



# Library podcast

## Jack Straw Writing Program Showcase

[00:00:05] Welcome to the Seattle Public Library's podcasts of author readings and library events. Library podcasts are brought to you by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation. To learn more about our programs and podcasts, visit our web site at [www.SPL.org](http://www.SPL.org). To learn how you can help the Library Foundation, support the Seattle Public Library, go to [Foundation.SPL.org](http://Foundation.SPL.org).

[00:00:35] Hi, everybody. Welcome. As we begin today, I would like to acknowledge that we're gathered together on the ancestral land of the Coast Salish people. We would like to honor their elders past and present and thank them for their stewardship of this land. Welcome to today's program with the Jack Straw writers presented in partnership with Jack Straw Cultural Center. We would like to thank our author series sponsor Gary and Connie Kooning's Foundation and Seattle City of Literature. And we're also grateful to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Private gifts to the foundation from thousands of donors help the library provide free programs and services that touch the lives of everyone in our community. We're also grateful to our media sponsor, the Seattle Times. So now I'm delighted to welcome Kathleen Flenniken, who is our curator for Jack Straw this year. Now in its 23rd year, Jack Straw Writers program has included more than 250 Pacific Northwest writers who represent a diverse range of literary genres. The purpose of the Jack Straw Writers program is to introduce local writers to the medium of recorded audio to do all their presentation skills for both live and recorded readings, to encourage the creation of new literary work and to present the writers and their work in live readings in an anthology on the web and on the radio.

[00:01:55] And then I think one of the most important things is to build community among writers. So, each year and invited curators selects the participating writers from a large pool of applicants based on artistic excellence, diversity of literary genres and experiences, and creating a cohesive group of writers. This year's curator is poet and educator Kathleen Flenniken. Kathleen's collection, *Plume*, won the Washington State Book Award. I happened to be on the jury that year and it was an awesome book. And *Plume* was also a finalist for the William Carlos Williams Award for the Poetry Society of America. Kathleen's first book, *Famous*, won The Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Poetry, and was named a notable book by the American Library Association. Her other honors include a Pushcart Prize and fellowships from the NEA and Artists Trust. She was the 2012 to 2014 Washington State poet laureate. Kathleen teaches poetry in the schools through Jack Straw and Seattle Arts and Lectures Program Writers in the schools and also currently serves on the board of Jack Straw. So here to talk a little bit more about this year's cohort, please help me welcome Kathleen Flenniken.

[00:03:09] Thank you so much, Stesha. I've been a fan of the Jack Straw Writers Program for 23 years from the beginning. For those of you new to the program, each year a curator is selected and each curator has the tough and I would say excruciating task of choosing a group of 12 writers across writing genres from a pile of interesting submissions. The writers come together in January for the first time and in the following three months of the year, compose new work, receive coaching in vocal and presentation skills, participate in recorded interviews with the curator. And in May present new work in a series of recorded readings and in a beautiful printed anthology which is available today for sale. A podcast is produced for each writer containing excerpts from the interview and reading. And unofficially, the relationships can blossom into informal and organic meet ups to write to share a meal. In some cases, to ride Ferris Wheels and to collaborate on projects big and small. This culminating reading today in this beautiful library has become an annual end of year event and celebration. And we're so grateful to the library for hosting us again. I love this reading year after year, so thank you against Stesha. I was a Jack Straw rider in 2002, and ever since I've felt emotionally and creatively attached to Jack Straw serving on the board for over a decade, working as a teaching artist and meeting each new crop of writers, it was an honor this year to choose and encourage a new group of twelve. I think I have enjoyed as much as anything watching them come to know each other form connections, often across genres and even create together.

[00:05:12] And what can I say about this group? That award and residency committees, journals and New York publishing houses haven't already. It was in each case the work that drew me to these 12 writers. I am delighted you are here today to enjoy a taste of eleven of the twelve. I'm so sorry that put Sarah Brienne can't join us today. And I know she is disappointed too. But today will be a banquet of talent. There wouldn't be a writer's program without the Jack Straw organization behind the scenes. None of this would be possible without Levi Fuller, the Great Spirit and unflappable maestro who administers the entire program. And I also want to mention Joan Rabinowitz, our amazing, huge hearted and brilliant executive director who couldn't be here today but sends her love and her all her best, but the talent doesn't stop there. Huge thanks to Alyssa Kean, Kate Meier, Daniel Gunther, Joel Mattox, Tom Stiles, Aisha Chubais, it to laca[unintelligible], Elizabeth Austin and Sherwin Aying, each of whom have contributed their expertise to the writers and me. And now onto our reading. Eleven writers will each be sharing a five minutes selection, beginning with Suzanne Warren. Suzanne Warren is a fiction writer and essayist. She is currently at work on her first book, a collection of short stories titled The Country of Husbands. Her work is a smoky blend of wit, sadness, snark, fantasy, outrage and empathy. Please welcome Suzanne Warren.

[00:07:00] Hi. I wanted to thank Jack Straw for this wonderful program, Kathleen, for bringing the cohort together. I am honored to be a part of it. I'm going to read two flash fictions. The first story started as a joke, quickly got weird, which is basically true of everything I've ever written. At any rate, feel free to laugh or not. The Reindeer Daughter.

I used to be a good husband when Linda wanted to adopt Alexie, I said yes. When she wanted to adopt Sasha and Ivan, I said, fine. I was a good father then. But Doris changed all that. She was older than our other kids. She'd experienced estrus. I lay awake at night listening to Doris in the room

down the hall. Her antlers knocked gently against the headboard as she slept. She smelled like grass and cold weather. When she gestured for me to pass the salt at dinner, my hands shook.

The first time I saw her, I was in the bath shaving. I glanced out the window at the bare white trunks of birches and something moved at the far end of the yard. I watched her, willing her to rediscover the opening in the fence and disappear from our lives. Then Ivan burst out the back door and toddle toward her yelling, can we keep her mom? can we keep her? She was a reindeer, yes. But she was beautiful when she came home from grazing. It took time for her eyes to adjust to the small scale of faces and bright lights indoors. Her legs were long and slender. Her antlers were covered with dense, plush fuzz. After Linda found out, I think it was the bruises on my legs from Doris's hooves. I had to find a place for Doris and me quick.

We're in a trailer on Route 30 past Tile world. I was fired from my job after kids at the school where I taught started talking. So, I worked part time at Staples. My sister won't return my calls. George, my oldest friend, drives out here to read the Bible with me when he can, but his wife doesn't know he still talks to me.

[00:09:34] Is Doris happy? before this, she spent the day roaming the hills in back of our house, returning only when the sun sank low in the sky. Now she doesn't stray far from the trailer. I tell her she needs exercise, but she doesn't listen. When I return from work. She's standing on the sparse patch of grass by the clothesline, staring into space. She looks at me as if she doesn't remember who I am before she totters forward for dinner. Sometimes lying beside Doris at night. I imagine I'm back at the house in my warm bed.

[00:10:15] Body tuned to every sound, rifting from her room. Each of my cells newly separately alive a bright sequin. Then Doris wakes up back sore, body weakened. We lie next to each other, both silent. What is Doris thinking of, there beside me? The first time we made love, she bled so badly, I snuck out of the house and stuff the sheets in the dumpster.

[00:10:47] If she could speak, would she say? I remember the warmth of the herd. I dream of a human world ravaged by ice.

So that's number one. Number two centers on a fairy tale called the Raspberry King, which you can read in the Lilac Fairy Book. It's a real fairy tale. The Raspberry King.

My sister was the one who showed me The Raspberry King. She was 14 and I was 8. Her gifts, like the Lilac Book of Fairy Tales, were more than gifts. They were instructions in who and how to be the bearer shapes the recipient to her gift.

In the Arthur Rackham illustration, two sisters, one older and darker, the other younger, and fair, like us. The two girls come upon the wizened raspberry king, a worm hidden in a berry. He is small with a huge, grotesque head, a frontier raspberry cups red Light when detached from the stem. Inside and outside of the berry can be traced in one unbroken line. I couldn't extract the story of the girls from the

real life story of my sister and me. Did the raspberry king wear a berry hat, or were we ourselves the berry wearers? One on each finger. And which was cause for greater delight, the beauty of our newly adorned hands or the act of eating berry by berry. Each lipped off the fingertip as if tongue and fruit were sisters. A fruit piece she started thumbs. pinkie's ring middle and index fingers, making a velvety dick of each. My sister was always the dark one, emphatically herself while I was fair as tracing paper. The night she got her period, she showed me her new breasts.

[00:12:57] The raspberry king was old, unpleasant to look at. Breast sour, she spent evenings and weekends far from the call of his family with a book and a glass. His gifts left a foul scent. My mother stained her lips, a dark purple that matched her lilac maxi skirts. That year, the women ring their eyes with coal, dawn glimmering rags over boots, lace to the knee, as if ready to sojourn deep in an enchanted forest. She walks in beauty like the night I wrote in this notebook given to me by my sister, not realizing those words were not mine. Once my sister caught me trying on her bra, the fleshy pink cups puffed stiffly from my chest. Can anything just be mine? She snapped. I was disappointed when the king entered the picture, and I realize the two sisters out bearing were not the point of the story. The older one weds the raspberry king and vanishes with him into the forest. What about the girl left behind? Does she returned to the cottage, crawl into the bed now absent her sisters' warm body? Does the raspberry king visit her in her dreams? Does she entertain him too there in her bed? And does it with guilt or sorrow or relief that she awakens alone, the bed empty her whole life ahead of her?

[00:14:43] Thank you, Suzanne. Our next reader is Gabrielle Bates. Gabrielle Bates has appeared in The New Yorker poetry and many other journals and creates poetry comics as well as poetry and fiction. Her work is alive with a profound love of language and a lifetime of reading and studying. Please welcome Gabrielle Bates.

[00:15:07] Suzanne, what did you just do to me? I do not understand. I've learned so much from my time as a Jack Straw fellow, and I'm so grateful for this time to hang out with this beautiful cohort. Kathleen, thank you so much. And Levi and everyone at Jack Straw. It's just wonderful.

[00:15:26] I have two poems to read. One older and one newer. First one is called Judas Goat.

We of ends are all this oblivious, one goat trained to live with sheep neck bell jingling in and out of the slaughterhouse. To it shackling pen no more than another human room.

[00:15:58] After it's fed a feast of roughage, sprigs of sage, timothy, cedar chips, carrot beards. It sleeps.

[00:16:12] What sheep, wild goats, eyes when we catch them, are always open. But this goat dreams. Its lips twitch as it lies curled chin to Thurl [unintelligible] behind the pen. Each morning that silver bell is affixed to its neck, it leads the flock. Wider than all the loose legged lambs, it approaches under a bright summer sun. The gate, grass on either side green. I, too, am dying of what I don't know.

[00:16:57] And this next poem I wrote in response to someone who asked for a poem for an anthology of insect poems. It's called Fruit Flies.

At the bottom of the jar, an apple core floating in vinegar at the bottom of the vinegar, the dead. I grip the lit and the two of us look in from opposite sides. The round door of the funnel remains open, open at exactly the same place. Can they not see this? Or can they just not buy some curse of anatomy, crawl or fly back out the way they came? That their lives go from egg to adult in eight days pains me. Before this apartment, before these fruit flies that rise from the throat of our sink and plague each glass of wine we raise. We used to take apples to the cemetery off campus. And if the ground was dry. Lie on the grassy path beneath between the rows, beneath the fall sky, we sucked dark daudz[unintelligible] into each other's skin. We widened the wound of each other. You had poems taped to your wall, as did I. Thank you.

[00:18:42] Thank you, Gabby.

[00:18:44] Our next reader is Josh Axelrad. Josh Axelrad has arrived at short fiction by way of memoir and storytelling. His memoir, Repeat Until Rich was published by Penguin Press, and he has performed onstage nationwide, including on The Moth Radio Hour. In every genre, Josh holds feet to the fire until they burn. Please welcome Josh Axelrad.

[00:19:11] Thank you, Kathleen. I have a quick question for you all. Is it Ricky or Reiki? Is Reiki. OK, that's going to help me. Thank you. There's also settling a dispute in my home. That's good. Is Reiki, ok, I was wrong. It's fine. I want to thank the library and Jack Straw and Kathleen and Levi and fellow writers and my wife Susanna and daughter Iris, without whose support I would have nothing to say. This is a story, part of a story. And you don't need to know anything. Reiki. Reiki. OK.

[00:19:44] And it starts. It goes like this. Jill was a Chicagoan in graphic novelist who earned her living researching the budgets and specs of major construction projects for an online subscription only database for commercial contractors. She had a remarkably compact four head and broad symmetrical face with eyes at a slight Disney animal-esque [unintelligible] angle that was disconcerting. But what really bothered me was the feeling I experienced whenever we were in the bed in the morning and Jill starting to grope in a way that tickled too much. And I wanted to throw up and cry.

[00:20:26] This phase where I frequently wanted to vomit and sob lasted eight months. We never talked about emotions. Luckily, I couldn't have explained myself.

[00:20:39] Things seemed to occur after prior things occurred that led to the stuff that was occurring now. In a sense, you could blame it on the big bang. My sexual withdrawal is a function of expansion of the universe, Jill. No one could say such a thing out loud, but it all worked because I was a Western Kansan these days and only saw Jill every couple of weeks when I drove 600 miles cutting through a corner of Missouri and traversing up all Illinois. We drank cocktails and could converse

engagingly. In Kansas, I worked from 4 a.m. to 10 or 11 preparing news summaries for a New York corporate PR firm specializing in clients that harmed the environment. Then I would nap.

[00:21:28] Afternoons were for reading literary classics like Zorba the Greek. I exercise three days a week. I find Zorba to be very funny. I'm sorry. That's not. I realize it's not great, but I just think that's why. I exercise three days a week initially running outdoors, down dirt roads until I got chased by a dog one time and subsequently in my uncle's basement. Family Guy streaming off the internet at high volume while the treadmill he'd snagged from the estate of a deceased friend constantly threatened to malfunction dangerously. My uncle was deceased too. His remaining mortgage \$280 a month was a better deal than rent in New York City. So, I left all my friends filled used Kia forte with the library I had built over 15 years by poring through boxes left on the sidewalks by it, by people who were capable of giving books away, and moved.

Jill and I had reconnected during one of her visits to New York when I was a New Yorker still. We'd first dated 10 years before, which is not important. She'd been in college at that time and I'd been a youthful college graduate whose ideas had yet to be clarified. What is important is that she spoke for no known reason with a slight British accent. As a student and now as an adult. Every night, whether in Brooklyn, in Kansas or in Chicago, I slipped to sleep envisioning another woman, name not relevant here, who had broken my heart, a statuesque Reiki practitioner who'd been raised by religious cultists in Nevada and whose complexion had a spiritual luminous-ness. Then when I was in Kansas bed one night wheezing a little, the water damaged ceiling had deposited a powdery debris over the dresser and the carpet and the room's corner, and I seemed to be inhaling whatever this was. I again envisioned the Reiki practitioners' arms embracing me. But suddenly I heard Jill's British inflected voice saying, "homethe!"[unintelligible] as if she were there in the room. I mean the mental room, observing the Reiki practitioner and me.

[00:23:33] This crystallized something.

[00:23:36] I was scheduled to head to Chicago in two days over G chat. I discussed with my former New York City roommate the prospect of breaking up with Jill as I'd done 10 years earlier. Then you'll be entirely alone out there, he said.

[00:23:49] Doesn't mean it isn't right. I said.

[00:23:53] Sometimes it's helpful to procrastinate before doing what's morally right.

[00:23:56] He said. I know!

[00:24:00] On the day I earmarked for the breakup, I worked a 4 a.m. shift before hopping in the car for the 12-hour drive. The road was flat and gray and fuzzy and mild. Rush Limbaugh declaimed with heat vitriol, etc. about libs. I wasn't conservative but enjoyed conservative talk radio went on the go. Blue signs indicated brands of gas and fast food coming up. I listened to conservative talk radio throughout the drive, but at moments I turned off the volume and submitted to the white noise of road sounds permeating the car, passing vehicles who whoosh along with ghostly and vacuous sounds. A

few moments into these intervals, something verging on an emotion would start to manifest inside my viscera, triggering laryngeal spasm, otherwise known as the gag reflex, turning back to Hannity would make it stop. Chicago presented itself gradually before accelerating into a mass of dense signage, complicated interchanges and drivers who didn't fear death.

In Jill's neighborhood, parking was so difficult. I thought about just turning back. But a space opened. I hesitated before grabbing my backpack out of the back seat. There was a real possibility I wouldn't be sleeping here tonight. Associated with this thought, there came a strange blank feeling, something like a hole inside my personage. When I buzzed, her voice blazed over the speaker, British and exuberant. During the ride up in the elevator, I ran two times through my prepared speech. I reached her floor, traversed the hall, and before I could knock, her door opened and her eyes flashed. We embraced. She said It was me, it was me. She said, oh, I was conscious of moving my face like a person with something to say. I felt a pre-spasm rising from my mid chest.

[00:25:57] I said, Jill. And she was waiting for me. I said, do you do you want to watch Deadwood?

OK. Thank you very much, you guys.

[00:26:13] Thank you, Josh. Our next reader is Michael Schmelzer. Michael is author of three poetry collections, including Blood Song, a finalist for the Washington State Book Award. Michael applies bravery and beautiful crafting to a whole realm of the personal and more recently and devastatingly, to the psychology of violence, war and torture. Please welcome Michael Schmelzer.

[00:26:39] Thank you very much, Kathleen. Thank you, everyone. Thank you, Jack Straw, for this opportunity. And thanks to the library for hosting us. I've had to follow Josh a couple of times now and it's such a 180 when I come up here. It's like he's so funny and dynamic. And then I'm like, here's violence and war crimes. But here goes anyways. Just a little bit about my project. I've been thinking so much about war and violence and the words we use in the current rhetoric and how much we can distance ourselves from the damage we do intentionally and unintentionally. So that's just all the things that I've been kind of reckoning with. The first poem is called Prosperity.

[00:27:23] The human tongue like the tail of a scorpion. Every word first formed in the venom gland of our brain. The story about the scorpion killing itself and surrounded by flames. It isn't true. It's just dying despite the theatrics. Was fire the first instrument of torture or was water? What we can do with the simplest elements keeps me up at night. Sleep too, when deprived is another form of punishment. And what about language? Well-wrought and sadistic. We now define this as a violence. No, not define. We make it violence. Not too long ago, we used music, unbearably tortured our enemies with song. Then we invented a way to drown them without drowning them. I'm at the grocery store buying cotton candy, grapes, water and bottles, honeycrisp apple. I am stumped by the number of body washes. We're blessed with the pleasure of meandering up and down the aisles while listening to the heart sick songs of our youth, even though we're safely in love. We forget the failures that matter most. We call those moments prosperity. We speak the boring platitudes of peace in order to keep moving. And even during war, we share pleasantries as carefully as shaking hands with a sword. War

like the sting of a honeybee, buried the mine until the enemy is yours. Watch as they step down as if on a hive and shrapnel rises like a swarm of bees. Watch the bees sink into the soft flower of a soldier's body. There is no honey left in the world. It's war. People want. I am pedaling dahlias and acorns, fat squirrels and the flit of finches. No matter how handsome, deny the soldier who offers a carnation in the age of carnage. Don't be fooled into thinking the world needs more red. If heroism is the sacrifice of self for others, what is more heroic than the honeybee? Its sting results in its death. Its abdomen torn loose in defense of the queen. Dear enemy, I am not a hero.

[00:30:21] I will do no such thing. Believe me, I want you to suffer. But not enough. Thank you.

[00:30:38] Thank you, Michael. Our next reader is Leanne Dunic, Leanne lives and writes in Vancouver, B.C. Her first book, *To Love the Coming End*, is published in both Canadian and American editions. And her band, *The Deep Cove*, has just released their second album with an accompanying short story illustrated by Gabrielle Bates, entitled *The Gift*. Please welcome Leanne Dunic.

Thank you, Kathleen.

[00:31:08] Thank you for bringing us all together. You made the right choice of all people. And thank you to everyone who makes Jack Straw happen and to Levi for taking such good care of us. Jack Straw has been the result of many things for myself and I'm sure others. And I'm one of those things includes my deflowerment on the Ferris wheel. I mean, I actually meant to say Ferris wheel deflowerment. I've never been on one before. But more importantly, I met Gabrielle. What's this like? This is really great. It's not the best thing, but it's pretty good. Gabrielle illustrated this chapbook, *The Gift*. And that's all because of Jack Straw bringing people together. And I met so many wonderful people. And it's been I'm going to be sad to go back to Canada. And I feel like this was the last day of high school and anthologies are yearbook. And we're gonna have to rain. You know, I'll come back and you come to visit Vancouver, anyway, enough talk. This is *The Gift*. I'm going to jump around and just give you a taste of the story.

[00:32:20] It's a month before Christmas. They meet for the first time at the pre-show event on Sunset Boulevard. Her black hair, a few grays, a denim skirt with brass buttons down the center. Him, baseball cap, Beetle's t-shirt.

[00:32:43] I've been looking for you for a long time, she says. You found me, he replies. She doesn't ask for his autograph. Instead, she presents him with a palm sized box wrapped in Ivy printed foil. She pulls a strand of hair behind her ear. Don't open until Christmas. Sharp creases, perfectly curled gold ribbon, no sign of tape. The meticulous packaging makes him want to unwrap it, the minute he is alone.

[00:33:18] But she instructed him to wait and so he will.

[00:33:25] She stands in the front row stage left. Her desire is to see his eyes without the tinted glasses he wears. Does he wear them to hide wrinkles, glaucoma? She wants to know. He is, in fact, often described as the least attractive member of the band. Still, she is drawn to the physicality of him. She can draw a perfect outline of his lanky frame with her eyes closed. Before she was born, he had toured the world performing for frantic crowds. It was because of him that she had asked for a guitar for her 13th birthday. Although she never received it nor learned how to play. His music was her soundtrack while she worked in her studio. For years, she watched his music videos and interviews, became fond of his sturdy jaw line and the way his mouth twitched when he didn't believe what he said. She wasn't interested in his persona. Long before they met, she felt a kinship too, as deep herself and knew one day they'd come together. After the show, a security guard brings her to the dressing room.

[00:34:43] So what kind of artwork do you do?

[00:34:47] This is it. She replies with open arms.

[00:34:53] He knows better than to ask for clarification.

[00:34:56] He might not understand anyway and doesn't want to scare her away with his lack of understanding. She doesn't tell him how in order to create, she needs to break beautiful things. She suspects he's the same. The next day, after brunch in Silverlake, they go for a walk around Griffith Observatory. Isn't it weird to be at an observatory during the day? That depends on what you're observing. He takes her hand and squeezes it. What's your agreement with your wife? We're married. Is that all?

[00:35:40] She joins the band on the bus. The only female onboard. The bassist is his son, only three years older than she is. The flawlessly wrapped gift remains unopened in the corner of his bunk on the bus. True, she had asked him not to open it until Christmas. Even so, she wishes he were unable to contain his curiosity. He remembers a scene in a graphic novel he read. Whatever choice he made would be a submission to chance. As always, one choice, two directions. Of course, he thinks about his wife. His son is a good reminder to our flings. He's been there, done that. He learned long ago that it is better to live without complications or the threat of them. He convinces himself he isn't doing anything wrong. They haven't even kissed. She doesn't seem to have amorous intentions. But if that is the case, what does she intend?

Thank you.

[00:37:00] Thank you, Leanne. Our next reader is Christianne Balk, Christianne Balk studied originally to be a naturalist and that developed eye for species identification for reading subtle shifts in season and terrain is everywhere present in her masterful poems.

[00:37:18] She is a winner of the Walt Whitman Award and the author of three poetry collections. Please welcome Christianne Balk.

[00:37:25] Thank you, Kathleen. And thank you, everybody who's here.

[00:37:30] And thank you, Levi and Jack Straw and Seattle Public Library for hosting us. And especially thank you to all of wonderful writers.

[00:37:42] I was feeling really sad. But now I'm feeling hopeful, like maybe we can find a way to get together reunions of some kind, you know, in the future. I'd like to continue with the project I've been working on with thanks to Kathleen and Jack Straw's support. This is a series of letters written by a nurse in World War One serving in a casualty clearing station, mostly in the eastern part of France. She's writing in these new poems to her friend Gwen, who's also a nurse stationed somewhere else in France. Little bit about form, these are letter forms. It seems that this series is finding its rhythm in blank verse. These particular letters each consist of two curtailed sonnets, 13 lines each, which I hope you won't notice.

[00:38:46] In the first letter, which is written by Suzanne to her friend Gwen. It's Suzanne's voice, as well as the doctor's voice, which will be a little clipped.

Sappers are trench diggers who dug the holes that held the line for all those years of World War One. Sanitary crew handles the dead corpses, the bodies. And rack line, many of you know, is the high tide line of debris on a beach.

[00:39:22] Eviscerations Verge [unintelligible] Mountains October 23rd, 1915.

One. Across the tent, the doctor lifted rags, piled on a soldier's stomach. Here, come now, snapping at me as if I were his dog. Stumbling, tripping over stretchers, crowded wall to wall, I glimpsed a mound, claret red beneath the doctor's hands, cupped fingers spread like rungs of a small cage through which I saw what seemed to be a flower deep Karmen [unintelligible], like the ones your mom grew in her garden, Gwendolyn. Dahlia, coccidian halfsphere of densely packed petals so closely curled they arched together in a single globe. labash Khabar luck, [foreign language] with one hand he sliced a line midsection to the dark navel. Let's play hide the sausage, gently pushing the soldier back inside himself again. Get that fucking dog off my gut, he weighs ten stone. Our patient coming to. Morphine. I slipped two blue tablets under his blue veined tongue. Mirror, the doctor pointed to see their, exit wound, a single bullet ripping back to front. Tiny careful stitches closed him up, broken tooth, zippers zigzagging. Send this lady backline. Now all I see every time I close my eyes are that boy's blooms, a non-stop picture show. Stopping sleep.

[00:41:14] Two, this is from Gwendolyn to Suzanne. What's wrong with seeing flowers? Dear Suzanne, hold them close, and sleep will come. Remember mom's pepper patch just behind her dahlias. How we pulled all the seedlings up one day thinking they were weeds.

[00:41:33] Let yourself go back. Think of Empress Josephine. Years ago, her favorite species, Dahlia coccidian bushels of black-market tubers from Spain nightly carded in secret to her beds where she

herself with her own hands, buried them unseen. Imagine them unfurling new leaves, inching higher, buds opening. The fabric that once billowed between dream and day has ripped wide open.

[00:42:06] Give this no do. Pretend your dreams are your real work.

[00:42:12] The laws guiding our waking hours do help. No sitting down to rest, no friendliness with patients beyond the necessary touch. No walking alone at night or day. No meeting any man off hours without matron's nod. No civilian dress in camp. This webbing holds us taut and strong. Canvas stretched to hide the sanitary crews still heaps. Let yourself dream only when you sleep. You'll soon find yourself forgetting that first bloom.

[00:42:49] There will be more. Few will live a week.

[00:42:56] Three, this is Suzanne's response.

[00:42:59] You ask what's wrong with flowers? They're gone, Gwen. Closing my eyes. All I see now is that boy's face glazed with sweat, his head shaking no more as if arguing with his own body, begging his lungs to stop breathing, heart twins. They could have spared him sooner. Mechanical lobes, they listened only to their own laws, forcing his swollen abdomen to rise and fall, rise and fall for over forty-eight hours.

[00:43:35] Slowly, his small bruise septic skin turned from blush to gray, like the undersides of magnolia leaves dulled by early frost. All I see is his gaping wound reopening as the stretcher bearers laid him on our makeshift table. The scent of iron sharp, metallic aftertaste, clings to our clothes. The mask of blood and flux never leaves us, soaking aprons, bed, clothes, towels, pillows. None of us have slept since that boy went off. Matron urges us to nap. We just lie wide awake. The sappers say he was 16. Empress Josephine's prized flowers betrayed. She ordered every dahlia tuber, seed stem and bud dug up from her garden, chopped to mulch, carted to the coast, dumped in piles below the rack lines, slick eelgrass, stained rocks.

[00:44:48] Thank you, Chris. Our next reader is Samar Abualhassan.

[00:44:53] Samar was born to Lebanese immigrants in Detroit, raised with multiple languages and has authored multiple poetry, chapbooks including *Farah* and *Nocturnal Temple*. Samar's poems field constructed of such skillful listening that the reader feels an active part of a compelling conversation. Please welcome Samar Abualhassan.

[00:45:15] Tootsie Roll Lollipop chimes the teacher to her students and a sea of eight-year olds. Bodies which leap and kick and bend and exclaim, bodies murmuring at very temperature and speed dart to the fountain, lowered down to moistened lips or cram yellow into steel before a voice freezes them. We were talking, but now we're stopped. The kids sing back autumn light, striping our faces like Gladys Sons[unintelligible]. They look at me. Their fingers poke through paws. They're tangled yellow or black, hair fluttering like uncertain kites fueled by the winds. In my mind, or the light inside rooms

go dark. Our Bay Area friends lose electricity. We squint and glare and crease each horizon and decipher our marks with worry and delight and restlessness. I tell them we'll find something new to witness in real time as our poems grow on the page before our varied eyes. Even while my thoughts have fires, I cannot touch. The reddest velvetest apple colored like a red carpet, Kelly writes. Maybe our ancestors will get word usher in a tasty, nourishing moon, a hall pass maneuver, perfect evacuations for all. As we muscle through this pole making hour where distractions are a garden of poppies, chairs shoved in and out. A toy like a rolling pin spins under a table.

[00:47:02] The door groans. Someone comes in with a letter or summons. An upset child makes a thrashing snow angel on the floor. In California, families move ahead of strong winds, you're waiting for the police to beat on your door to rescue your water damaged book of bone-dry poems. Invisible moans play twister over there on the rug. And in Beirut, as long as the banks remain closed, the clocks are stopped. And here were young and ancient and making wagers with language. If you try to hold the moon over your head, you would squash yourself, writes Claire. Down, down, down into the sea below. She continues before eventually where Moon held in the treasure house of vanishing. I lower into my parent's country of origin. Older men and government dimmed by a shimmying singular flag. A revolution is happening, laughing, chanting, not sleeping. I watch aerial television footage of flag shivers in loops and crimson waves and perhaps all of that recorded screen time noted in my weekly reports will become cedar scented. Should you nurse a paper cut or stream a bloody nose? Details from news reports emerge in my mind as carefully pencil sketches. Onions bounce around in backpacks. An emergency balm, you learn to be held and applied raw to protesters, eyes sprayed with tear gas.

[00:48:55] Millie writes, when the sore eye comes to rise, it lies down with the stars. My friends in California have candle lit evenings, play Trivial Pursuit. They're at the mercy of cell tower reprieves and fridges are beginning to smell. It's 8:20 a.m. again. And the kids are scattered like skittles. Flat tire, I declare popping the air out of morning shhhhhhh..... Feather inks its way to me; a paper airplane marks the curve of a hush. And we go to work making new poems. In our wild classroom, peppered with outbursts and chairs, tipping back, hovering as the thinking. We are teetering and speaking out of turn. In coming days, I flattened many tires flat tire, flat tire, flat tire, longing for unison shhhhhh ....A whoosh flies in from next door. Since no utterances ever, ever the same place twice, now you've been sucked into that department store song. T.J. is in your bone marrow on your jukebox is maxed out with unwelcome visitors. But wait, how did the children respond to that call, was it now or stopped or now we've stopped? Each version you realize has a different quality and it's homecoming. It's halt like the end of a roller coaster ride when the car comes to the finish line in a sure soft sway.

[00:50:33] Do you find fur where you've misheard things? Do you dangle between apostrophe hanging left? I adjust a podium in a classroom and the face of my overseas and rises like a white screen. For years on Instagram, you're fixated on her gowns and glamorous magenta lips, her sad, open smiles. Your aunt, whose brother is the speaker of the parliament, his height towers over you now. He's in his 80s, and has done much in service to people in your lineage. You want to set a little saucer on top of his head inside your phone screen and you're embarrassed by this thought, a

nervous gesture arising from your fatigue, from trying to understand the names and factions. A jumble revered by some, reviled by some. You see your own eyes in the streets there. October made summary by the promise of freedom. You sat down a little pile of poems in the middle of each table quartet. The children's group names swirl from paper mobiles, Hershey's kisses, the Spinderella, the smartest giants. I crouch down, Michael writes of a moon rise that will light your eyes on fire. I think of all the rooms vacated by circumstance, bereft classrooms waiting for chatter and revelation as we sit here in this room and writing sparks into our hands.

[00:52:15] Thank you, Samar.

[00:52:17] Our next reader is Rena Priest. Rena is the Lummi tribal member. Her debut poetry book, Patriarchy Blues, won an American Book Award, and she is the recipient of a National Geographic Explorers grant. Rena plays with poetic form, makes and breaks rules, and her poetry brims with music and surprise. Please welcome Rena Priest.

[00:52:42] While this challenge so well to not cineastes not hjalmarsson well-healed. Xand clindamycin attachable.[tribal language]

[00:52:50] I'm really, really honored to be here with my cohort today on our last big reading for Jack Straw. It's been a wonderful year and I'm just so happy to have been included. Thank you, Kathleen, and thank you, Levi and everybody else who has a hand in putting this together. It's been wonderful.

[00:53:12] I just have two poems for you today.

[00:53:15] They're new. And I've been thinking a lot about climate change. I had a residency at Hedge Brook this summer and people kept asking me, are you having weird dreams? Are you having weird dreams? And it's true, it's so silent, and so still you have interesting dreams.

[00:53:32] I woke up from a strange dream in the middle of the night and jotted out the beginnings of this poem. It's called The Index.

In the beginning, there was darkness, then a bunch of other stuff and lots of people.

[00:53:46] Some things were said and loosely interpreted or maybe things were not communicated clearly. Regardless, there has always been an index that thing about the meek, how we shall inherit the Earth. That was a promise made in a treaty at the dawn of time. It was agreed upon and primordial darkness and documented in the spiritual record. The nature of the agreement was this. The world will seemingly be pushed past capacity. A new planet will be discovered 31 light years away. Space travel will advance rapidly, making the journey feasible. The ice sheets will melt. Things will get ugly. The only way to leave will be to buy a ticket. Tickets will be priced at exactly the amount that can be accrued by abandoning basic humanity. The index will show how you came by your fortune. If you murdered, trafficked or exploited the vulnerable, stole, embezzled, poisoned, cheated, swindled or otherwise subdued nature to come by wealth great enough to afford passage to the new

earth. If your ancestors did these things and you've done nothing to benefit from their crimes yet do nothing to atone through returning inherited wealth to the greater good. You shall be granted passage. It was agreed. The meek shall stay, the powerful shall leave, and it all shall start again. The meek shall inherit the earth. And what shall we do with it? But thought about putting aside our meekness.

[00:55:22] Ok. I don't think that's gonna happen. I think we're gonna figure out a way to solve this whole mess that we've put our self in.

[00:55:28] And I think we're going to do that by changing the way that we think and speak, and the things that we believe and hold dear. In my culture, we talk about watching your words and your thoughts because of how it shapes reality. I had an elder one tells me that I needed to help our people with my gifts. And I said, how do I help our people? And she said, think good things about them. That's just an example.

This poem is called The World Maker.

Be conscious of your thoughts. It's very serious work to make a world. Your thoughts and words take the shape of reality. If you test it, you'll be lost. Imagination races forward to offer scenarios of the worlds you could make.

[00:56:16] You open your mouth and aha. And outcomes the sound of a bell. A torrent of flowers. daisies, roses, zinnias, bluebells. You cough, but the sound is three dots of baby's breath that followed your feet like an ellipse, you or me. I open my mouth and outcomes a winter morning the house I grew up in. A younger me, waiting at the bus stop, watching maple seeds, helicopter from the trees to land atop the gilded golden quilt of fallen leaves. There is coffee. There are frozen windshields. I opened my mouth and outcomes loneliness, cigarettes, boogie woogie on the radio, dark, empty taverns at daybreak, sad books read in bathtubs of water gone cold. I opened my mouth and out comes green and blue and purple of bruises and flowers and sunsets. My mind gives me a picture of an old-fashioned chainsaw stuck partway through a tree. Someone had tried to thaw it down, and partway through it got stuck. The owner gave up and left the saw to rest in the rain. The tree healed and grew around it. This is me, I am the tree, healing, growing around all the things that have tried to cut me down and burn me. I am taking these weapons and tools and making them freakish in interesting parts of myself. I hear singing and drumming a great and powerful chorus. It goes on for hours. The songs turn and change and join together and fold in on themselves. I feel that they are reaching into me and doing surgery on the injured pieces of my soul making me new. In this place where the things that I think and say are born into the world in unexpected ways. I want to make sure my thoughts are kind and good. When I am ready, everything will be new.

[00:58:13] Thank you, Rena. Our next reader is Sylvia Byrne Pollack. Sylvia has been a professor, cancer researcher, mental health counsellor, and she is a poet. Her examinations of political and social folly and tragedy come of decades of fierce attention, wit and intelligence. But even her darkest poems bear traces of glee. Please welcome Sylvia Byrne Pollack.

[00:58:41] Well, it's lovely to be here to look out and see friends and family. And I want to thank the library and thank you, of course, to Jack Straw, to everybody there. To Levi, all the wonderful training that we got. But mega thanks to Kathleen, who just nudged me to apply. And it turns out that indeed, the third time is a charm. It's just been a great experience. And I just love all these other writers. You all wonderful. And it's as Chris said, I hope we don't lose contact with each other because it's important that we keep this going. So, my project is called questioning myself. And, you know, it's not always easy to question yourself. I'm going to read you three of the questions.

[00:59:28] What would you choose for a pet? A T-Rex or a Kraken?

[00:59:36] In the designated area, my black dog lets me off leash to run, sniff, explore, chase rabbits out of magician's hats. We collect the rabbits' tails to give as gifts to our unlucky friends. Deep into the woods, we plunge through thickets. I ride on black dogs back. I carry him under my pith helmet. His dogs scent mixes with the sweat running into my eyes. We get lost, but we have each other. And a leash, that could be used as a noose or a rope to pull ourselves back up over the edge of this cliff. We play games, black dog and I. He leaps on me, knocks me off balance. This is not my favorite. I prefer when I play fetch. And he races off after some harebrained scheme I've concocted. He may be gone for weeks, occasionally months, but I know he'll be back. Despite my eating right, exercising, thinking lovely thoughts, hanging out with positive people, getting plenty of sleep, he doesn't care what I've been doing. When he decides to come back. He comes.

[01:01:00] Entrance can be as subtle as a Gregorian chant or as raucous as a Sousa march.

[01:01:08] He whimpers, barks, growls, howls according to his mood. I listen, I do not applaud or encourage him in any way. Yet he pops down across my feet, leans all his weight against me as I try to stand. I've often thought I ought to call him millstone. We are in a marriage from which there is no divorce, just reconciliation, understanding, acceptance. Over and over again.

[01:01:45] Would you rather watch silence of the Lambs or Dumbo? Rage, rage against babies in a cage, not a playpen or crib or portable play yard fence, but stainless-steel frame and mesh sides, floor and roof. A candle, if you will. I won't, at least I don't want to. But in my name, it's being done. We the people are agitated, anxious, willing to believe cockamamie conspiracy theories, invading armies. Hannibal's elephants tromping north through Ecuador, Nicaragua's jungles, bringing what? Imagination falters, stops, reasons of order closed. A wall of fear rears up ugly antithesis of beautiful. We pay for it. And babies, little girls and boys lie listless in their crates in to hear a voice they know. Harsh English syllables beat tattoo's on tiny eardrums.

[01:03:02] What do you think?

[01:03:05] That an order to stay alive. You have to respect something. The poem that declines to be written because it is self-conscious, shy, cryptic or shallow, is a poem that must nevertheless be treated with respect. Like a wild goshawk.

[01:03:24] Don't try to take off its hood too soon. Let it rest in the dark as the two of you get to know each other. Your voice is important. When the day comes to let it fly. Watch where it soars. If it disappears into the forest, you must let it go. But if it flies back to you, feed it.

Thank you.

[01:04:00] Thank you, Sylvia. Our next reader is Shankar Narayan, Shankar Narayan grew up around the world. His daily encounters as a civil rights attorney with technological encroachment and his insights into their impacts on our natural world and on our human rights feed his poetry, which has garnered well-deserved publication awards, fellowships and honors. Please welcome Shankar Narayan.

[01:04:27] Sir, how many of you all went to a Mariners game this season? four people? Really? That's it. They keep trying. I mean, it takes talent, right? They have the longest drought in the major league sports. But I don't think it's because they're not trying, right. They're spending a lot of money on people and it's not. So, I think that takes some talent anyhow for the sports fans in the audience. This first poem is called In the Arena.

The goose lands in the infield, settles.

[01:04:57] As if a thick Cuban swinging a chunk of dead tree at a stuffed cow skin weren't absurd enough. As if beneath the snow, Indian bones, no seeders, slowly crushing to petroleum, no spectra of marshland that perhaps some primitive part of the goose's brain remembers encoded in this choking air. A ghost puzzled upon his return to find his old home demolished. In the Korean knockoff Godzilla. The boy asks why they kill the creature, who was just looking for food. But the adults laugh off his question, smile extra wide.

[01:05:38] The announcer has failed to make a goose chase joke. Coughs[unintelligible] and fake teeth bobbing to fill the dead air. And I don't know whether to weep or swear as security not built for running chases the goose around his heart, thudding harder and harder in my chest. And then the firecrackers arresting both our pulses, though I know the beating will continue. The goose lumbers to panicked flight and trajectories directly into the Jumbotron falls 40 feet to the stands.

[01:06:14] Against the evidence, the Croft's [unintelligible] is announce that he is fine. Oh, hapless bird.

[01:06:22] My life sometimes feels a B movie in which I am freak beast, unwanted nuisance with webbed feet and adapted for America's Astroturf incarnated too far from water. I tried to explain to the ICE agents, but manage only one honking whale sad enough to shatter eardrums and my limbs already so slick with running blood. I cannot raise them even to signal surrender. This day turns so slowly, the roof rolls like a closing casket and we are only standing where our home now buried once stood.

[01:07:02] We just stand here honking, awaiting the machineguns.

[01:07:08] So that was poem number one of two, before I read the other one, I want to say Jack Straw has been amazing. You all. All of my fellow writers are incredible. And I at least have I have anything to do with it. We're definitely not going to lose touch. We're going to do stuff. And, you know, I think the energy is there and we'll be able to do that. Thanks to Levi for everything you've done. Thank you, Kathleen. Thank you to everybody else who makes Jack Straw happen. It's been so cool. It's been a really great experience and a bright spot this year.

So, this other poem I haven't read for quite a while, but when I was sort of reflecting on what I wanted to share. You know, summing up this year, it's been a hard year for me. I think it's been, you know, a year with a lot of loss and a year where I've sort of felt stuck on the wrong side of a lot of things. So, this poem is about being stuck on the wrong side of borders. But, you know, even if you're not in that case, right. You have languages inside you that, you know, you are grasping to keep, right. We all have lost languages. So, I think there's something universal in this poem, which is called Oral History Examination.

[01:08:17] If you were to feel where in your body, the trauma of losing language lies.

[01:08:26] And if you were to ask why your voice has been banished from its homeland. And if you sometimes wonder why English feels a rasp abrading the throat of a dead crane. And if someone asks you what is power and you are unable to answer.

[01:08:54] And if later in the border cue, you realize it is the impact of the beliefs of others on the visceral of a single body. And if you try so hard for the right answers on every immigration form, despite knowing the nature of truth, is valuable. And if you believed you were beyond borders, but borders reach back to crook again and again. And if you were to see the border's black line uncoil and crack your back like a lash on so many, it crossed Indians, slaves, bracero and now you. And if you profile yourself before they do, questioning every friend, protest, plea and poem to assess their compatibility with this new America. And if you have never approached a border without your heart pounding so loud, you must rehearse how to say your name when the agent asks. And if despite this, your hand quavers so violently, your passport falls into the gulf between you and the guard. And if later during the search, you are terrified they would find a new threat CD, because he sang of a with an ecstasy forbidden in this no man's land, meaning this land without humanity. And if high speed flight from a checkpoint is grounds for deportation and evidence rendering you admissible to America is inadmissible in an immigration court, rendering your home and body incompatible.

[01:10:55] Then you would know. The reasons America is far from perfect are assimilated into your larynx.

[01:11:07] And free to fear you would walk past the cameras and drones to that same checkpoint. Like Mohammad arriving in Mecca after years of desert. And to that same guard with that same

magnum, in that same voice, which you finally recognized as your own. Say, I do not believe in borders. See my skin, which is my home, which is here, which you are wearing. You are wearing my skin. You are wearing my skin. You are in my skin. Thank you.

[01:12:02] Thank you, Shankar. Our next reader. Our last reader is Dianne Aprile.

[01:12:08] Dianne Aprile has been working a working writer her entire career as the author of non-fiction books, as a staff writer and columnist for The Louisville Courier-Journal. As a critic, magazine writer and an essayist. Her new memoir, brilliantly explores the legacy of a favorite aunt's traumatic secret. Please welcome Dianne Aprile.

[01:12:30] I want to say that I really feel so grateful for being in this program to have had the experience of being so moved to laughter, to near tears, to feelings of identification with others loss, and with feeling a sense of community with people of different walks of life. And I think that this has just been an extraordinary experience for me for that reason. Above all, I want to thank Kathleen. I want to thank Levi. I want to thank all the writers that I've had the pleasure of reading with and meeting with and writing with through this program. And I also want to thank my mother, who 41 years ago this week died. I want to thank her for teaching me the pleasure of playing with words and also the secret of how words can help us heal and help others heal. So, I'm gonna be reading three very short excerpts from the anthology that we've put out, and they're from my memoir that Kathleen described, which is the story of my maternal aunt Alene, who was known to everybody as Anny. And it's the story of how I was affected as a writer and as a woman by her long-held secret of a rape. Also, the details of her lobotomy. And also, her particular form of OCD, which was compulsive hand-washing. But most of all, by her courageous survival. So, I'm going to start with the memoirs, hybrid memoir, so there's poetry, there's things in her voice, my voice kind of goes all over the place. I'm going to begin with a short couple of paragraphs called Family Fun.

From the sidelines, I used to watch them wake from their trances and do ridiculous things that my Uncle Sam had suggested while they were under his control. Party goers, usually women, sometimes relatives. Once, from my perch on the stairway, I watched as a woman my mother's age, struggled all night to light a cigarette whenever she heard the sound of my uncle clearing his throat. No matter how hard she tried, tears of frustration filling her eyes. She could never bring her lighter, close enough to ignite the cigarette held taut between her lips.

[01:15:17] The crowd approved. The palpable power of suggestion. At some point, my Uncle Sam would laugh.

[01:15:28] Set his slippery old-fashioned glass on a tabletop, put his unsuspecting victim under again. And to the delight of his cocktail party audience, break the spell.

[01:15:41] She, the impossible smoker, would carry on as if nothing had happened. Clueless, her unremembered trauma now over.

[01:15:56] Sam, my uncle in his younger brother, the one who pulled quarters out of the ears of his nieces and nephews, the one who chanted five magical words to suggest to Anny she was overreacting, not a rape, just a bit of harmless flirting.

[01:16:20] You were a hothouse flower. He told her, naive, easily frightened. Magical words to put the truth to sleep.

[01:16:35] So the next piece is a list. It's called 20 Things About Her.

One, her plump lips reinforced in Vermillion the night of her 90th birthday. Number two, the wallop of her big toothy grin. Three, the bushy brows she darkened to hide away the gray. Four, her lively laugh, loud and rambunctious, unapologetic. Five, her teasing corny, silly sense of humor and how it endured and endeared. Six, the way she pushed doors open with her elbows. Seven, her gusto, her appetite for fun, her crush on Placido Domingo. Eight, her obsessive fear of storms and dogs and dirt and germs and God, not necessarily in that order. Nine, how she mastered in her seventies the art of diaper changing to the astonishment of all who thought they knew her. Ten, her irreversible devotion to the women in her family.

[01:17:59] Eleven, her habitual irritation with the men. Twelve, her tidal waves of memory, the way they rolled into a room like a tsunami, devastating and without warning. Thirteen, her unwavering insistence that nothing happened the night that something clearly happened. Fourteen, her recklessness in getting what she wanted. Fifteen, her unstoppable, insatiable habit of making friends. Sixteen, her trademark late life walk, stooped, bent, humped, yet vigorous. Seventeen, her hands knobby knuckled, wrung raw, peeling, grazed by water and time. Eighteen, her notorious potato dumplings fretted over, prayed over Kirsten hallelujah had ever devoured. Nineteen, her woefully inadequate kitchen, which I loved as I loved her, despite all flaws and dark corners. Twenty. Her one stubborn secret, a not frayed fabric.

I have spent my life unraveling its ragged stitches, finding us still. And finally, this is a found poem, in a sense, it's called Remembering My Lobotomy, and it's told in her voice and her words.

The night before. I was so scared. I thought I would die. This nurse, she was real nice. I smoked cigarettes then. And she said, you know, I get off at 11:00, but I'm going to stay because you are so afraid. I'm going to sit with you all night. And I said, do you think I could have a cigarette? She said, I have to go and ask. So, she came back and she said, you can have one. And she lit it for me. She must have given me something because I don't remember anything more. I just remember that she held a match and she lit that cigarette.

[01:20:37] Thank you, Dianne.

[01:20:40] So I want to thank you all so much for coming and I want to give one more round of applause for this wonderful group of writers.



[01:20:52] I think their reading speaks for its self.

[01:20:54] And I want to thank our library, the Jack Straw staff, our writers, and let you know that our 2020 curator is Anastacia Renee. And please stay tuned for another wonderful year of the Jack Straw Writers program. Thank you all so much for coming.

[01:21:15] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.

