



# Library podcast

## Virtual It's About Time Writers' Reading Series: Meeting 368

[00:00:02] Peggy

Welcome everyone to reading number 368 of It's About Time: Writers' Reading Series. I was realizing tonight that I kept feeling like something was wrong. I remember - since we're recording now, I don't have to take photographs because we are, so I was like why am I able to like be more relaxed when I'm listening? This is one of the clues so I realized that this is a somewhat of a continuing experiment, but I'm so glad that you are all willing to try and try new technology, login with us, and we are creating a record of readings that hadn't previously been able to be recorded or shared with other people. So even as we take steps backward, perhaps into our homes, we're going bigger and wider into the world. So, I'm sure that people will continue to join us on this coast and the East Coast where it's not a little late. While a few people join in a little attention to this beautiful quilt behind me was a gift from writers that I work with at Cancer Lifeline and that is where I met Wanda. So if everybody's

[00:01:27] kind of ready to settle in I'm going to go ahead and Introduce our speakers tonight. We're going to be starting with kind of a special cameo with Wanda Herndon and then we'll hear from Kait Heacock, Suzanne Edison, and Alison Eckels. There are open mic opportunities in between, three minutes - keep it to it please, and first of all, let me tell you a little bit how it came to be that you have Wanda here tonight. She is a fellow member of the Cancer Lifeline Advisory. And at our June meeting, at our June meeting Wanda shared that she was going to have a poem in the Seattle Times. Now most of the people didn't know that she wrote poetry. And when I was on the lookout for it that following Saturday is like unlike most people who have, maybe if they're lucky, have like a poem in public somewhere. It was like this big honking corner of the op-ed page it was fabulous. So she revealed another side to herself and I realized that it's often until we ask someone about their other things. We have no idea

[00:02:45] how rich and full their lives are. And when she sent me her bio, then I was further blown away. I knew that she had been a Starbucks Senior Vice President. I knew that she had her own Global Communications company and was CEO, CEO of her own company, but didn't know that she had been involved in Broadway producing, minority and ownership of men and women's professional basketball teams, and she's received numerous accolades including the 2015 Puget Sound Business Journal's Woman of Influence and Senator Maria Cantwell's 2018 Women of Valor Award. She's going to share with us her poem, "I Cry."

[00:03:28] Wanda

Thank you Peggy. I just want to say that I am honored to have been invited to read to you tonight. And I want to give you a little background, you know, in all the turmoil, turmoil that everyone is experiencing. You know, I'm no different than anybody else. I had knots in my stomach for, for months now. Plus the incident with Mr. Floyd happened the end of May and here

[00:03:56] we are into July pretty soon, August. So, you know, I kept waking up feeling pretty terrible. And I said I need to find a way to channel my feelings. So I wrote the poem, "I Cry" and I like to share it with you. I Cry, Home alone, I cry. I cry for my ancestors, stolen from African homes To suffer the injustice of slavery in America Viewed as inhuman beasts of burden They died. I cry for my people who survived this shameful history Oppressed and terrorized, their tears watered the roots of inequality They suffered. I cry for an American dream lost Replaced by a Black person's nightmare then and now Only we understand. I cry for members of my race, callously slain by evil Ku Klux Klan, vigilantes, neighbors, and the law Thousands still die. I cry about poverty and destitution engulfing our communities Unbreakable cycles of despair begun so long ago on slave ships, plantations Few escape. I cry, incensed by the murder of yet another Black person Knee on neck, asleep in bed, jogging in their neighborhood America is our country, too.

[00:06:18] I cry because we are not welcome We are tolerated by those who say, "It wasn't me" A perk of White privilege. I cry because our sacrifices for America are unrecognized And our deficiencies emphasized Equality eludes us. I cry because our ancestors died for my chance Decades later, hate still festers and threatens our souls The pain is too much. I cry for justice. I cry. Thank you.

[00:07:15] Peggy  
Thank you Wanda. Thank you so much.

[00:07:18] Wanda  
Thank you.

[00:07:25] Peggy  
[Sigh.] Kind of gives - you all need a little recovery time.

[00:07:33] Okay. I have to switch gears because I'm not I'm your host. Next person. I'd like to introduce is Kait Heacock. I'm particularly taken with how she described herself as she said Kait Heacock likes to think of herself as a literary organizer who builds community around books. As a person who can't help but build community I was like, I could tell I was going to really like this writer. Kait is a book publicist, the Pacific Northwest editor for Joyland, and sits on the Advisory Board for the Mineral School artist's residency. Her fiction has appeared in Esquire, Joyland, KGB Bar Lit Magazine, Portland Review, Tin House, and Vol. 1 of Brooklyn - Vol. 1 Brooklyn, excuse me. Her nonfiction has appeared in Crab Creek Review, Largehearted Boy, Literary Hub, The Millions, PANK, and even The Washington Post. Her debut short story collection, Siblings and Other Disappointments, was released in 2016. She is currently at work on a novel about what happens when women turn their anger outwards. This evening she'll be reading from

[00:08:51] this novel-in-progress All The Boys Laid Out Like Princes. Welcome Kait Heacock.

[00:08:59] Kait  
Thank you. Can you hear me okay?

[00:09:02] Peggy  
We can.

[00:09:03] Kait  
Great.

[00:09:03] Peggy  
Now we just - there you go. Welcome.

[00:09:06] Kait  
Well, thank you Peggy and thank you to the Library for diligently putting together this event for so many years and tackling the transition online with such aplomb. Thanks to everyone who's joined us tonight. I'm sure most of us are suffering from screen fatigue these days, but I do appreciate y'all coming here to show your support for spoken word. As Peggy mentioned. I'm reading an excerpt from my novel in progress. I've been interested in telling a story about friendship, particularly between teenage girls for a long time now. That age is such an intense and dramatic time that I'm not sure our culture as a whole take seriously. And this novel I wanted to explore what happens when you take an unhealthy obsessive friendship between two impressionable, damaged youths and you add to it a psychopath. Here is an excerpt from All The Boys Laid Out

[00:10:03] Like Princes. I first saw Christina during Memorial. Sometimes I think my life didn't really start until I met her like you can live as half a person and get by okay, but when you meet your soulmate, you become whole. Of course, I didn't know any of that then. I could only sense that she was special. I was 12 and Christina was 11. It was a celebratory day at the Kingdom and the Jehovah's Witnesses that Jay Dubs as my dad called them, honored the death of Jesus. Once a year they pass bread and wine. Something I knew my Catholic friends from school did every Sunday. My mother once told me that was indulgent. When we passed the bread and wine around we did not acknowledge it as actual blood and body. Even as a small child I could recognize the gruesome nature of people willing to believe they were eating their God. You weren't supposed to eat or drink it unless you were one of the chosen 144,000. The very first time we went to a meeting after mom had answered the knock on our door and started

[00:11:13] studying with the Witnesses. My daddy took a sip from the cup of wine and said, "How the hell they do they know I'm not one of the hundred and forty-four thousand." Laughing quietly, he elbowed me in the ribs until I laughed too. And when I did he made a big show of looking around the room and added, "Is there a list nobody showed me?" He made a good point and so I imagined heaven as a place that you couldn't get into unless your name was on a list. On that list clear as day, I

saw Clint and Nadine, but I couldn't make out my mother's name. That was okay since she'd get to live in Paradise on Earth after resurrection. Back then I thought my daddy hung the world, and as his only offspring, I would inherit his Heavenly Kingdom. My mother did not look amused when Daddy said it but she rarely did. This was sometime after her fourth or fifth miscarriage. No the first time I saw Christina at Memorial was after my mom had already passed. Her dark eyes made her look like she was full of secrets, like she could

[00:12:21] entertain me for hours playing truth or dare. Christina sat in-between her parents. They passed the wine glass delicately balancing on a silver tray over her head with slow and precise movements. They were playing keep away from their small child. But Christina managed to wrap her hands around the stem. Her father pulled it out of her hands with a tug and a small splash spilled over the glass. While he hurriedly past it, Christina with reptilian precision flicked her tongue out to lick the droplets on her fingers. "I saw you earlier," I said when the meeting was over and I found Christina wandering through the aisles. "Doing what?" she asked with big eyes at feigned innocence. I'd find out later that she was a middle child used to blaming things on her siblings. I leaned in and whispered, "You drink the blood." She flushed with embarrassment, or shame, or something else, like that tingly feeling you could sometimes get below your stomach. Christina took my hand and we ran off giggling to the bathroom. My

[00:13:28] daddy was somewhere talking to the widows. Christina's parents were chatting with other families each with a kid in their arms. "Do you want to know a secret?" Christina said once we were locked inside the one person bathroom. Before I could answer. she said, "I wanted to see what it would taste like." "Blood? Eww no, that's gross." "My brother Danny told me there's alcohol in there. I had to try a taste," Christina stared at herself. Her cheeks were fatter than mine and her light brown skin pinched pink, pink at the apples. Her cheeks would stay lit like that the rest of the day, like the flush you get when you come inside from the cold. Christina sat down on the toilet and peed while I stood near the sink. Her purple tights bunched around her ankles while she swung her legs. I wore tights too under my velvet dress. It was April and still cold outside but not enough to wear the dress I wore to my aunt's New Year's party two years ago. "Did you ever want to taste it?" Christina asked. "I don't care

[00:14:31] about alcohol. My dad leaves beer around the apartment all the time, and he never notices when I take a sip from one. It's not about the taste. It's about being one of the chosen who gets to taste it." "You want to be special," Christina said in a singsong voice. Back in the lobby a boy ran up to Christina and said, "You're missing it." He turned and ran for the front door, Christina ran after him. She called over her shoulder, "That's Danny. Come on." I looked around for my daddy, but couldn't find him anywhere. I took off after the other two and stopped outside the door when I saw them panting on the sidewalk next to one of the Witnesses I didn't know, and a cardboard box filled with kittens. "His cat had a litter and he brought them for anyone who wants one," Christina explained, her chest heaving with breathlessness as she spoke. She held a kitten up to me that was squeezed tightly between her fingers. "Be sure to check with your folks first," the man said. I scooped one up and found daddy standing near

[00:15:35] the door sandwiched between two women. Since my mother had passed, he never sat through a meeting without at least one woman worrying over him and making sure he was getting enough nutritious food to eat. We lived on other people's casseroles for six months. "Did you see the kittens?" I asked too impatient for hellos. "There you are, kiddo. I was telling Diane and Julie about you just now," he said and tousled my hair playfully without breaking eye contact with the blonde one. The woman on his left leaned down and said, "What a lovely dress you have there." "Seems a bit literal Clint, don't you think?" she was a short brunette who looked nothing like my beautiful mother. My daddy looked at me and said, "Look at that - blood red. Didn't put two and two together. The poor thing, she didn't have anything to wear. I'm useless in the laundry room." He gestured a lot with his hands while he talked, throwing them up in despair when he explained his inability to launder, and patting me on the back because I was the poor kid

[00:16:36] without a mom. I held the kitten up again. It's body squirming between my palms. "Not now, kiddo. Let me finish my grown-up conversation and then we can head home." I turned around and walked back to the box of kittens. Other families huddled around it. Christina and her brother were joined by the rest of their family and Christina's parents looked like they were seriously considering taking one home. Pressing it against my chest. I squeezed the kitten so hard it scratched offensively at my hands. When I paused to push back the long sleeves of my stupid dress. I pretended the kitten slipped from my hand and let it drop onto the ground. If I couldn't have it, I wanted nobody to have it. It landed on its paws with perfect resilience, stunned only momentarily by the fall. As I dipped over to pick it up. I contorted my face into one of concern and said, "Oh no," in case anyone was watching. I stood up with the kitten meowing terribly and saw Christina. She was the only one who saw me whether she believed

[00:17:42] my act or not, she said nothing. Instead, she smiled. I'll go ahead and end there. Thank you again.

[00:17:59] Peggy  
I have to remember to, okay.

[00:18:06] [Ha ha] Oh my goodness. I made the mistake one time of taking a dead dog prompt to to my Lifeline group, and I've never been allowed to forget it. They would be on tenterhooks with that ending. So you will have to come back, read more, and keep us posted about the publication date.

[00:18:29] Kait  
Absolutely. Thank you, Peggy.

[00:18:30] Peggy  
Excellent. Okay. Is there anyone out there in our virtual friendly world who would like to do a 3 minute and open mic? If you are, I hope you're standing by in like chat, say hey. I know there is talent out there.

[00:18:53] The next reader and I was encouraging some of my writers to think about sharing their work because one of the prompts that I had taken to my weekly Cancer Lifeline Writing for the Moment class, was a poem by our next reader Suzanne Edison. And I never know exactly what's going to come out of the reading, or the you know the prompts I bring, but that particular prompt, which all I do is really read it, and just let them go, was very very generative for the group. So thank you Suzanne and I look forward to hearing, you know, more of your work. Our next reader, Suzanne Edison's recent chapbook, *The Body Lives Its Undoing*, was published in 2018. Her poetry can be found in: *Michigan Quarterly Review*; *Whale Road Review*; *Journal of the American Medical Association*; *The Naugatuck River Review*; *Scoundrel Time*; *Mom Egg Review*; *Persimmon Tree*; *A Journal of Narrative Medicine*; *The Ekphrastic Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in Seattle, is a 2019 Hedgebrook alum and teaches at Richard Hugo House. Welcome, Suzanne!

[00:20:16] Suzanne

Thank you. Thank you Peggy. And thank you. It's About Time Reading Series and Library for making this possible. Can everybody hear me just thumbs up if you can. Good. Thank you. Okay, WebEx is not my intuitive normal space, but I'm doing my best. So I'm going to start off with a poem for those of us who were on the either upside or downside of midlife. However, you choose to look at it, and I just wanted you to know that there's this creature that in the poem called a coelacanth and if you don't know what a coelacanth is, I'm just going to give you a little bit of background. Very primitive looking, it was thought that they went extinct with the dinosaurs about 65 million years ago, but it turns out that they are not extinct that there are two different species. One lives off the coast of Indonesia and one off the coast of Africa, they are very elusive deep sea creatures living up to 2,300 feet below the surface, surface of the water. And they can be quite large up to six and a half feet

[00:21:22] and a hundred ninety eight pounds and they can live a long time. So anyway, I'm going to start off with this poem called, "We Should Not Wait for Fruit." "Death is the dark backing that a mirror needs if we are to see anything." And that is an epigraph by Saul Bellow. Once we lived in the hyperbole of petals and penumbra. Felt ourselves stark and ravenous as flickers who drum on house siding mining for grubs. We tongued each other like cows at salt licks. Oblivious to the whine of lawn mowers or diesel stench. We lived like avalanche lilies pressing through snow. Profuse, we skimmed at nothing. Now we are past the verge of vernal and should bury the clarity cold March gave us. Let our etched in ice beliefs that we are rare like coelacanths able to live undetected, frozen in time, become rain glaze. We should lie in the sprouting, in mirror slicks of mud. Let gravity take us drunk deep in thistle.

[00:22:43] The next poem is a little bit different. I'm trying to give a range of, of poems and themes here. This is called "Late Blue Moons." My shutters open to rarity. Record heat all summer. Bloody sunset, smoked out sky, rage of forests on fire. Tonight the crenulated mylar shine of moonbeams across the lake flood the bedroom. A photograph of you on a glacier, encrusted beard, pickaxe, goggles twists on the mirror. We've all had too much exposure. The icy slip of Earth's demise dot the papers daily. I shiver now after a late lake dip. Swimming out from shore. Ignoring the drowned carpet scraps, tires, strangling algae. In the glacier-carved body of water that was once ice. I hoard photographs of snow. Whatever is wild must melt our great denial that coats us like the Pacific

Ocean's debris patch. We must burst like the Jack Pine seed scarred, scattered and charged for generation by fire.

[00:24:15] This is the poem that Peggy was referring to I have a daughter with an underlying autoimmune disease, but she's doing very well and has been in remission for a number of years and this is when I wrote this poem. "After Remission Her First Tattoo" It wasn't the needles or punctured skin rat-a-tat-tat and repeat that surprised me. She'd had years of infusions. It wasn't the ink like an ant trail of dark blood. Nothing we hadn't both seen in the vials siphoned monthly, like crude oil from shale that often sputtered or refused to flow. It was the location she chose, familiar bench of her left inner arm exposed and soft as morning haze. Where once tubes were tied above her missed vein. And the image in Roman numerals their heft like those carved on a tombstone, engraved on a sundial or gold coin. A code one must decipher something a future lover will rub his finger over or kiss. The tattoo inscribed today marks an expiration to the platoons of bottles, pills, lined up beautiful as soldiers. Marks four

[00:25:48] years since then the gnats swarm of her rash, and weakness finally lay dormant - like larvae in winter. And my gift is forgetting the phlebotomist name that I once knew by heart.

[00:26:06] This next poem could be called "There's So Much to Scream About" but it isn't, it's actually called, "Oh America" and there are some phrases in the poem that are taken from Ray Charles' version of "America the Beautiful" so you may or may not recognize them.

[00:26:27] Oh America. As a girl I was told keep it down. My words crushed like cigarettes. Here, now, my clacking teeth this pecked grain of tongue bitten, no longer held, wanting a refrain to circle the caged children. The ones oh beautiful who dared for spacious skies, they cannot yet see. Here my furor, flagrant and foaming, chanting in liberating strife. My feet calloused for justice and rights. Aged, I continue. Can you bear my Earth and fire? Purple mountain majesties spitting and hissing as I say - hands off, my body, his body, hers too. I'd rather be a crane, still, listening, but without buttressed wails of resistance, silence like a parasitic wasp will infiltrate, colonize and mummify. Here now new currents, collective chemistries of heat, and time once again a freedom beat. Oh render a clearing, extrude the liberty in law for those like my brown daughter. Let the arc of her days bend from sea to shining.

[00:28:15] Wanda I hope you're still on the phone or on the call, but you may not be. And this is another, this is a cancer poem, "My Friend Claims Her Second Round of Cancer."

[00:28:30] As my Italian father would say since the house is burning let us warm ourselves. And so I braid my wreaths of garlic, sweep out those motes that hover like ghosts in fall. Our house slants toward dawn, toward ducks arriving on a brimful pond. I say let's hunker down, lay ourselves and the breach of stud and nail bear unhinge the windows.

[00:29:11] And lastly this one's called "Like Robins Eating Ash Berries in October," which is a little weird because I just saw ash berries on the tree outside my window, and I thought how could I've

made this in October. Are there still ask berries in October? But yes, there are. Anyway, "Like Robins Eating Ash Berries in October." Minstrel of need for what is, I play the cello. My calloused fingertips buzz, hovering on strings - the way a fly trapped under a glass desires release. I let it come bowed. Let it come haunting, fill the air with screech, moan or strum. I let the rumbling ground camber up between my thighs, cradle the curves of Maplewood. Praise the beetles who left the tree alone. Praise the droughts and floods, stamped in its waiver and grain. And hail the goats who once gave their guts for strings to pluck, so we might live even without words. Thank you.

[00:30:37] Peggy

Thank you so much sort of ironic that you end with the phrase "without words" - [laughs] this series is dedicated to words. It's such an honor to hear you read. I believe the last time that you were in It's About Time. I was out of town, so I haven't had the chance to read you, you know hear you read your work personally. And, especially after sharing that prompt, you know, with others to hear you read it, I tell you, you do such better justice to us. The whole poem, the line that drew me, and I think, just kind of caught the attention of everyone in the room, along with the other work, is forgetting the phlebotomist name. There's just a chill that goes through us. That's what we all think we dream of forgetting the phlebotomist or the pharmacist name, you know after there's been an odyssey like that.

[00:31:30] Suzanne

Thank you so much. [Laughter]

[00:31:36] Peggy

Of course, I invited a pharmacist to a birthday party. You know, that's how much I like a pharmacist. Anyway, once again calling out to the ether out there - in case anybody wants to do open mic. I know it be especially can be a little, yeah we know Katy Ellis is out there. It can be a little threatening in terms of whether the audio is working, but you know, that's why we have our incredible team of librarians who are passing up on other opportunities tonight to be with us. It was a pretty literary night. There were three events alone just on the Library page not to mention, you know throughout town. So things are thriving in a different and strange way, so there's always opportunities. Next person I'd like to introduce is Alison Eckels. There's so much I could say about Alison because she is one of those people that it turns out that our lives - we probably like, crossed on a beach as children and didn't know it. Her, one of her family homes, was the childhood home of another one of my close

[00:32:53] friends. And so quite often when we're exchanging reminiscences we know exactly what the sand feels like under our feet. In addition, it turns out our children went to the same school. And I'm so happy to be able to present her because as she would say, it's a, as a writer she is just starting to share her work. She has probably been a lifetimer, or lifelong writer, but I'm so honored that she is beginning to share her work. She's been in writing as she will tell you inside her head forever. She found the Writing for the Moment group that I've been leading for about 10 plus years at Cancer Lifeline. She joined us in 2012 and discovered what a safe place it was to begin writing and sharing. In 2018 her first two pieces were published in an anthology put together by actor and playwright, Elizabeth Coplan: Grief Dialogues: The Book: Stories on Love and Loss by Sixty-One Authors. I think

Elizabeth immediately recognized what a treasure she found and has been encouraging her work ever since. And I'm so glad that she's

[00:34:05] going to be sharing with us tonight. Alison!

[00:34:15] I'm going to get you unmuted there, Alison. There you go.

[00:34:21] Alison

Okay. [Laughter] Look at the day. Thank you, Peggy and thank you for leading us in that wonderful group where you bring your compassion, and your wisdom, and your wry sense of humor every week and trust us to write in the moment. And we do and thank you dear writing buds who are part of that Thursday gathering. Thank you all who are here tonight. I'm going to read one short poem from early on at the writing table. I'll call it "Go." Go breathe life, spill onto pages, scatter seeds, splash symbol, tell stories. Go, go, go! Have a life of your own. Let many birds spring from the nest of your pages. Let them fly freely, sprinkling words as insects scatter pollen. Give life, give hope, give laughter. Invite imagination. Have wings and fly. So much carefulness, so much caution. Without these writing groups my thoughts would be even more homebound than I have sometimes been. With wings that spirit, I fly. All things are possible. Bring it all into the body tethering pen in hand. Touching

[00:35:44] the paper with letters with words. This is less like flight, more like plotting, but there is joy in tramping, tramping along the muddy furrows.

[00:36:00] And my other longer poem, I started writing this in the really grey afternoons of March when we all were hunkering down at home, and continued for a while not up in the present time, but perhaps this poem and its emotions may speak to you. It's called, "In the Quiet of the City Called Covid-19." In the quiet of the city called Covid-19. I hear the rush of the crows wings as he flies past. In Woodland Park a toee chirps on the path in front of me. I have found cherry trees blooming amid the firs and cedars. It is safe here. No crowds of people, much beauty. Home from separate walks, we cook, we clean. At eight in the evenings we bang our pots and pans and shout and cheer in gratitude to the healthcare workers. Our hearts are open. We remember how to love indoors. We think we are safe, but here seeps through the cracks - thoughts we don't wish for rush in our brains. In the darkness of the middle of the night we feel the fear breathing through [indistinguishable] good. Even the pillow is restless when we try to go back

[00:37:27] to sleep. Daylight seems safer. Laughter comes easily as the demands of the day are limited by the germs in the air around us. Anger flares too as we have more time to remember things long buried by the din of life. We pretend that anger can hold fear at bay, can mask old hurts, frustration at not being heard. We keep anger close at hand ready if we need it because maybe, just maybe, it will protect us from our fear. A greater force pulses in us, more disturbing than anger, or fear. Grief - the unwelcome guest has huddled in dark corners for more years than I am willing to count, or perch on the windowsill not invited to come in, not permitted to fly away. Grief that others wanted me to be over and done with lives on inside me. Do I have access to clear flowing anger that

helps me heal, access to any emotion strong enough to keep me afloat, or am I still weighed down by despair and desperation for the care I needed so long ago?

[00:38:55] We know daylight and darkness as we quarantine at home, and the slow hours and days my eyes adjust. I see more in the darkness, and I begin to see more in the light. Within four walls, I explore the dimensions of time and space. What we have hidden comes into view a corner of a photograph two or three jigsaw puzzle pieces. Will I searched for the larger picture or try to sweep away these clues? In Covid time I discover that ignoring what's within me no longer works, without the bandaid of a busy life. The quietness of our days shakes loose what's inside us, reveals the hidden hurts, the losses. Reminds us of the times when we did not know how to ask for support and others did not know to offer. Sorrow that we felt in silence years ago or yesterday now wakes up in our bodies, spills out through our pores, fills the space around us, fills our home.

[00:40:12] How do we go on living? Can the people we love bear to be with us in our pain? The ones with us in isolation and those we can reach only through a screen? What world of loss and letting go are they exploring on their own? Do we try to tamp down our feelings and hold our breath? Do we notice when that makes things worse? Can we put our arms around our sorrow, embrace our memories, our hurts? Can we fill our stories with the love we need in order to become whole? Can we comfort one another, not with sympathy, but with understanding? As we grieve, we let flow the tears that have filled us. We disperse the gray clouds that have been with us so long and our light begins to shine more brightly.

[00:41:10] I see my life in pictures, old photographs and home movies scroll past my inner eye, too fast for me to cope or comprehend. How do I anchor myself, feel my feet on solid ground? Only the simplest things will help. I fill the tea kettle, stay near and watchful as it comes to a boil. Make toast, slather it with butter and jam, eat while it is still warm, feel the textures on my tongue, taste a bit of heaven. Outdoors I feel the air warm or cool, notice a breeze, smell the soil after rain, breathe in fragrance of shrubs and flowers, gasp at their beauty. Intake of breath, outburst of joy, loosen the constrictions in my heart and lungs. Inside we wash our hands and sing a song. Can we be present for full 20 seconds, or do we drift away during the familiar exercise?

[00:42:23] Our grief was forbidden, cut short by those who did not want to brush up against our contagion. Is that how we learned to leave our bodies by trying not to feel our pain and loss? Only by coming back to our body, our home, can we breathe deeply, feel, loosen, let go. We need to smell the rich scent of hyacinths. Lilacs will bloom their transitory fragrance and beauty remind us that all things will come and go. Begin, listen consider making friends with the feelings inside. Let grief be among them. Sit was sadness. Have a cup of tea with a loved one who has passed away - have the conversation we have yearned for spirit to spirit, light with light. We have traveled with rustle of crow's wing, heard toes chirp, laid our heads on restless pillows, awaken to to jam on toast. Lilacs have [indiscernible]. There are buds on the rose bush now. We begin to know the light within us, the light that is us. We breathe so we can find our way through our inner landscapes, walk safely and with care in the city called Covid-19. We breathe,

[00:44:01] open our lungs and fill them. We bring our light into our body, open our hearts to love again.

[00:44:13] Peggy

Thank you so much. All right last call out there for any of my people. I know you're out there. I see and I really appreciate seeing some of the faces of people who have been on this journey going online. I see Christiane Bach is with us tonight, and she was one of the very first readers. In March the Library closed and I was out of town and you know at first there's this sense of like whoa, what do we do? And then I realized, as I've mentioned before, that the series had gone 30 years and only missed like one other time before, and we couldn't let a little thing like libraries being closed, or a shutdown or pandemic, stop the It's About Time Writers' Reading Series. And so we've been muddling along with different formats. and it was just last month that the Seattle Public Library who are partners in this, this is considered one of their programs now, volunteered to take on the technology aspects using their WebEx. So it's a little different, but it's a safer platform than some of the common ones

[00:45:35] out there. So I really appreciate the fact that it's been able to open the doors. And I apologize to those of you who have had trouble with audio or video tonight. I see a few things on chat that somebody's saying they couldn't get the audio. One of our readers next month, Loreen Lilyn Lee definitely we can spend the next month, you know, making sure we got your audio. So next month, let's see that will be August 13, I believe. We will be hearing from Loreen Lilyn Lee, Euphrates Moss Phrate, and Lyn Coffin. Onward then to planning September and it's just been firmed up that, as has become an ongoing tradition, that October will be our Jack Straw night. For some four or five years now, we have been able to host the years Jack Straw Writers sampling of them, in our own format - with a crossover with the It's About Time Writers' Reading Series. And so whether we're in person or not, we will be going forward with that. So it's been a lovely evening and still the sun is still shining for a quite

[00:47:01] a while longer. The moon is still beautiful, as so beautifully and exquisitely, you know, captured in the poetry tonight. And, what we can do now is I'll have the librarian turn off the recording portion, and we can stay and have a virtual chat. So thank you all.