get the shadow of a man, the outline of a story. "Andrew's Brain" reads more like a notebook than a novel, although one filled with fascinating ideas from neuroscience and an intriguing cast of characters.