



Library podcast

Virtual It's About Time Writers' Reading Series, #394

00:00:01 Peggy

Welcome to reading 394 of the It's About Time. Writers' Reading series. Tonight I am delighted to see so many people from years of the reading sort of past, present and I hope future here tonight. We're going to be hearing from Raul Sanchez, Susan Rich- coming to us live from where she'll be starting Poets on the Coast- and Amanda Harzell. And I understand we have a whole Emerson Bostonian theme. And what's wonderful is you never know what connections are going to emerge. So I would first like to invite anyone here to let me know in the chat if you would like to do or speak up right away if you are interested in doing the three minute open mic tonight, we'd love to have you. Also next month is our annual Jack Straw Crossover night. So we have a lovely lineup from the Jack Straw 2022 writers who will be joining us. Otherwise, let me go ahead and introduce Raul with his splendid backdrop. Raúl Sanchez is the former City of Redmond WA, Poet Laureate 2019-2021. A 2014 Jack Straw Writer. Mentor and judge for the 2014 Poetry on Buses Project. A TEDx participant in Yakima WA. He is a translator who currently teaches bilingual poetry at Denny and Mercer International Middle Schools short residences, through the Jack Straw Cultural Center. He taught bilingual poetry at Evergreen High School through Seattle Arts and Lectures (WITS) program. He volunteered three years for PONGO Teen Writing in the Juvenile Detention Center. During the Pandemic he put together the manuscript for his forthcoming second collection "When There Were No Borders" published by Flower Song Press. He created the "Poetry in the Park" bi-weekly event at the Meadowbrook Pond in NE Seattle which is dedicated to Theodore Roethke. King 5 TV's show Evening has featured both the Poetry Pole and the Poetry in the Park events. So welcome our new celebrity poet well earned, Raul Sanchez.

00:02:29 Raul

Celebrity, that's a big word. Thank you. Actually, the book came out last year that I didn't update that on the bio, but it's a pleasure to be back. The last time I read for this series, we were in person about three years ago, maybe four years ago, something like that. Anyway, so it's a good thing to be here. It's 6:10- I'm keeping track of time. Last week we were in Lopez, my wife and I, and this poem is about that place. It's from the first book: "All Our Brown Skin Angels." I like the poem because it's a poem about trust.

00:03:11 Raul

(Reading) "Cliff's Edge. You and I hold hands by cliff's edge watch the ship's sail with the crossing breeze admire the ancient archipelago if tomorrow we lose our sight. Become completely blind we

could stand still by the edge of this cliff for the wind will show us how hear me now you and I are born from such mysteries."

00:03:41 Raul

When I read it, I honestly get this chills my skin because it's standing there. Just facing the wind. Pushing you back. Now I'll begin. I'll share some points from my new book. This book is divided into four parts and the first part is mostly cultural and immigration and all those issues. The second part is more current stuff what happened after those situations. The third part is more current stuff, themes. And the last part is about the commission poems that I had to do for Redmond and burying and other places. But I like to begin from the book with this one.

00:04:29 Raul

(Reading) "Immigration is something that's never going to stop. Humans have been moving across the world forever. Praise for the walking warriors. This is for all the migrants, the shoeless, the desperate, the risk takers, the caring fathers and mothers, the elders, the youngbloods, the babies, the laborers, the engineers, the aspiring writers, the ones who want to get ahead, the humans with color skins kissed by the sun. The ones who are no longer dreaming, the ones who know the land, the ones who harvest our fruits and vegetables, the ones who take care of our elders, the ones who cook our food, the ones who sing hymns and turn prayer wheels. The poor ones they aren't afraid. The women who are raped, the young women who want their children to have a better life. To all who desire and strive for freedom."

00:05:36 Raul

Next in the cultural part of it have any of you ever tried Mole Poblano? When you go to a Mexican restaurant and a real Mexican restaurant? Mole Poblano?

00:05:50 Raul

(Reading) "16th century Puebla city cultural crossroad where the New and the Old World collided legend says that a magical wind gust swept the precise proportion of spices and condiments into casuals the barrel at the Santa Rosa Convent ancient Mexico advice using chocolate in splendid ways taken from the eldest Mayans quintessential mestizo delicacy roasting chilies Basilia. Mulatto ancho grinding cloves cinnamon. Anise seeds black pepper. Garlic. Almonds. Peanuts. Raisins on metate grinding stone gentle grind making the paste with native Mayan chocolate by gentle Mexican hands I can almost taste it. My mom used to do this by hand. I remember I'm watching her in my memory. It's very laborious, but it's delicious now. Next is two years ago, so maybe three. There was a problem. They still have the issue with avocados. They say this is a new cocaine for Mexico. Well, here's an ode to an avocado you shape like an album seed in the middle of the branches hanging with all your brothers and perhaps your sisters. Did you know that I've known you since I was five? I really didn't really know you then, but I heard about you at that time. You were presented introduced in my mouth as a mushy soft, sometimes tangy, spicy on any decadent delicacy served in small bowls and dipping dishes that soft, green, creamy, buttery meat sensation in my palate could not identify the deliciousness under the hard, crusty skin that protects you dark green as my midnight dreams bumpy as a cloudy day bureau of Sunlight, where have you been? Oh. I see hiding beneath

the bushels crates of transported imported food other immigrants harvested at the right time south of the equator where alpacas mules donkeys and mountains goats go handled by those humble brown skin hands from far away lands where the sun shines brighter. You are free but trapped in a plastic mesh with five other guys your friends, I presume. Even though the sign says four in the pack. Ahuacatl is your name, but nobody calls you that. I think I know why. Do you want to know why? Ahuacatl is the Aztec nahuatl word for testicle. So imagine going to a Mexican restaurant and say, hey, siri, can I get a little bowl of testicle? Like green testicle sauce? They will not know what you're talking about. So ahuacatl. That's the original name of the Avocados."

00:09:08 Raul

All right, next, let's see. This poem at the end of the line has either one word or two that is in Spanish. And the whole idea is to condense the early part, the first part, which is in English, into a single word in Spanish or two. It's titled Life/Vita.

00:09:33 Raul

(Reading) "These days filled with lies mental fear intimidations. Smoke screens. (speaking Spanish) nebulous particles we breathe (speaking Spanish) inhale deep because we need iron air to live, vita, the orange glow, resplendor, father son tonight remains in the center, el centro, while the planet floats, flota, we make the earth turn (speaking Spanish) the rhythm of our heartbeat latitude our pulsing heart correspond the size of a postcard stamp, stampia, stuck on the map of our existence, existence, the cycle repeats itself the cycle begins once more, continua, when night falls we rest the scan, samos, our soul, alma, to see the light loose the new wind of change, biento nuevo, the new day."

00:10:44 Raul

And so it's a condensation of all the English words into a single or two in Spanish. And it says the same thing without all those other words. We know that we need to economize our words. Otherwise we're saying much more than we need to. Okay, this next poem is titled the Shelter of Your Chest. And it came from a workshop with David Wagonier many years ago at the Richard Hugo house. He liked it. And what you're going to hear is what I presented and hasn't changed. And I like it.

00:11:24 Raul

(Reading) "It's here, the shelter of your chest guard my backside from the thin knives of their dreary eyes. Guard me between azaleas and marigolds guard me between wood and musk in your misty meadow. Guard me between the roots of cedar and maple in your snow-covered mountains. Guard me burrowed in the wet sand ocean waves brush. Guard me between twilight and the early light between mist and rain, thunder and storm in the rainbow. Guard me between azure and purple. Guard me between the sheets of your bed tucked in like bald socks. Guard me from disdain guard me, guard me inside, outside, over, under, beside your chest let us guard each other from the fallow keep the torchlight on race your red rose. I'm your warrior so they would like it so it stays the way I presented." Thank you.

00:12:46 Raul

So, about the detention center things are a little off there, but I want to go back in person because to do this soon, I cannot. The whole purpose is to be there with the students. We don't call them prisoners. They're students because their expression, the body language, how to scratch their head, what they're writing, how to scratch it off. It says a lot. And I'm not a psychiatrist or a psychologist, but as a poet, I can interpret what they're writing and then see and ask questions without being too nosy. My experience at the detention center and why I became interested in mentoring the youth in detention.

00:13:34 Raul

(Reading) "There are seeds that are blown by the wind. There are seeds that are planned, planted by human beings. Those seeds will grow into beautiful flowers and trees. Those are the powerful seeds of knowledge mankind needs. The seeds will germinate, throwing roots expanded like fingers grabbing hold of the earth. The roots contain wellbeing grandiosity, wisdom, virtue, truth, pride, glory, faith, harmony, agreement, disagreement, tranquility, ancestry, principle. The roots will give way to the branches providing leaves, foliage and fruit. Reason must be at the base of all that flourishes. Think of the dervishes dance who whirl and whirl away. There is a cosmic dance throughout the human forest where we encounter people from different places and different places. I am one of those trees. I unravel my branches to provide fruit and shelter to the seeds I planted. These days, I share fruit and shelter with the youth in parallel situations. Compassion and an open heart are the roots I use to help them free themselves from the trauma and pain in their hearts. Poetry is a carving tool I use to remove the stumps that hold them down. The words come out of their hearts like seeds germinating to create their own poems, poetry they didn't realize they already had. For the young are praised. Their faces gleamed like the sunshine in the early spring. Their poems are gems strung together like diamonds after the rain." Let's see, maybe one more.

00:15:35 Raul

Ode to an oak tree. This is from the Shoreline project. Voices in the Forest. It has an epigraph. (Reading) "When the oak is filled, the whole forest echoes with its fall. But 100 acres are soon in silence by an unnoticed breeze. That's Thomas Carlyle. Acres of aging grand trees on the lower ground boughs, bending, rising and falling with the wind randomly sinking and fainting responsive bird songs. Day dry ground cover with hard shaped leaves and twigs. At night, the trees on the higher ground cast their shadow under the clear moonlight. Your branches blow by the east west wind secrets toll when the birds can sleep full moon fill with countenance dense murky clouds. Rats of fragment pines, oak and cedar limbs swish with the wind brushed your very old mystical greatness stands looking at the stars of the gorgeous clouds in summertime, your sun trenches splendor shelters, birds hanging on your moist branches, crows, blue jays, chickadees and eagle nests nakedly, standing in spring, your dormant roots thaw below the frozen ground. Do not say that these roots are weak. These roots are strong. The very roots of being." Thank you.

00:17:21 Peggy

Thank you. Thank you so much. I love the exposition between the Ode to the Avocado and then the beauty of the words like seeds and the joy on their faces as they realize they're writers. Thank you. You do such important work. Thank you. I would next like to welcome I should have given a little

announcement before. So Keelam has been asked to do open mic and then Sylvia Pollock will be the open mic reader next after our next reading.

00:18:04 Keelam

Good evening, everyone. Those going to do three quick ones? (Reading) "I wish I could love you without losing myself. I wish I could find myself wherever you are I wish wherever you were, I found love I wish I could love myself as much as I love you." And this next one. (Reading) "Bittersweet kiss I miss what we were more than what we are but any version of us is better than nothing at all. Bitter sweet kiss and the last one. As waves crash on sea shores I see more than the sun shows and you're unless the time lost hearing your voice, enjoying your smile and knowing you better."

00:19:02 Peggy

Thank you everyone. It's so good to hear your work again, Keelam. It's been way too long and I hope you will come back and be a featured reader again, whether in person or virtual return. Our next featured reader, which sounds a little Lolita, is Susan Rich. Susan Rich is the author of five books of poetry, most recently, "Gallery of Postcards and Maps: New and Selected Poems" (Salmon Poetry) and "Cloud Pharmacy". Her awards include a PEN USA Award, a Fulbright Fellowship, and a Times Literary Supplement Award. Rich's poems have appeared in the Harvard Review, New England Review, O Magazine, Image Journal, and elsewhere. Her sixth collection, "Blue Atlas", will be released in early 2024 by Red Hen Press. Joining us from La Conner tonight. Welcome Susan.

00:19:57 Susan

Thank you, Peggy. For a moment there, I thought I was going to have a book starting in the year 24 and I thought, wow, I wonder what on. Tablets, maybe. Thank you. I love this series. I've been part of it for each book that's come out, but it's been a while, way before COVID. I'm going to start with some poems from Gallery of Postcards and Maps, New and Selected Poems, which just came out this summer from Salmon Poetry. And there's a lot in here of women's, Surrealist painters and when I started investigating their work probably over twelve years ago. Not too many people in the US. Had heard of Leonora Carrington. Ramitio zbarro leonorfini. But that's changed a bit. There was a big surrealist show just, I think, last year in New York, and I am going to put money on the fact that there will be a film about Leonora Carrington and Remediosbarrow before too long because their lives were just incredible. One thing I don't think I've gotten into a poem yet is that when Leonora Carrington was bored at dinner parties, she was said to take the mustard off the table and paint her feet. So that just gives you an idea that she did things a little bit differently. I do need to get that in a poem at some point, but here we go. Here is a poem called Secret Agent and it takes its inspiration from one of Carrington's paintings.

00:21:32 Susan

(Reading) "A long armed monkey lurks by the far edge of the table. A kind of night watchman half hidden behind lace tablecloths. His tail an upside down question mark, naked of course, and disinclined to join the party. I think of your life this way, Leonora, observer of other realms, hold up like a secret agent with the oddest of binoculars. Your gaze that of a professor or perhaps an undertaker. How you hated your coming out party. You said it was like your father was selling a

product and not one he believed in. How your teachers complained often Leonora does not collaborate well. Wild animal, the head mistress hissed as you left her wallpaper rooms for the next, you would recall with distaste weekends of flowing cocktails offered by strangers with odd shaped heads, the food laid out as some anemic image of the afterlife. You disappeared by then. self-appointed linguist at the local zoo each day meeting with lesula monkeys, African hyenas to learn their language, to paint their gorgeous minds."

00:23:19 Susan

So there's a wonderful novel about Leonora Carrington. Normally I think novels based on real life for terrible, but this one somehow worked for me and it's called Leonora in the Morning Light. So if you want a good read, I recommend it. And one of the things you would learn is that when Leonora Carrington, I'm not sure if she was quite 18, she ran off with Max Ernst, who was definitely twice her age, more than twice her age, and married to, I think, his second or third wife at that point. And they lived for a time in the south of France and painted and made art and made sculptures. And the first painting that Carrington made, she started it in London and she took it with her to the south of France. The story goes that it was what she needed to prove herself with was about a rocking horse in a nursery. So you'll hear some of those images here, perhaps. And this is called self-portrait as a Leonora Carrington painting.

00:24:30 Susan

(Reading) "I never understood how it happened, the doorknob turning left, not right, until the different selves assembled. How I recognized myself in the blue chair like a hangover of sky, complete with hyena and rocking horse, a kind of overworked alchemy that made the chair legs wear the same boots that I wore, painted with a delicate dab six buttons up the side, like a soused constellation working after hours. And when no one was there, the horse shoeless stumbled out the doorway, main matted and unadorned, she cantered to the orchard for just a moment yet in her clouded loneliness, how she howled, how she opened her ginger mouth to the sky, apricots buzzing on the branches as if to join her. How did she transform from Toy to Pegasus? How do I toss off my blue dress of missteps and instead choose a star map that slips me through to another galaxy? Goodbye to the asparagus of self-doubt. The onionskin envelope of the lonely instead left his hangover open into uncharted happiness. Let the sweetness be dangerous. Unfasten the windows from their frames, take off the rooftop from the triple decker house. Join thy hyena. The horse and the girl offer them wings."

00:26:31 Susan

So Leonora Carrington's best friend and perhaps her competitor, was Remediosvaros, who was originally from Spain. They met in Mexico City, where a lot of artists went to escape Europe during World War II. And this next poem is also a self-portrait, but from a Remediosvaros painting, and hopefully that's all you need. Brian Turner's wife, who passed away a few years ago, both of her books, her name was Elise Kunnets, with a K, and both of her books have Remediosraro paintings on the cover. And her second book has the painting that this poem starts from. And sometimes I don't know if it's helpful for you to know what's in the painting, so I'll just say both of these artists loved androgynous figures, figures that seem somewhat female but were really trans in their own way, in a

very different way. And so you have one of these figures making birds. I think that'll give you a start. Self-portrait with stained glass and feathers.

00:27:51 Susan

(Reading) "As she works. Everything wakes up and takes notice. From the Alembic paint machine assistant to the magnifying glass that she uses to render tropical birds merlins and Yugatans night jars that soon exit her canvas. Then spiral above the church windows into a ghost night overpowered with bright constellations. Which the painter lightens into breathing orbs. The same shape that her brown raptor like face takes as she concentrates on her vision. And though the birds exhaust her, she pulls each one from her musical heart, the perfect body part for a woman transitioning to an owl, which every girl knows will require more than a prayer and a spell."

00:28:57 Susan

And now for a complete switch in topic. For better or worse, this next book, which comes out in 2024, but I'm doing the finishing touches on now, is not well I'll just say that the two poems I'm going to read tonight, I have not read to audiences before, so for better or worse, you're it. And they are both they both involve an abortion that I had when I was 26 years old that I didn't really want, but my family wanted for me. And this first poem is called Arborist Abortionist.

00:29:43 Susan

(Reading) "Procured by anxious relatives who demanded a disappearing trick, prepaid like a surcharge for yard work done in the offseason. His steel tool severing a quirk of a tree limb attached to the nub of a stubborn bud. He didn't question how I appeared transplanted into his waiting room, never inquired as to the coauthor of my infinitesimal text, although he'd memorized its map, extracted the troublesome little branch that obscured the golden overlook and restored the river view."

00:30:35 Susan

Sometimes words sound so much alike. And how did that happen? I think I'm going to end with this one, which is very new. I have this crazy belief that you take a gamble when you come and spend a beautiful evening at a poetry reading. You don't know what you're going to get. You don't know if you're going to be glad you're there or not. So I feel like I should take a gamble and also show some vulnerability, which this poem definitely does. It's a bit longer, so if you need a glass of water or to stretch, this is the moment to do it, and I think this will be the last one I read. It's called the abortion question.

00:31:17 Susan

(Reading) "The abortion question is if you wanted it. The abortion question is if you had a choice. The abortion happened in Manhattan, the Big Apple shaken and stirred along Madison Avenue just two days after being kicked out of his Paris fifth floor walkup. The abortion question watches you through side view mirrors the self-satisfied gaze like that of an undertaker, as if it holds the answer to the question of your body. The abortion question loves to flirt. It flirts with your sister who accompanies you. Flirt rhymes with skirt, and you relinquish yours for a paper gown. The abortion question laughs with your sister executor of this plan, who giggles back. But where is the deadbeat non dad? Is he

hiding in the hourglass, the dying tulips? Such a checked out father not to be. The abortion question is bone tired, multilingual and global. It looks Basque on its past coat hangers and back alleys, the wild herbs, cotton root bark and black cohosh. Take a fourth cup penny royal water, twelve drops heart shorn, wrote Ben Franklin in his popular recipe for fixing the misfortune. The abortion question liked the founding mothers best, the midwives, crones, nurses who created an underground network, a Jane collective for the women who fell into trouble, became suicidal. Abortion is no joke to this body, which ate enough for two potato chips and kosher pickle sandwiches well into the second trimester. The abortion question places its miniature sticks into the cervix, small bundles of twigs made of seaweed. See you tomorrow. The abortion question waves. And tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. This is not an antiabortion poem. No one will be killed with a .22 caliber rifle, as in two women's health clinics in my hometown. No one pushing fetus porn outside the Central post office. But the abortion question really loves to attract attention. It lives in a clock tower, chimes, strongest at three months. Have you heard the one about the United States Supreme Court voting to legislate women's bodies? What a question. The abortion question loves to fool around. Masquerading as a lawyer, as an illegally appointed judge. It plays swashbuckler, predator and prey. The question hangs around me like a pest, tugging at my knees, begs it will not go away, offers another drink, a Manhattan, shaken and stirred." Thank you.

00:35:15 Peggy

Thank you, Susan. We're so glad that you were willing to take that to us, to bring us and to know and to be so brave, to share that it's beautiful and so needed right now. Back at the beginning of your reading, I was trying to decide if I wanted to be like, you know, not a collaborator like Leonora or like a constellation. And now you send all those thoughts out of my mind, and I hung onto every word, as I'm sure we all did. So thank you. One question for you, though. You haven't told us you spoke of artists, but could you share? What is your screen background?

00:35:59 Susan

It's a Leonora Carrington painting. I always forget the name of it because it's not translated, but I think it's something about a horse and a dream she wrote a lot about and she painted a lot about horses. She was I wondered about that when you said androgynous and birds, and I felt like I saw feathers.

00:36:20 Peggy

And so I'm so glad that you elaborated that. I had a feeling it must be related, and I really wanted to know more. So good luck with what's on the coast, and come back anytime, even between books.

00:36:35 Susan

Thank you so much.

00:36:37 Peggy

Thank you. Right. Our next open mic person is Sylvia Pollock.

00:36:44 Sylvia

Okay, well, I'm not taking nearly the risk of Susan said. I'm not that brave, but this is a poem I just wrote, so it's a baby poem. It's called Today on the Burt Gilman trail.

00:37:02 Sylvia

(Reading) "A man in cycling shorts, helmet, dark glasses pedals by, talks to his wrist. I want to know if he converses with his boss, his lover, his kid, or himself. No clue. He went by too fast. Next on the trail, a rabbit casually crossing in front of me. Not in a hurry. He's learned their safety in numbers. And we've had an outbreak of rabbits this summer. The raptors are not keeping up. Neither are the neighborhood cats and dogs, which all are wildly domesticated. I know we have coyotes as well, my wife has seen them on her early morning neighborhood walks. Here, half hidden among the trees beside the path, a small tent is ditched. Someone undoubtedly lives there. So many satellites unhoused, I feel guilty. The cavalier rabbit doffs his feathered hat to me, almost trips over his sword, but maintains his composure, continues his ambulance into the shrubbery under tall pines. Will he end up in the stewpot of the homeless person who lives in the pine shrouded tent? I prefer to pay higher taxes, feed the poor. I was brought up Baptist, taught it's my duty. I converted to Judaism. It's still my duty, perhaps even more so, to care for the poor, the homeless, the destitute, the unwanted. The trail stretches on needs and rabbits deliberate."

00:38:51 Peggy

Thank you, Sylvia. Always glad to hear any new work so. Amanda Harzell is the author of the forthcoming poetry books, "The Heart Never Pretends to Be a Beautiful Muscle" from Finishing Line Press and "Glowing Animals from Game Over Books". Her work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net and appears in Breakwater Review, Carve Magazine, The Knicknackery, and New Letters, among others. She holds an MFA from Emerson College in Boston. Originally from eastern PA, she now lives and writes in Ballard with her husband, two children, and their dog. Welcome.

00:39:36 Amanda

Thank you. Thank you for hosting. And thank you to all the beautiful poetry and the poets that we've heard so far. It's really an honor to be here with you and to find this community here in Seattle. I felt like I was for it for a while. I'm very glad it's here now. The first couple of poems I'll read are from the first book, the Heart Never Pretends to Be a Beautiful Muscle. There are poems about the tension between motherhood and the individual, the necessity to evolve, and then the desire to hold on to a previous identifiable old self. And I was thinking a lot about the transformation that happens in fairy tales and how something looks like one thing but it's really something else. Whether that's metaphorical or nature, the way that a prey will disguise itself as predator or magically in a way that sort of tests your own resolve and reveals true character. The first poem is called Unknowing.

00:40:37 Amanda

(Reading) "Even horses know they are just horses even goals no distinction from falling even force know how to disturb lose daughters permit fields their sudden light. Even the dog knows I'm leaving the door broken from both sides by dust and lightning. Even I know the worst thing light creeps in and here if you stare too long at unripe fruit pistol and petal photos of lovers before you swarmed into their

bodies waiting match sticks. What's to see except the greed and spire in your own heart beating against wind, that unknown monster we call heart."

00:41:15 Amanda

The second poem I'm going to be reading is called El Tasso in Space. Similar to the poetry that Raul was sharing. The family separated at the border, going really, really heavily on me when my son was first born. And even as of 2021, there were 122,000 children that were separated from their families. That's enough to fill up Lumen Field twice. It's called El Paso.

00:41:47 Amanda

(Reading) "Do not send your children across the Border. On tricycles intended for outer space, a name can make you less a person more a crater bunker down in the orbiter eyes north with everything designed to burn beneath you. Greetings from interplanetary dust, from spectral frost on asylum and prickly pearls. Where else to go but towards inevitable, uncertain dark? Even the youngest sense meters in El Paso. Then a hopeful wreck. The world ends in spectacular blues and citrus in a picture from your childhood cutting into sprinkles on birthday cake the one blanket given is woven from stardust. What's English for America? Do you need your blanket if you're hungry and cold? Suddenly deepest sea makes sense the windowless room and its bodies and silver weights all pressure and anonymity brachiopods in desert boulders cut from hickory by glaciers, limestone as a conduit, a uterus. In the warehouse there is nothing left but everything a howl forgotten in a cage. If the world ends without cake or children stand up tall, burn the pictures, learn foreign words."

00:42:53 Amanda

The last poem I read from this first collection is a poem I'm not sure if you all remember. Most of you are local. The Orca J 35 in 2018 she had a calf who passed away shortly after birth. And in a show of unseen grief, she carried her calf for 17 days and more than 1000 miles, to the point where the pod started to show concern. The pod would take turns carrying a calf for her so she could rest. And it was just a really emotional window that was opening up to me at the same time where I just become pregnant. I had experienced miscarriages and I had a whole bunch of women in my own life that were opening up about their experiences. And it was really striking me for the first time how much of our lives as women that we live in isolation, where we don't share these stories and we don't offer this community to each other. And so I was really struck by this magic of women's bodies and how the best part about magic is not the illusion itself, but how we don't know how it happens. So this poem is called Slight Orchestra in Deception Past.

00:44:08 Amanda

(Reading) "The orchestral carries your young orcs a beautiful island this grief magician watch closely, follow each sleight of hand stacking cups turn my heart into another muscle one I can clench it glows in the dark. The trick to love is love at nothing. I love you so you exist yellow birds exploding in the amphitheater bubbles rising in the tank. I love you so you pretend you're real. You know the future is more than fire and siren that punch and ghost one trick to reassurance respond by name turn back and called even just to be thought it in half who doesn't covet some hocus focus a way to roll back rock from cave or peel card from orange to live underwater my grief magician bears a wet hat holding

hunger the doves are gone. The ribbon back in my mouth for my first trick I will need an assistant for my second for my second the last couple pumps I'm going to share from the last collection and they're very short and they don't really need much of an introduction but book blowing Animals basically was born out of all the wildfire smoke we were experiencing and this pre-COVID kind of interlude of wearing masks and not being able to go outside and then when COVID did hit. There was this eerie timelessness between that smoke and isolation. So these homes are very short and they're about that California without makeup. I do. Says the woman to the future they kick howls when cut but she licks icing from ring finger not knowing black seeds don't take in the garden or root in champagne and armpits of lace she does not see the warm bodies burrowed in pine needles and down to kill for their young but begins hearing them flee at night and finds their fur and puts toughs in her mouth as if she too carries a child one promise of heat and time is incandescence another drought and warmups a dry wind will come inside the house testing doors. When the bedroom catches fire, she wakes like a little mission town abandoned in Orange hills the next home is called Beginning birds are peace is cut out of mourning the arch of your body still in my palm is it really so simple? Wind downing power, the crumbs on a knife, the storm, the appetite a way we revive the beginning until the soap you leave on the towel is a fortune and the toothpaste and the sink ocean poem for us the glowing animals no one has seen yet no one has named and the very last poem I'll read is called nighttime is to nectar as stable as to fox. This is how it will happen. Dear not knowing which way the river runs moon out like a lamp at the end of the hall finches trap their gold panic inside a winter porch and then you arrive stealthy as the fox who wins out of dead legends sweet spoken thief curled up like smoke in my home and belonging to no one prying open your throat for my name I find only a belly full of honey as well as the bees." Thank you.

00:47:27 Peggy

Thank you so much. You touched on so many things that are you know, you're right actually. We're in some red flag warning for wind now and bringing back the memory of the Jpod and what that must have been like for you newly pregnant after miscarriages. It's heartbreaking. Thank you for capturing that. And for the titular poem from Glowing Animals. Yay. Thank you. Next we have another open mic reader, which is Sandra Sandy Yanui. So if you could say hello. Hello. Give a shout out to what the heck you've Been doing since the Pandemic with Voices.

00:48:17 Sandy

Wow. Yeah. Thank you. Well, yeah. A few of you in this room know that since the Pandemic started, my sister encouraged me to host a reading series on most Sundays. It's through a Facebook group called Cultivating Voices live Poetry. Number of people here in the room have read and will be reading. Our first Sunday of the month now is a poet's focus where we focus on we just went on labor where we take a word and let the prism of that word emerge through the poetry. So it was near Labor Day, but also I was thinking about labor in terms of birth. There's so many ways. The second Sunday is a new books showcase featuring folks like these fine folks here, RAL and Susan, who actually are going to be being contacted very soon to come on and read for our program. And then we do something called the Wild Card Open Mic where we invite folks. It's an international intergenerational intersectional reading series. We occasionally do special events like a Poetry Pride parade. We did stuff on the suffrage hundredth anniversary of suffrage and just different events. So that's what I've

been doing since the pandemic. Most Sundays on cultivated voices, live poetry. So feel free to join us on Facebook and join our Facebook group and then you'll get the announcements about the readings and be happy to have you come and read in one of our platforms.

00:50:10 Sandy

I'm going to share the poem that I was talking about when I came into the room. It's called gratitude. Workshop Notebook Number 1219 91. And it was written for Lucy Brockbroydo, the poet who wrote *The Hunger and the Master Letters*, among a few other collections. She was I took a workshop from her in Cambridge for a number of summers and when I was at Emerson during the summer when I was at Emerson in the MFA program. And ironically enough, I actually was working on this poem when I was at Poets on the coast. So I have Susan Rich to thank for this poem, among many, many other things in my life. So this is and I'll signal when it's Lucy Brockbroydo's line and the others are all lines from poems that I had cast away that I said, I'm not going to use them. And I went into this journal from 1991 and pulled out these lines and then stitched them together into this poem.

00:51:27 Sandy

(Reading) "Gratitude workshop notebook number 12 19 91 for Lucy Brock Boydo. She said, poetry is about demons and to trust the interior of ice. I ruminate over all the advice we must endure in this world. A precarious stack of dishes on the edge of the sink or a game of midnight freeze tag in a field of no moon. She said, don't apologize, don't explain. If 14 fish swim past, what does the 15th look like? The darkest hour of the recurring bruise. She said, court tension and risk. They don't exchange names. They don't even shake greasy hands about doubt. It's terminal. More than a blessing, forgiveness is another night of testimony. How is it you remain unmarried? I told myself it was the mattress. I had a bed. I did not lie. I find fire delectable and can sleep. She said, be careful not to be too good. So I pretend to fidget with some anger in simplicity, the simple let the day bear out its breakdown of horoscopes like coins that disappear into the glass space of a parking meter. All description must be revelation. I can forgive only the first gray hair. And in response to my longing, I burn the toast." Thank you.

00:53:30 Peggy

I feel like I pulled a genie out of a bottle today, which a couple of the people I was writing with earlier today when I started going on about yourself tento like now it's like within hours. Here it is. Thank you. It was wonderful. I'm so delighted. Anyway, what a lovely evening. Forget that. Gave me some other thought. Well, what I will do is just say that it turns out that we actually for the October reading, we have four readers from Jack Straw and I've forgotten their names right now, but I thought we only had three, but fourth one has been added, so that will be lovely. We will be back on October like, I think. Oh, October 13 is our next reading. We plow through another year and as always, tell your friends, invite them open mic. Always so many things to do. I'm going to turn off the recording now and say goodnight so that we can all just chat and then we can compare notes about Pamela Painter and Emerson in and all things fun. So thank you to our readers, our open mic people, and always our audience.