

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

---

The Spectator Online

Newspapers

---

11-13-2024

## 2024-11-13 Little Shop Hops: Twice Sold Tales

Milan Damjanac  
*Seattle University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online>

---

### Recommended Citation

Damjanac, Milan, "2024-11-13 Little Shop Hops: Twice Sold Tales" (2024). *The Spectator Online*. 1376.  
<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/1376>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Newspapers at ScholarWorks @ SeattleU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Spectator Online by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ SeattleU.



# Little Shop Hops: Twice Sold Tales

**Milan Damjanac, Volunteer Reporter**

Despite general reading rates declining and online retailers and big box stores consistently monopolizing the book-selling industry, Twice Sold Tales, an independently owned used bookstore, has managed to defeat the odds and thrive, serving as one of the most iconic establishments of Capitol Hill for nearly 40 years.

The store, located on the corner of Denny and Harvard, is known for two things: a large selection of affordably priced books, and the six resident cats that roam the store. These two factors create a cozy, welcoming atmosphere to browse, read and purchase books that are seldom found in larger establishments.

The store sells a wide range of titles, including both fiction and nonfiction, ranging from science fiction to classics to romance. The store offers these titles at discounted prices, which can be appealing to customers on a budget, as new books become more and more expensive.

Additionally, because all the titles are used, the selection can often include unique and rare editions of a work, leading to a much more exciting and involved search than one might find at a traditional bookstore.

According to owner Jamie Lutton, the store's origins trace back to her small-scale book purchases, which quickly grew themselves into the store we now know today.

"I had a bicycle and a fistful of dollars from my mother. She wanted some pulp novelists from the mid 20th century... and that turned into this business," Lutton said.

After making money selling books out of a cart at the Broadway Market, Lutton expanded to the first brick-and-mortar location in 1990. A few more moves led to the location we know now, a quaint brick store lined with books from ceiling to floor.



Alan Behar

Two cats find comfort on the floor at Twice Sold Tales, one nestled inside a bag, with rows of bookshelves creating a cozy scene behind them.

Jennifer Hiatt, a customer of the store, emphasized the leisure and entertainment aspect of the store.

“It’s really easy to get lost for hours and have a really nice time, and it’s a nice way to spend an afternoon. It brings me joy,” Hiatt said.

Lutton herself corroborated this, describing the draw of the store.

“It’s a place to go and be quiet and hold a cat and spend 12 bucks, which keeps us going.”

In addition to the literary aspect, the impact of the resident cats cannot be overstated. While it may seem like a novelty at first, the presence of the animals works closely with the other qualities of the establishment to make the space feel welcoming, tranquil and reflective.

“I’ve had three to nine cats at any time in the store [since opening]. Sometimes I foster kittens, sometimes people just hand me cats. Right now we’ve got six... they keep us in business. People have come all the way from Montana just to see the kitties,” Lutton said.

Each cat at the store has its own distinct personality and behaviors. There is Buster, a gray-haired, extroverted half-Siamese cat; Lily, a Calico cat who is occasionally shy but still very friendly; James, a tuxedo cat named after the Bond character; his brother Screamer, a talkative black shorthair; Pepperjack, an orange tabby cat who loves to play and is best friends with James; and Myrtle, a sassy Calico who loves water and birds.

The cats help attract the subset of people who might be interested in reading and literature, and those who are fanatical about cats. Often, a love for cats can be the driving factor to visit the store.

“I love this bookstore because I am a cat lady, and there’s cats here, and it’s great,” Hiatt exclaimed.

In addition to simply providing a place to spend time and money, independent bookstores offer a huge service in expanding the shelf life of books and allowing them to change hands and find the people who are willing to read them.

“I feel like they’re underserved at something like a Goodwill. I wanted to give them to someplace that could use them,” Cat H., a seller, said about her decision to sell her books to Twice Sold Tales.

She also touched upon the role of independent bookstores in her own journey as a reader, attributing them to expanding her literary palette.

“There’s so many genres that you either don’t think about or don’t know that you walk by, and then suddenly you have a new genre that you’re exploring and diving into,” H. said.

Small bookstores have become increasingly difficult to maintain in a time when retailers like Amazon or Barnes and Noble have monopolized the book market. When a new book can be at your door in less than 48 hours, it is especially critical to support the stores that maintain the humanity and community of the literary world.

You can visit Twice Sold Tales at 1833 Harvard Ave., and more information about them can be found at [twicesoldtales.com](http://twicesoldtales.com).