

# Llyn Clague

## The Times Square Ninja

Dressed in black, black mask,  
with a toy sword,  
the man did back-flips  
for tips.

Of no known address,  
unemployed, one day –  
we'll never know why –  
a real knife.

A foot long, six-inch blade.  
The cops didn't know  
he'd been sent, four years  
ago, to Bellevue.

Knew only a man, yelling,  
was waving a knife,  
acting wildly, the tourists  
skittish.

Six times they tried,  
with shouts and pepper-spray,  
as he skipped and danced  
backward

down Seventh Avenue  
to subdue and arrest him,  
but he wouldn't stop, or drop  
it.

With guns drawn they hemmed  
him in between a building  
and a cruiser parked perpendicular  
on the sidewalk.

Later the mayor said, he  
“must have been mentally  
deranged,” and the police  
“probably”

acted responsibly. Trained  
to aim at “center mass,”  
they didn’t try to wing him,  
to drop him

with one bullet in, say, a leg,  
a man “mentally deranged” –  
from close range they fired  
twelve shots.

So ended, at 51, the life  
of Darrius H. Kennedy,  
unemployed, address unknown,  
known

as the Times Square Ninja.

**Llyn Clague**’s poems have been published widely, including in *Atlanta Review*, *Wisconsin Review*, *California Quarterly*, *Main Street Rag*, *New York Quarterly*, *Ibbetson Street*, and other magazines. His sixth book, *The I in India and US*, was published by Main Street Rag in 2012. Visit [www.llynclague.com](http://www.llynclague.com)