



Library podcast

Virtual It's About Time Writers' Reading Series: Meeting 376

00:00:01 Peggy

Good evening, and welcome to reading number 376 of the It's About Time Writers Reading Series. A year ago, in March, was one of the very few readings that didn't happen on the second Thursday. But I'm happy to report that by April, with the help of The Seattle Public Library, we were up and running. And in the last year, we've been able to start recording these readings. So I do need to let you know that this reading is being recorded and it will be edited, though. So all names would be removed and but it will then become part of It's About Time YouTube channel and the featured readers tonight will also be part of a podcast that will be available on The Seattle Public Library website. So it is my pleasure to start the year off a little differently. Mary Ellen is wearing the green and says, if we been in person she would have brought us Shamrock cookies. And I have no reason to doubt her. It's wonderful to see so many people here tonight. It's a new record for our online presence and I'm

00:01:26 Peggy

delighted that nobody had to drive across town and that we're able to be here. Tonight we're going to be hearing from Amber Nelson, Mary Ellen Talley and Diana Elser. So Diana from California. Mary Ellen from near Green Lake and Amber and I are alive in Ballard, Washington. So close to our own home branch, which has been incredibly supportive and I am so thrilled that Just before the start of our entering the world of Pandemia that we have become an official partner with The Seattle Public Library. So I'm going to introduce now Amber Nelson. She is tis the author of two full-length books of poetry, In Anima: Urgency and The Sexiest Man Alive (Spooky Girlfriend Press), as well as numerous chapbooks, most recently First Apocalypse (The Magnificent Field). She was the co-founder of alice blue review and founding editor of alice blue books. She lives in Seattle with her partner and their two cats where she hikes, bikes and cooks a lot. Welcome, Pamela. Not Pamela. Pamela

00:02:48 Peggy

is coming in from the waiting room. Welcome Amber. There you go.

00:02:54 Amber

Hi, it's so nice to be here. Thank you for inviting me. It's great to see all your faces and these tiny tiny boxes. I'm going to read from a couple projects. The first will be my book, Sexiest Man Alive. For those of you who don't know, this book was written one poem for every sexiest man

alive starting from the very first, Mel Gibson, through The Rock. Each poem was written using collaging their public speech. So things they said in interviews on red carpets in real life not like dialogue from movies or that sort of thing. And I'm just going to read one poem from this book and it's Sexiest Man Alive 2005 Matthew McConaughey. All right, all right, all right. Now, first off, I want to thank God because that's who I look up to. To my family. That's who and what I look forward to. To my father, I know he's up there right now with big pot of Gumbo, I'm in South Africa at the moment and of course, I still play the congas naked.

00:04:03 Amber

I mean, well, it's a heaven of a story, ain't it? I am vain, I think vanity is a good thing. And I started to strip things down and after that I was high as a kite, what does that ring mean? What does my name mean? You might be tempted to call it spiritual, but I think that description would be a dodge. I'm religious. I like that word. To that, I say Amen. We'll have a frequency where things are clicking. I got much more selfish. I'm a fan of the word selfish. I'm turned on. I'm interested in things. I'm in the clay in my career. You start to miss things, you know. Listen, I was thinking. My brain's not wild enough, not in tune enough to be finding things that inspire me. At the end of your life, all the things you thought were periods, turn out to be commas. There never was a full stop to any of it. We got to light the fire. I lived in a trailer. It's an Airstream. Let's understand that this is not a destination. This is the beginning of an adventure. I'm going to unbrand. I'm sure we're going

00:05:14 Amber

to talk about the years I was in romantic comedies. The guy on the beach running around shirtless, I believe I gave them buoyancy. I like people who are great at what they do. We would get together and have a steak dinner and philosophize. That's mainly what I do with my male friends. It's the Latin lagari- to bind. To bind us together again. That's about the point where I start to see I can survive. Speculate all you want. Do I think the image of me is a true picture of who I am? No, it's incomplete. But things about me that are out there. I'm not going to say they're false. I didn't just fall off the apple cart. I worked for all of it. What I've been choosing somebody who I could get drunk on their obsessions, you know, soothsayers preachers Barnum & Bailey, poets, it's a whole different. rhythm and way of speaking. I still have moments where with acting where I'm like, I'm getting away with it. I was the first frat boy in the University of Texas film school who are buttoned down denim shirts

00:06:21 Amber

boots and a buckle. The Stereotype is that we're slow. I like to say, we take our time. I've never had fears that I was stuck in one thing. Everything's right where I left it. I didn't see a false note anywhere and in case you didn't know I've always been in on the joke and I can shake hands with that.

00:06:45 Amber

That's The Sexiest- Thank you. That's The Sexiest Man Alive. The next thing I'm going to read is two poems from this project. It's totally unnamed even the poems or unnamed. I've been

working with a visual artist named Cole King. I'm going to read the last two poems that we've done- or the last two pieces that we've done in this series. I'm actually going to share my screen just for a minute, so you can see the visual art that I'm responding to. So, that's the first piece. Well, the eighth piece in our in our series. Take and have a look. Untitled. Planetary or maybe ocean deep a vision disrupted, by synapse or blade. This Abyss flooded under watch, where is the guardian we were promised? Where is the tree rooted by God to heaven? The bottom of the sea makes promises. The sky makes promises the light makes promises the moon. The eye makes promises all promises are broken somehow we grow and reach. All the same and the eye and the eye and the eye share. The ninth one. And that's the most

00:08:05 Amber

recent. Well actually, I just got one this week. The most recent one I have a poem for. Untitled. Everything has its wonders even darkness and silence Helen Keller, a new body shapes itself into being in the dark. In space, there are no stars by which to navigate this sea. What it is to see. Only by feel what it means when to feel overwhelms against new skin, there is comfort in Silence, the body Celestial, a rogue. The dark, the tree a root by which to hold or be held. There is something out there somewhere else movement towards a song and abandon staves to unknown Wilderness. Where do we go from here? When we don't know where here is lit from within away. And I'm going to close out with some poems, from this new chat, book called Safety, it was all poems, I wrote doing a poem a day with a friend who I hope made it here but if not oh well we did poems a day- a couple times through the pandemic and... And most of it was trash, but I went back through and and revised, what I had made

00:09:33 Amber

into this. And yeah, I can bring the checkbook out. I see your question later. I don't have it on me right now, but I'll grab it before the day is done. so, the first poem infection, In the beginning, there was nowhere. Its fingers endless contamination. Tell me now, where safety lies. I do not see it only mountains. The future will bear down. The sun rises rows of stampeding, bodies the valley. What we remember the world fed on the bones of us

00:10:16 Amber

Parable of the Assassin. On the horizon. Shimmer seems like home in a desert. That does not exist. There are no safe places. Here, there are no safe places. Anywhere, only the violence and Terror who travel between.

00:10:36 Amber

Outside the lights like the sky Whited out. I should something outside the lights a siren. It's raining. Now later more Sirens, it's difficult to see the world, clearly, the windows of fog. So hard to kill the sun, had come, I forgot. I'm considering a piña colada thinking about desire. The half sleep awareness of everything, coming around the bend.

00:11:11 Amber

There will be brutality. It won't be in the Hungry Eyes of a wolverine. Won't be the nice teeth. Biting isn't Brimstone. Isn't dining with bloody mouths. It is sometimes a blue sky even now and cherry blossoms. There will be brutality but not bones. Snuffed in the wind how it tastes to us Winters than air. Brutality, it will change yellow daffodils like laughter and sharp mountain peaks the Predators. On the meat of their bodies, it means a quickening their coasts and red wake their glow Shadow glow. No Light, No Light. There will be brutality of Stillness of Baron fall, drift of abundance of revulsion, the brutality of eclipse, the moon, imploding, the galaxies shrunken brutality yet to come.

00:12:12 Amber

Buried. There is a challenge to lines like a Delta, glowing. Dust, that never is a hollow knock its years. The water new on the spruce low tide, a granite boulder is the same. Two. A day of juniper in ripe grass nothing but a thin scream stretching the bright, its tip fractured and distant like a goal without breeze. The last of fire weed wet silk stained.

00:12:50 Amber

When I create all the fat, sorry, when I cradle the flower in my hand pedals loose, I see the end little portends, an ill fate like coming undone my hands, shake too. Wait for night and then more days. Even as each bleeds, I know the flowers thrown away, composted forgotten dust to dust and whatnot, but I'm not yet ready. The time will come when there is nothing left to hold onto. We have all just come undone. There is nothing left. And this will be the last one I read. Night. One. A sound underwing, she hunts a black dawn, the sun, a boundary. Two. Our wood rot lovely. Three. The woods fangs, the stream free of bone bound of finch and scar rust and Father's a field. That's it for me today. Thank you so much for being here. Having me, etc.

00:14:02 Peggy

You had promised that, as you said before the day is done, you will be able to show the cover.

00:14:12 Amber

This book? No, I just I just finished writing it. It doesn't have a... I just I just finished it. In fact, I'm not even sure it's finished still has notes towards potential revisions but I have I thought you meant First Apocalypse, which I do have.

00:14:28 Peggy

Ahhh. Well, I think they want to see them all so great, thank you so much. Thank you for. For thank you for blue sky, and cherry blossoms amidst the brutality. All right, we now have some open mic people so [unintelligible], are you there? May I ask you to unmute? I should have said the order before, in terms of people who did the open microphone test. It was so this is a, you'll be followed by Carol. So all right, you're on.

00:15:10 Unknown

Metal upon metal. For Wayne Smith. Wayne dreams of a heaven where metal upon metal rules. He can see all of 11 robots, who pretend to be in school. Where metal upon metal rules?

No place for a man exists with robots who pretend to be in school. He finds it all a funny myth, no place for a man exists

00:15:39 Unknown

with no oxygen or food. He finds it all a funny myth and that the robots are rude. No oxygen or food the molecule shift and turn and that the robots are rude. He tries his best to learn the molecule shift and turn like a kaleidoscope. He tries his best to learn by writing to the Pope.

00:16:09 Unknown

And do I have a time for another one? Okay.

00:16:16 Unknown

The sun borrows a ray into my brain. It sends squid-like tentacles to the corners of my mouth. They pull them up into a perpetual grin. Tears, run down my cheeks like Twin Creeks.

00:16:35 Peggy

Thank you.

00:16:38 Peggy

Carol.

00:16:42 Carol

Okay. While a moonbeam zips to Earth in less than a second. The house mouse and I come eye to, eye this evening, neither of us is pleased about this house mouse aiming for the Austrian apple strudel stunned by the flicked on kitchen, light is an ogre in my eye. I visible in an unlocked, ziplock plastic bag circling berserk finally free to the floor where poofs tip of tail under and out still standing stopped dead at my entrance. I wish I can would look away surmising. Imperceptibly a more positive relationship with food as a phosphorescent prism hangs in air and slides from my sight. And I have one more. Yep. Your name was Nate. Your ears have risen in value ears that never would I have imagined when sitting behind in fourth grade, fascinated, concocting funny ear names for those winged lobes that I wish were mine. Now eyes, like my need ears, like yours. To hold the heavy rims that cross my nose and thank goodness ears, have hitches for your indispensable ear aids, conveying my

00:19:06 Carol

whispered words in earshot to you from behind my ear-hooked-on mask. Oh neat. If you thought about it, you would rhapsodize the jug-eared jokes that brought our attention to each other. In enough, amplification, all these years I've sweet-talked love and you're still all ears.

00:19:48 Peggy

Next, we're going to be going to Mary Ellen Talley. And after our reading from Mary Ellen, we will have two more open mics and that will be Rick and Allison. So let me introduce Mary Ellen. Mary Ellen Talley's poems have recently been published in Raven Chronicles, Banshee, What

Rough Beast, Global Poemicals, and Ekphrastic Review as well as in the anthologies, Chrysanthemum, and Ice Cream Poems. Her poems have received two Pushcart nominations and her chapbook, Postcards from the Lilac City was published by Finishing Line Press in 2020. Mary Ellen is a former school-based speech-language pathologist and lives in Seattle, Washington. Welcome Mary Ellen.

00:20:42 Mary Ellen

Thank you. I just got a notice that my internet connection was shaky, but I think I'm okay. Thank you all for coming and thank you Peggy, for inviting me and to Seattle Public Library. It's great to read with Diana and Amber. I'm going to be reading some poems from my chapbook Postcards From the Lilac City. The artwork is by my son. It's largely a nostalgia based chapbook about my hometown Spokane, which has a lilac festival every year ever since 1938. And the book is available through Amazon and Finishing Line press. So, I'm going to read some poems from my chapbook, and then I'm going to read a few poems about our trip to Ireland. A couple years ago when travel was happening. The first poem is called End of the Trolley Park and if you may know that a lot of the amusement parks in towns were built at the end of trolley lines to entice people to travel and this was one of them. Carousel at Natatorium Park in Spokane, Washington 1909 to 1967. Come back. Watch families drawn to swimming

00:22:12 Mary Ellen

baseball, gardens rides and cotton candy they picnic at the curve in the Spokane. River. Not far from where two Chinese dragon benches. Breathe fire. See the Gilded Carousel. Gift of Master Carver Charles Loaf in honor of his daughter Emma's wedding one tiger. One giraffe, the benches. And all a 54 painted horses with be jeweled, headpieces gallop as a platform spins revolving. Once Each Steed jumps. Six times, revolving twice, my father leans, right on the first date in the Lilac City. Trying to catch the brass ring with one outstretched hand, it won't be a stylish marriage. We can't afford a carriage. See now, the end of an era. Five cent trolley line, gives way to cars and buses, Merry-Go-Round, and rollercoaster, still stand. Another 30 years to host, Fourth of July fireworks, where we parked on, the rise above for the best view. Hush. Now the stallions are sleeping. Come leave, the slow descent to Nat Park. Two. Oh, and the cemeteries are full of writers.

00:23:52 Mary Ellen

Two. The Carousel returns to Riverfront Park 1975. Open crates in storage and Rouse each Restless sleeper. Wake up. We will tend to your grooming sweep away years of dust. Restore plumes, reglue dazzling glass jewels. See how each sculpted giant preens elegant shine in coats of paint and lacquer. Come now enter the bricks table up river where 333 mirrors revolve and a hundred eighty lights kaleidoscope color in the circular home. Ticket takers welcome the parade of people queuing up now listening to the organs 300 Hurdy, Gurdy Gurdy pipes, Each animal glistens in waiting throng, step to the wood plank platform, to take their pick. Choose red Sorel, Dapple Gray, chocolate Pinto Bay or Palomino, stirrups ready for the climb aboard, grab the center pole, rise up, throw a leg over and cinch. The leather belt, organ music starts

the slow circle with Oliver in the lead. Head held high, Galloping forward, gonna take a Sentimental Journey. As memories glisten spinning counterclockwise, new generations.

00:25:37 Mary Ellen

Tug the reins as steeds speed past In hastening cadence. Winded riders reach for the brass ring, Let the trolleys sleep.

00:25:52 Mary Ellen

And here are a couple poems from the chapbook, they were prompted by a postcard project in Deborah Woodards' class at Hugo House. They begin with a short poem from a random post card filled with and then there's a letter to someone in my life. This one is The Big Red Wagon.

00:26:25 Mary Ellen

Photo op at Riverfront Park. Now our grandkids slide down the handle, visit aunt, Leslie and drive her to the cemetery. No one needs to buy lilacs in Spokane, such profusion in a brief season. Letter dear Mary, Sylvia, Kathy, Linda and the rest of us, 50 years. Since our graduation, we wore white gowns. I was there with Ken. You didn't expect us to last. The big city was Seattle. That's where we are now a few years back. I saw in our old biology teacher climbing, Mount Rainier, Sister Marian Sarto is no longer a nun. Remember dissecting frogs in her class? Love Mary Ellen.

00:27:29 Mary Ellen

And this one. Is postcard. Poem is called Cheerleaders. Hot hot so hot. Nobody has to tell us twice to wear thongs on our feet Kick. The Can in the street and bike rides in summer, some girls aspire to be yellow leaders or Lilac princesses, but they will have more options because will subscribe to Ms, magazine.

00:28:02 Mary Ellen

Dear Taylor and Aubrey, you have to come to Seattle for the bigger art exhibits. If you put enough colored dots on your floors and ceilings and tables and chairs like, why did like we did at the yayoi kusama exhibit will all be counting using Aubrey's obstreperous method. While your kids are still doing slip Jigs and riding bikes. Wish we could pick huckleberries together, love Grandma.

00:28:39 Mary Ellen

And now I'll read a few poems about Ireland, because Saint Patrick's Day is coming up and these poems are not in the book, most come out of a trip to Ireland in 2018.

00:28:56 Mary Ellen

Endangered Plants of Ireland, County Wexford

00:29:04 Mary Ellen

To think, during joy of its ending where bog orchids used to grow, wild to bury bones on a bright day, where narrow leaved [unintelligible] grew to gather treasure from the homestead in Duncan's town, where serrated wintergreen drank soil. To seize clear-headed from vibrant fields. The one spoiler where green-winged orchids bent to close the door of the caretaker's cottage near Melancholy thistle spreading would trample too many wishes marvel, the roses at our Lady's Island near carry Lily's, almost gone.

00:29:56 Mary Ellen

And this poem is about one of the rebuilt ancient circle forts that we saw in the west of Ireland. [unintelligible] Stone Fort.

00:30:13 Mary Ellen

We walk inside a gate to skip to stroll ascend, descend. 7 narrow staircases find The wider grassy path. On top a walkway, akin to earthy go grain ribbon in circumference that protected land owners. Their livestock from the wolves legal bounties and now the wolves are gone 200 years. From atop the castle walls. We serve a sloping Fields. See lacan abulia and far off ruins of Bali, Carberry Castle. All three. Remnants traversed, by mythic tunnels, Rams and cows they roam. They rest today in charge of solid ground outside the circle. Eyeing my trespass. With a languid gaze.

00:31:17 Mary Ellen

and, When we were in Ireland, I fell in love with the [unintelligible] hedgerows. Which you don't see here. From [unintelligible] hedgerows. If I could bring Ireland to my home in Seattle, I would plant a trinity of [unintelligible] bushes and surround my yard with stone walls, short enough to exchange tokens of friendship with my neighbors. I would line my driveway with a hedgerow of [unintelligible], making that exit as narrow as the roads of County Kerry. I would live long enough for walls to grow covers of moss and brambles come outside daily, wearing long, work gloves to protect my arms and sometimes remove them to let my fingers, linger, underscores of pink, and purple blossoms.

00:32:24 Mary Ellen

And my last poem combines Ireland and covid. 500,000.

00:32:38 Mary Ellen

Winds blow across oceans meander to gentle long water reflected by an obelisk in Washington DC or elsewhere in Dublin sculpture of for swans with broad wings, the children up the steps, they honor the dead of the troubles, we keep honoring the dead. Plague of war, plague of disease. My president-elect looked out over lanterns lit to illuminate, 400,000 American lives lost to covid, Phalanx of long reflection. The Washington Monument, I recalled standing in at Dublin's Garden of Remembrance Mosaic dust of the dead wind on my face, blue. Brain waves in still water spent swords and broken shields of the Irish. Did we bring art of our hands? Spread veneer of healing, like a warm cloak across wide water of misery. Now one month later, candles climb stairs at the White House portico as my new president, honors, 500,000

covid dead trumpet sound over silent prayer. This healing. We do when we remember, thank you very much. Everyone and thank you for coming.

00:34:28 Peggy

Thank you. Mary Ellen. I just

00:34:31 Peggy

have to keep pausing to write down these beautiful lines. Let me see our next Open Mic reader is Rick.

00:34:44 Rick

Okay, I thought I'd read a short Seattle story that I have. I wrote it last summer, during kind of the height of all the social unrest. It was going on everywhere. It's called Who Was Mr. Crane? In the Fall of 1963, a few months into my sixth grade year at John Rogers Elementary in North Seattle, we were given a new principal, Mr. Belrazo. I was in Mr. Crane's class. A large man with an always ready smile. Who honestly, rode a Harley-Davidson Harley-Davidson motorcycle to school, Here's was one of just two sixth grade classes at John Rogers. Initially, the entire school was introduced to our new principal at an all-school assembly and because he was so friendly and outgoing and genuine- genuinely interested in all of us and said he would do his best to help us all do. Well, we all like him very much. The students of John Rogers were approximately 96% white 8 and 4 percent

00:35:48 Rick

Asian, nothing else. Mr. Belrazo was Hispanic, either, Mexican Central and South American descent, and the color of his skin was brown. It was not wrong after Mr. Belrazo became the principle that Mr. Crane always exuberant and smiling yet. Tough, and disciplined appeared before us one Monday morning, looking uncharacteristic, uncharacteristically, somber, and greatly subdued. A state we had not witnessed before even as a room full of most of the 11 year olds, we knew intuitively that something was very wrong after we were in our seats and quiet. Mr. Crane said, he had a story. He wanted to tell us about something serious. That has happened over the weekend with regards to our new principal. He told us that as a gesture of friendship to Mr. Belrazo, someone new to North Seattle. He has suggested that he considered becoming a member of a local Elks Club. That's a social organization with chapters all over the country. The one in Lake City had a large dining room with nightly

00:36:51 Rick

buffets a bar. I believe a game room and possibly an exercise area. Mr. Crane told us that very quietly, Mr. Belrazo, the new principal of a Seattle public school had replied that that would not be possible for he was certain that they would not allow someone who looked like him to become a member of their Club. It's civil rights battles were being waged. A lie in the American South. Seemingly a world away from Seattle, Mr. Crane, told us this story. He made it effectively clear that he was deeply outraged and embarrassed by what. Mr. Belrazo had said to him, outraged that our new principal was afraid to join a local Club because of the color of

his skin and he wanted us to know that we were mostly too young then to fully understand what he was talking about, but we always remembered his story. And I'm sure that the elementary teacher, who rode the Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Knew we would. Who was Mr. Crane?

00:37:53 Peggy
Thanks Rick. Allison.

00:38:00 Allison
I stumbled on this piece of paper recently

00:38:03 Speaker 1
and I wrote this about two years ago on the early afternoon, before I went to read at a bookstore for the first time. So I was understandably nervous. And what does the writer do? When she's nervous? Take a walk. And right, so I did both. Today, I had just enough time to walk over to the Rose Garden and a little beyond most often I visit there either when roses are in bloom or when the garden is garbed in snow today, all the rose bushes were recently, pruned. Their stems were short branches shorter. There was no hint of life visible. I sat in the gazebo and felt the stillness gazed at the woody stems. I remembered that in our lifetimes sometimes or many times we are pruned, we are cut down to where we cannot imagine that anything within us will ever grow again. When we are in that place, we feel and live the dead of winter. I sat there and I knew from so many years gone by that though these rose bushes would reveal the life that were still within them. That in a matter of time, they would

00:39:19 Allison
burst into bloom. But I know that we cannot always remember this to be true, just beyond the Rose Garden. I walked up the knoll amid pines and cedars. There were many branches on the ground blown down by recent winter. Storms and filled by the heavy snow Ah this is what it looks like when we are mature in years and we get proved by The Winds of life. Across the bridge and down the sledding hill. I marveled at what I saw, many more trees and branches were down. Since I walked there recently, some seasons are like that and on the ground volunteers have been busy planting many new shrubs, they left a sign for the dogs, asking them not to trample their and upset the carefully tended Earth and soil. So must we be careful not to tread the soil or trumpet? The new plants when they begin to emerge in our inner Garden. Thank you.

00:40:25 Peggy
Thank you. That is so appropriate as we emerge from this. Very unfortunate one year anniversary today but had towards Spring. Thank you. We're going to hear from Diana

00:40:41 Peggy
now. And then after Diana's reading, we will have two more open mics from Julene and John. So Diana, Diana has decamped from Seattle, but she seems to have a Wanderlust to her.

Diana Elser was born in Great Falls, Montana (Rockies to the east), grew up in El Paso, Texas (Franklin Mountains to the west), finished high school in Bountiful, Utah (west slope of the Wasatch Front), and earned a degree in English at Utah State (west slope of the Bear River Mountains). Despite coming from Montana ranch families on both sides, Diana grew up regrettably suburban. She practices poetry via classes offered at Hugo House in Seattle (west of the Cascades, east of the Olympics), the annual Jackson Hole Writers Conference (southeast of the Tetons), and two poetry groups. She is currently at work on more weather and climate poems, a persona collection in the voice of a blunt, mouthy grandmother, and collected eye-witness accounts of experiences with ghouls, so far mostly imaginary. She has published recently in The Chrysanthemum 2020 Literary Anthology (Goldfish Press), Rise Up Review (2017), Clerestory Poetry Journal(2017, 2016), and Writing It Right (2016, Shaggy Dog Press). She currently lives in San Clemente, California (southwest of the Santa Ana Mountains). Her chapbook, The Winds of Home Have Names, will be released by Finishing Line Press in late March. Diana.

00:41:48 Diana

Good evening, pleasure to be here and to read with Amber Nelson who I've never met and with my colleague, Mary Ellen Talley, who Mary Ellen. Sorry, who believe it or not, I do know. Anyway, she's

00:42:08 Diana

the one who suggested that I read here, so I was very grateful for that. I also want to thank The Seattle Public Library programs, the fabulous job they do of keeping the Arts accessible and the Battle of writers Collective, especially Peggy Sturtevant. I'm going to start by talking a little bit about my father, because he is, the book is dedicated to him. So I think that if you understand a little more about him than some of the poems might make more sense, my father was a meteorologist. He was the son of a Montana rancher, practical curious, very handy, he really enjoyed fixing things. So he was a neighborhood favorite and he was a good father to me my brother and sister fun hard-working. Critical always thinking, he loves his wife, his work and showing off his children at the office, which was often at this time, which would have been the 50s and 60s in in airports. Because at that point, the National Weather Service was still actively briefing. Pilots on the weather, he loved to dance

00:43:23 Diana

and he could not help teaching us about the weather. We grew up with the weather vocabulary. He was unusual for his time. He genuinely liked women and introduced both my sister and I as well as our brother just horse activities, very early swimming, tennis shooting a 22 unexpectedly he died when I was 30 pregnant with my second child working full-time living, several states away, short of money and time off losing him. Was my first experience with the death of someone close to me. So I've always felt like I had unfinished business in terms of just working through saying goodbye. So, in these poems, I pay tribute to him drawing a parallel between the Earth's weather phenomena separate from, but related to climate change and global warming, and the emotional phenomena of human behavior. Exploring grief

memory, the art of prediction, how we attempt to resurrect the loved ones. We've lost with words and deeds. And finally, how blind we can be to the signals, our bodies, and our communities,

00:44:34 Diana

and our planet send us The first poem is about a sudden desert thunderstorm. The kind that triggers flash floods and to demonstrate the parallel. It's sort of how grief overwhelms you at times. It's called Thirsty Again. [unintelligible] whip scroll themselves on a weather tarps flapping black and snap crack and drop an old cottonwoods upper trunk sudden. Rain cold were caught by instant wet faces, slick with big drops cloud grumbles clothes in light, sprint's past sound glimmer, flash upset, quick glare. Strobes. The landscape sends us inside slipping are slapped soaked dripping. We towel off in a metal drum. Beaten with sticks were deaf ring, thrashed, wind shrieked, water gushes beyond gutters dark. Rushes the windows door slams open we crowd against what would still take us? Slide down to hold and hold In new quiet temperature up wheat, which humidity ticks the air pressure up, sun light bends through the West ring licked window. What close stripped away? We rest next morning, you'd never

00:45:52 Diana

know, except the cisterns full landscape crisp as laundry outside. Dried fresh travel fan like a brush stroke at the bottom of the wash by afternoon heat cracked mud skies blue. With dry.

00:46:13 Diana

The next poem is called Radiosonde and for those of you don't know, a radiosonde is a weather balloon a smaller than a hot air balloon, but 20 to 30 times the size of a party balloon and attached to. It is a package weather instruments. Now all computerized. It's only about that, big that measures and broadcast back to the ground. The weather conditions in the upper atmosphere. And that feeds into forecast developments. The amazing thing to me is that in the age of weather satellites, these balloons are launched twice a day simultaneously all around the world. If you find the instrument package, it can be return, postage free to the National Weather Service. Assuming it's a u.s. balloon radio, send my father drives into a snowstorm big in his winter hat coat gloves, windshield wipers thump dry heat blows soft. The snow tires. Make a funny sound, we float and snow night poked open by headlights. As dear Dad says, when we see shiny eyes, he slows the car turns onto a short road, with a gate

00:47:30 Speaker 1

leaves the motor on. So I'll be warm tells me to watch out the window. Car door thunks. I get to my knees on the seat. Wipe a clear spot on the steamed window. Snowflakes make him blurry his boots, make a ditch, he opens a gate goes into a little house, comes out holding the biggest balloon I have ever seen white lips, his arms, and the balloon bumps, into the snowflakes up, and up into the dark, until I can't see it. When he's back in the car, I want to know where the balloons go. He says higher than you have ever been and higher than I have ever been. I asked why he tells me how pilots need to know the weather before they fly. I tell him. I want to see the balloon go up again. He says they go up every night every day

everywhere. Now, we're driving and I want to know how big is. This guy pretty big? He says the hired the balloons go. Colder. It is I'm sleepy with questions. I have no words for eyelids, heavy with balloons.

00:48:43 Diana

In keeping with measurement and weather instruments. This one is, is it that a science fair project? What my father built? I watched my father measure draw pictures on graph paper. With a t-square label of numbers, the feet and inches went with him to The Lumber Yard. Watched him measure again at home. Covered in my ears from the circular saws, flying held piece. Of wood in place against the handsaw hacksaw and swish the hammer plan, which is a level plain sander phillips flathead. Sometimes I got to help drill holes, twists, screws, hit nails, mount handles, knobs hinges for the sixth grade science fair. I chose to build an anemometer with wood scraps from the garage, a plywood square marked with an arc wind speed in miles per hour. A smaller plywood, triangle attached to a wooden stick to make a paddle that would catch the wind. I trimmed the 5/8 boards picked off, splinters sanded edges, nailed the paddle to its handle bolted. It to the bigger board, painted everything white, the paddle

00:49:57 Diana

Red made up of scale, the paddle hung straight down at zero hypothesis, wind speed equal to wear on the number dark. The wind blew the paddle. So clear to the straight-A student under us to failure to the rudiments of instrumentation calibration standards, who didn't think she needed help like a teachers or a father's tactful suggestion. Let's look at a real anemometer. Those tiny finally lubricated weightless cups. I had seen spinning at the airport tower finely calibrated. I was attuned to adult reactions Dad's face a funny look listening with more enthusiasm than I expected as pride in me collided with his moral conviction that in. This is an instance I be left to my own devices.

00:50:54 Diana

So when my father was dying, I had to fly back and forth between Boise Idaho and the Bay Area in San Francisco, as you'll see in this poem, climate change, in Idaho. After Christmas thin, whiskered cheek against my smooth. One, my father's last words drive safe my frozen throat. We left sooner than I wanted to soon. Return to mid-January is hard. For use my living, belly Suave and soft, black hose, black slip, black dress, baby curled, quiet sticks for trees, no birds mihai. Black boots on icy sidewalk strewn with fireplace ash and salt to keep us upright. Keep us from falling ashes. Everywhere falling snow. March in Southern California, the best day of that pregnancy. I talked with a friend fell asleep, late in the morning on the patio 8, croissants with butter, the baby, heavy kicking, I wore white flannel, and Lace. My eighth month belly. Rose out of the white. Wrought iron lounges, did my neck out of lace ruffle bathe in son, Maple Oak, eucalyptus leaking Birdsong.

00:52:18 Diana

You probably I know you can't see this very well, but you can kind of get a little bit of idea. It's a old-fashioned, sort of tie clip. I mean ties themselves are old-fashioned, right? But anyway and

that's what this poem is about. Remained 1979. I find the tie clasp in its plastic box stored in the dresser top tray with his Freemason's ring. A few small tie tacks, the Bolos he eventually preferred to neckties his watch military, pins and ribbons. I lay one hand over all of it. Looking for magic. Nothing. In Thailand 1971 because everything was cheap, we bought souvenirs for everyone. I designed a tie clip to honor my father's, whether profession using my sketch. The artist etched in silver raindrop and snowflake cumulus cloud. Slashed by lightning flash, sun shining behind But to weld of heavy clip to cloud and Sun added weight, pulled that itself throughout the day, until it hung crooked on a Phad Thai. It angled down slowly, on a thinner tie, it dropped off all together and eight years

00:53:38 Diana

later he was dead. Unless the box take off the lid, tarnished the clip lies heavy in my poem, I touch the lightning bolts. Sharp tip slip, the clip onto my lapel. It tilts true to design and memory begins to slide. So in this next poem, I refer to my children who were my father's only grandchildren and I wanted to give you their names ahead of time too. So you don't get distracted, trying to sort that out in the poem. So Jamie is my oldest daughter and she knew my father, well, her two younger brothers, are Derek and Christopher and also the title of the book comes from this poem high wind warning. This was inspired by a 1982 Oakland, Tribune newspaper, clipping titled, they called wind cockeyed bomb, no author attribution. Humans name the Winds of home, like they named their children. Their pets familiar as the home Horizon color of the soil. Taste of the local water Afghanistan's, wind of a hundred and twenty days. The Central American chew Bosco dry and hot scene of the Middle East

00:55:02 Diana

Swahili, over the Persian Gulf elephanta of Southwestern, India, Steppin wind in Russia and North African Sirocco. Alaskan taku siberia's by Yoga North American High Plains Alberta Clipper the Mistral of Provence. [speaking foreign language] I find the clipping 35 years after dad's death a wind sampler that triggers a brain lock Dust Devil makes me long to call or write, I would talk first about the Chinook midwinter surprise when we lived in Montana, the mysterious name. The sudden warmth that melted snow cover left us logging home from school in mud coats off Earth and vegetation smells spelling spring. I'd say his first grandchild Jamie When he knew lives on the carquinez Strait sandland from the San Francisco Bay toward the Delta where the seasonal Diablo blows hot and dry, high pressure and Nevada, pushing warm air over the Sierras, I'd mentioned, Derek whom, he never met the youngest grandson, living in Seattle, where the north were to the north. The Squamish worlds

00:56:20 Diana

that violent in the fjords dissipates it see while to the South, The Gorge ruined The Coho. Drives Whitecaps on the Columbia. I've mentioned, Derek whom he never met the youngest grandson living in Seattle, where to the north? Whoops, already read that. Sorry, I'd tell him that in Southern California, a sister went to the Diablo, the Santa Ana Also born of Nevada, heat swells above the San Gabriels rushes to the Pacific where his oldest grandson. Christopher lives born. Three months after he died. Father to his twin great-granddaughters,

but I am done with this. One-sided conversation. Cannot say any more names for small talk with a ghost, no matter how. Beloved nostalgic, the universal Breeze of lost, attachments spins to windshear, knocks me side. Sideways.

00:57:17 Diana

And I'm gonna wind up with a poem about the water cycle, which of the, of course, key to life on Earth and essential an essential part of the weather. And, of course, we're very busy turning water into a commodity and putting it up for sale. As if it were not something that every living thing needs in lieu of rain, all the Her on Earth is all the water there ever was and ever will be. If all the words on water, if all the words on Earth were water, 97 percent would be salty. Conversation moving in thermal layers, cold words, sinking hotter words, Rising water and words and warm and cold currents pulled by Moon. And Earth's rotations title words, crawling onto beaches and off where those who speak walk with Nets, dig Wells. Bill dreamcatcher were traps only 3% of words as water would be fresh. 75% of that locked in glaciers and ice sheets words calving in chunks. Melting 24%, would pool in dark aquifers and moisten, soils were water leaks into Caverns drips off, stalactites layers itself

00:58:39 Diana

into wordy stalagmites scaling into Echo 0, 0.33% would flow to freshwater rivers. And lakes used more often in far more than 0.33 percent of all dark and cold conversations. The infinitesimal remainder lost to faulty memory released by plants and Silent. Transpiration, weird, chatter precipitates, Rain snow hail and view all float and fall filled the rising Ocean Pages were drops, Ripple, condensed clouds of meaning rise from significant tongues unable to make rain or dryness rains words fail riverbeds, Run High with dust words, undrinkable vocabularies collapsed into aquifers too deep to reach or empty strewn with husks of river. Nymphs water, God's praise, the world's living things waiting wordless scrambling. Thirsty.

00:59:48 Diana

These are a little bit lighter but on the same topic. Rest stops attract ghouls who find the plumbing irresistible. Washington. Rest. Stop just across the Columbia. G Creek, where ghouls are said to gather outside. The restroom press a button by the water fountain, labeled underneath white letters on Blue, push button for weather forecast, an embedded speaker, spills out, Portland, Seattle information, Coastal Inland a link to the NOAA frequency. I speak into it saying, Dad. I think about you. A man passing says, you know, that's not a microphone and I'm sure I hear a ghouls Snicker. I know, I know but it could be I mumble when I want to say who the hell asked you and how do you know? He can't hear me the water fountains? Come on, no one been to drink, it's the ghouls. I'm sure they love the water transparent like themselves and fluid they care, nothing for the weather.

01:00:59 Diana

And finally a wardrobe commentary. Calculating possibilities. If all the weather happened all at once, imagine piled upon the bed tangled hangers you dress inside then run back out. Putting up your hood to save your head, from wet from cold, from hail or snow. Waxy balm to soothe

chapped lips, sunglasses or goggles to fight the glare. You paw through socks and special under theirs. And son, is not your friend, though, you crave the life. You must have a hat to shave yours neck and face sunscreen for all of those in the Ninjas loose clothes and lightweight fabrics to let air circulate Wick. The sweat away. Same as your cold weather gear, must Wick the sweat. While keeping out the chill, you layer up and peel off. Policing us in bulk [unintelligible] anoraks and Slickers Wellington's and Mukluks, Steve has and sorel's. Mittens Mufflers loves and most Studios and sell westers tooks and balaclavas. Dickies and bandanas ice, cleats, boots, water, snow or rock shoes. Dive suits, wetsuit

01:02:05 Diana

shorty or full? Then sulit SmartWool sunshield. And spandex Sunbrella neoprene Lycra and Gore-Tex, short-sleeve long-sleeved hooded or slip on antibacterial and odor reducing son. Proof windproof waterproof or resistant clothing, protection and endless selection. While the weather comes to you naked as that for a grand finale. Thank you.

01:02:37 Peggy

Thank you. Thanks. It's been-

01:02:39 Diana

When I was going to show you since the book isn't out. Yeah, I can you see there's a picture of what the book will look like.

01:02:49 Peggy

With your dad?

01:02:52 Diana

Yeah. The actually, my son did the cover art, the collage and it's a collection of family pictures and a number of those pictures actually have references in the poems and then my other son who was ls on the call, he took the author's picture for me, so they'll get credit in the book, which was a very nice touch.

01:03:14 Peggy

Thank you. All right, Julene, you're up on Open Mic.

01:03:23 Julene

The backstory momentarily on this poem is that it was a year ago when awp decided to go ahead with awp in San Antonio, when I went, so this is written after that first stop in San Antonio first night, awp off-site, He says, I've been sent to test him but he's a good person so he will pass the test. That's good. The word schizophrenia lands in my brain. He says I will act like I don't know what he's talking about. It's a test of his character

01:04:04 Julene

reminds me. He won't hurt me. People like you have cars. He's black. I'm white, he's right, I'm traveling. So I don't have a car. He asks if I have a car at home, I do. He asks why I'm taking the bus reminds me. He won't hurt me. I explained I lived in New York, the city. I'm used to public buses. I don't fit the expectation for a white woman with white hair, a tourist at a conference to wait at a bus. Stop in any Sperling City. I'm not feeble. I say he asked what that means. I don't need a walker. I motioned to my feet sturdy, but are they? I get leg cramps. Do you have that? He puts his hand to his mouth? His other hand, motions pushing buttons Wilbur. He says our lift I pulled out my phone, then explain. I don't get data without Wi-Fi, so I take the bus or walk because I did text. We look up the schedule, it's important date. The bus is due at 9:21 agitated. He's already waited half hour, he says, he's been up since dawn at a construction job, heading to his sister's place for the night

01:05:38 Julene

homeless. I'm glad you have a place to stay. We board the bus sort of seat apart. He make sure I get off at the right. Stop, we wave goodbye. I exit for the vegan cafe, healthy food and a poetry reading he travels on safe for tonight. Right. Missing the last bus. I walked back to the hotel, people like me aren't expected to ride a bus to walk. The lonely streets to meet those who provide the labor, the builds our cities,

01:06:16 Peggy

Thank you. I had forgotten that awp went on

01:06:23 Speaker 1


incredible. Alright next we're going to hear from John who has already warned me. We're not going to be able to see him but I think we're going to be able to hear him.

01:06:35 John

So I changed my mind. I was going to read tonight. It's Diana. And Mary Ellen been reading about their childhood and adolescence in their different cities. So I thought I'd read about the when I lived in a Maryland around Baltimore than we moved to Cincinnati later. It was like, about from ages four to like into my 20s. So this is called The Chesapeake. What the Chesapeake swatters? I'll never get back to the, to the choir of undecipherable words. Carried on sea, breezes from the inlets of the Chesapeake. When I was a child in, Maryland in the Summers humidity, they claim like sunlight in a waves of my sister's blond hair and Faded in a group or liberate Hayes soon. Twilight, fill the beginning of my teens with the Vermilion harmonies of The Drifters, singing This Magic Moment, Rhapsody of ecstatic senses repeating

01:07:41 John

from competing from convertible sailing down. Ritchie Highway from Baltimore. But we moved away and my sister left forever. Stranding us under the azure himmel of Cincinnati, where I got lost in the hiss of German syllables. Writing the haunted Grand Knight Hills above the river. I saw my sister a wraith watching the Ohio River, winding West. Later, I boarded the Raga Juggernaut of the stones painted black seeking, seeking an, even where my brain caught fire



with hallucinogens. And I just send it to solitude as evening sun darkened, to have lot of India ink,

01:08:27 John

This is about a portrait and I went to Anna. I was afraid my library in 2010, so I'm going to make explanation longer than poem here. So we need a haiku magnesium voices, refers to refugees from Rainy Streets Within Walls. The color of Roquefort cheese. Thank you.

01:08:53 Peggy

Thank you. I'm so glad we were able to hear you if not see you. Yeah, that's the best part. Ha ha ha ha. So our next reading will be on April 8th and we will be welcoming Jacqueline, Cynthia, or I think is with us tonight and CJ Dudley and just as a reminder that Especially now that we are online for the. Well, I don't know how much longer but for now, we don't have the same boundaries so even if you've left Seattle, we'd love to have you read. I'm booking from June on. So I'd love to see more of the names and faces that I saw for the first time and Familiar Faces tonight come back and join us and share. Their words.

