



Recorded Events

Virtual It's About Time Writers' Reading Series: Meeting 377

00:00:03 Peggy

Welcome to the It's About Time Writers' Reading Series. This is the one-year anniversary of are going online. Our first couple months. We had several different incarnations but ever since The Seattle Public Library, our partner stepped up. We have been doing much better. I want to let you know, for anybody knew who's joining us as well, that this event is being recorded. The names can be removed later to protect your privacy. The library is wonderful about that. This is reading number 377 in our 31st or 32nd year. It started in 1990 so we are definitely one of the oldest continuous writing series, at least multi-genre, that's been in the Seattle area. I'm very pleased tonight to welcome three writers and to invite several of you to participate in the three-minute open mic. Our readers tonight will be Cynthia Orr, Jacqueline (Jaye) Ware, and CJ Dudley. It's wonderful to have you all here to the It's About Time Writers Reading Series. So I have not met any of our readers in person to my recollection,

00:01:27 Peggy

but I am starting to already feel familiar with you from various readings over the course of last year. Before I introduced them, I'd like to just also, send a big shout-out to the ultimate friend of the writer series, Geo Levin, who is normally would be right in the front sitting next to Carol. And if he could be, he would be. And I know that he would be

looking at me encouragingly the whole time as he always does. I'd also like to just share my joy with the selection of Renata Priest as the new Washington State Poet, Laureate. I had the Good Fortune of first seeing her, yeah, read with Sylvia at Jack Straw. And also then add an open Books Emporium reading on I think a very stormy night and then also, as part of a Jack Straw night at the It's About Time Writers' Reading Series. So always delightful and I am so, so happy to see that recognition and to look forward to what she'll be doing during her tenure. So our first reader tonight is Cynthia Orr. Cynthia was a professional Storyteller specializing

00:02:53 Peggy

in programs for adults. After ten years of full time touring and telling, she became a mental health counselor. Now retired, she is writing a series of essays on her encounters with art and beauty. She is an avid traveler and poker player. Cynthia.

00:03:12 Cynthia

Thank you. Peggy. And I want to thank you for all the work you do to keep this program going. The Seattle Public Library. And also I want to thank the New York Times. I submitted an essay to them for the Modern Love column on my relationship to art and beauty. And they rejected it and I kept thinking and finally I decided, well I just need to write a whole bunch of essays and develop the ideas that were in that essay I sent them. So shout out to them. This first piece is called "Lightning in a Bottle." [reading] "I had just moved into an apartment and was trying to repair a floor lamp. I turn the light off but I dented unplug it from the wall, I grabbed a knife and cut the wire the speed and force of electricity screaming through the wire was astonishing. The

00:04:16 Cynthia

charge blew a hole in the knife blade. Knocked the knife from my hand and lit me up. I prowl museums for this electricity. I'm on the hunt for something powerful enough to stop me mid-stride, to rivet my attention, to jolt me past ordinary reality. Sometimes it happens. Sometimes it doesn't. When it does, it's delicious. At first glance, Bruegel's painting gives no warning. The bucolic scene he painted in 1565 appears quite straightforward. The Harvesters presents peasants at work and rest in a wheat field. We see a canvas roughly four feet by five, suffused in a soft gold tinged with brown. The gorgeous gold is wheat stacked upright in triangular sheaves, were still standing waiting to be harvested. A large tree bisects the canvas roughly dividing the scene in the segment on the right of the tree, a group of eight men and women sit eating and drinking. One of the peasants is breaking a loaf of bread bread made of wheat possibly grown in this very field. The Peasants on the left side of the

00:05:49 Cynthia

tree or hard at work, trudging along a path or harvesting the wheat. Nowhere is there obvious conflict or tension. The surface of the painting is ordinary. We even get glimpses of distant buildings and in the far distance at bay, yet something is off. It was irritating and nagging. I was determined to understand and refused to move on to the next canvas.

00:06:23 Cynthia

Painters not only see the world, they study the mechanics of vision and the way we see they use that knowledge to manipulate us. So I focused on the way, the painting took command of my eyes and where it led Bruegel was a master, he made sure the peasant asleep or passed out under the tree was prominently displayed. The painter presents us with a man, spread eagle on his back. The peasants crotch may not be the precise focal point of the painting, but it's close enough. Now I am really confused. This is not a painting about sex. There is no hint of sexual interest or intrigue among the peasants.

No one is touching anyone, but something is happening. I puzzled more in suddenly the images began to swirl in swarm, up in a torrent, hitting my eyes. They're coming so fast, I can't process all of them. The triangular shapes in the painting loom up, practically clamoring. The wheat is stacked in triangular teepees and each has its own triangular opening each branch of the tree. Begins with

00:07:42 Cynthia

a fork and each forking branch creates more triangles and the leafy. Foliage of the tree is redolent with triangles the house in the background with a steep A shaped roof offers another one. Even the women in the distance, bent over to the Earth, suggest triangular shapes. To the left of the tree, on the same side of the tree is the spread eagle peasant, there is a large arresting shape, part of the wheat field actually forms a thick long arrow, its size and mass dwarf the peasant walking in front of it. It is discomfoting, it is aimed out of the canvas. Almost at me. I am no longer analyzing the painting pondering male and female symbols. I am not thinking about the lush fecundity of the earth. No, a bolt of energy hits my heels and screams up the length of my legs moves through my torso and hits the top of my head. I am infused and shaking with the same energy that drives the growth of the wheat. I am radiant with Dylan Thomas's force that through the green fuse drives the flower.

00:09:06 Cynthia

Pieter Bruegel didn't represent the vast force that fuels the cosmos is torrential rains. That gale-force winds. No, he oh, so meticulously crafted a masterpiece that unleashes him. He delivers a straight shaft of the energy that animates the universe. Electricity in a wire lightning in a bottle. This is called, but it isn't beautiful. It is true. Not all art is beautiful. Some is discordant remarkably harsh and flat-out butt-ugly a painting of a sickening reality. A man about to be gutted by a bayonet. Shouldn't be pretty. Artists refusal to restrict themselves to beauty is a beautiful act, naming the ugly is a gift

generosity and compassion. It is refreshing offset to well-meaning. People who want us to sugar coat and paint over ugly realities, denying ugliness doesn't make advantage. It weakens our capacity to deal with it. I remember standing in front of the Van Gogh painting, I do not remember which museum and I do not remember which painting what is burned into. My brain is the

00:10:39 Cynthia

lower right-hand corner of a huge canvas at the site and this is seething, chaotic, snarl of ivy, the pores on my forearms opened. I knew I was looking at a rabbit and manic image created by a manic. Mind, I'm not just talking about then goes mine. I'm talking about my own, I had touched a manic State and it was one of the scariest times in my life. I escaped that place. If too many too fast, never-ending, thoughts, that painting documented, my experience. It was a validation and a caution that moved across time. It was a blinking light. Stay away, dumbass. Do not go back to the wild ivy Compare that conversation with then go to a conversation. You had with a friend when an intense in troubling emotion was upon you. if the conversation became an attempt to deny and downplay your reality, or if the subject was suddenly changed, You were feeling, you were left feeling much, much worse. God bless Van Gogh. Full-on, he showed us a diseased mind and we are richer for it.

00:12:10 Cynthia

A spectacularly horrific painting is Goya's 'Saturn Devouring His Son.' This huge and monstrous Saturn, rips into our field of vision. He's an oozy brown, barely defined form. He was holding his son, Saturn is eating him. The head is already gone part of the left arm is missing. Saturn's eyes bulge, his mouth gapes, he is ready for another bite. The description of this painting, which you just heard takes some seconds of time to hear. And process, the painting lands on you. Immediately, there is no way to protect yourself from the gut punch. It stopped me cold when I saw it 53 years ago. I gasped. And it

wasn't just the painting. I gasped because I recognized my father. The painting said, yes, he really is that way. My father kept a tight leash on his rage, but it was there, it was scary and worse than that. It was never ever acknowledged. It was such a relief to have it named by Goya ugly, as it was, the secret was out. It is easier to breathe when you aren't pretending. I felt such gratitude

00:13:49 Cynthia

to Goya. I have no idea about the Saturn's in his life. The tears and great fears. I do know this, he summoned the skill and the courage to study and depict something awful. He modeled the sound approach study, learn, prepare yourself. It helps.

00:14:17 Cynthia

About five years after this encounter with Goya, I listened as my father, slid into an unbridled racist rant as he had, aged those dark spaces had gotten worse and the spew that evening was hopelessly vile. It was shocking. It went on and on and it could have been debilitating. But I did not freeze. My nervous system had been prepared by Goya. He had warned me. I am lucky and grateful, he did."

00:15:00 Cynthia

I would like to close with a very, very brief little piece: "If I Were God." [reading] "If I were God, I would read The Ten Commandments and laugh. My laughter would ring out, split sequoias, and roil oceans. Moses, that poor schlub, he didn't come close to getting it right. Let's just leave it at that. If I were God, I would have one care. As the newly dead came before me, I'd wait for fear to subside then slowly I would lean forward and gently ask: 'In your life, did you add to the beauty of the world?'"

00:15:58 Cynthia

Thank you.

00:16:01 Peggy

Thank you, Cynthia. To say I'm sure there's many of us who could be part of the Modern Love Rejects Club. But to my good fortune, I actually was able to then have a piece published in Modern Love Rejects. But you had to show your rejection. That wasn't hard.

00:16:25 Peggy

I believe Allison Echols. Now going to mute Cynthia and Allison, unmute for Open Mic.

00:16:37 Allison

Well first, thank you to everyone who's here and to Peggy and to The Seattle Public Library. This event, I'm going to read two pieces that I wrote years ago and they may fit into a larger piece I'm working on. Thank you for letting me do a test drive. [reading] "Spirit and body. Time and space. When we begin to recognize that we are spirit, things begin to make sense. There is so much more that we know beyond what our intellect can fathom. My mind, cannot measure Infinity, yet Infinity is real. As spirit, we cannot tie our shoelaces. We need hands and feet and shoes and laces. With pen in hand, we can pose to do lists for the day. A spirit, we can envision each item on the list accomplished when we begin to work with our bodies realities of time and space. Everything seems to take so much longer than we expected. The phone may ring. The weather may not cooperate with our plans. We measured wrong and the piece of

00:17:44 Allison

wood does not fit. We counted wrong and we do not have enough. Or we counted correctly, but then we made mistakes with one or two pieces and are left with not enough. Our emotions get in the way. They get louder when we shout: 'Don't bother me! I don't have time to feel you. Can't you see I'm busy?' If we expect our bodies to be able to do everything in the blink of an eye, we become hard on ourselves. When really that was how much time was needed all along to accomplish in body what Spirit envisioned so easily."

00:18:25 Allison

This next one, I call "Writing, a Physical Act." [reading] "My commitment. I started a notebook in 2011 at the beginning of my writing journey and I wrote about renting My Little House on North West 43rd Street. After writing it, I made this note: 'This all flows so clearly and instantaneously in my head, usually even sounds a bit witty. I have told it so often, in my head, getting it onto paper was clumsy at best.' I hadn't connected, until now, writing is a physical act. A bringing of thoughts, stories, ideas into the body and onto the page. It's just like any other thing we choose to manifest in physical reality. It takes time and space. No hand can write as swiftly as spirit tells the story conveys, the images. I must be content to work at this to have faith, that I will sustain my ideas until they reach the page. I must have patience and the willingness to work, to write and rewrite, to tolerate editors and critics, readers, friends, and loved ones. There is clearly a gestation period following conception

00:19:48 Allison

and I, as author, may not know everything about the child I hope to give birth too."

00:19:56 Peggy

It's my weekly honor to have Allison at my Cancer Lifeline, Writing for the Moment table and to have been watching her evolution as a writer. That also, Sylvia Pollock, who will be one of our featured readers next month, along with Allison Green and E. Lily Yu. Sylvia was a lifetime writer and came back from a trip to Antarctica, as she put it, ready to write. And luckily, somebody told her about our writing for the moment table because, as she often puts it, she likes to kind of feed on the blood of others, a vampire writer. She doesn't need us, but it's fun for her to write with this. So it's been a wonderful place and I encourage you all to check out if you know anybody who's going through a cancer Journey or as a caretaker there are a gazillion programs so we welcome all there and writers and non-writers. Our next reader is Jacqueline (Jaye) Ware she said, I could, you know, use all her name's she didn't say,

00:21:13 Peggy

I could use none of them. All or none. Jacqueline (Jaye) Ware is a longstanding member of the African American Writers' Alliance. She is a Poet, Spoken Word Artist, and Playwright. Jaye has performed at libraries, schools, Town Hall, museums (including Tacoma, Northwest African American, and Seattle), art galleries, bookstores (including Elliott Bay), and on Camano and Vashon Islands. Her filmed, on-location play (reading), can be viewed on YouTube, Menrva Labs, "Madison Park Bench." Her filmed, hip-hop pandemic stage play, "COVID Dreams" is available on Vimeo's On Demand channel. Motto: "Words have power; use them wisely and in moderation." Welcome Jaye.

00:22:25 Jaye

Thank you so much, Peggy. I'm truly pleased to participate and the first thing I have to say, other than thanking you Peggy, this is great. Is that Cynthia- that was excellent.

00:22:40 Jaye

Thank you so much for your readings. They were so emotional your pieces and I was truly touched and I wanted you to know that. So this is a sunny day and some people that might show up on Zoom or not showing up because it's a sunny day and we don't get sunny days and springs very often back to back, so I can understand why some people would prefer to be out there, soaking up that vitamin D. As you'll notice in my bio that I read and write social justice and injustice poetry. There's just so much going on around the world that's unjust in so many different ways is just unreal to me. And so some of it can be kind of dark, but I try to lighten it up so that you can tolerate it. You can stomach it, you can handle it, you can deal with it. So it's not so challenging and that's kind of what, Cynthia did. Yeah, some of her stuff was dark, but it was so beautifully written that you could handle it. Also another thing that I do is that I write children's stories and poetry so now that's a

00:23:54 Jaye

really light-hearted so it's me out of that sad, melancholy mood. Alright, the first piece I'm going to write and read it'll start small and then it will enlarge. The first piece is called "Compost." And you just have to really kind of think about this what it might mean to you because it has a couple of meanings. But as a lot of times as writers, we know exactly what it's about, but as listeners, you have to think it through. [Reading] "Compost. In the spring. The first time he claimed, I tripped and fell told not to tell the magnolia tree was in full bloom. In autumn leaves were falling swept into a bin, to with dustpan and broom on Thursday, on Thursday, a commercial composting facility received grass clippings leaves branches plant trimmings and allowed to rot. The season ended. My garden was free of any invasive species." End poem. The next one is called "A Black Poem." [Reading] "A Black Poem. Let the world sing a sweet serious song in the range of black poem. Singing, baritone tenor, soprano, alto, but

00:25:33 Jaye

sing it with purpose. Strong. Let the world, let the world dancing elegant a Black poem choreographed by Alvin Ailey. Dynamic, racial, vibrant, tap dancing with precision on wood like Bill Bailey with the world. But the world be a Black poem behind closed doors. Even a boisterous crowd, will be brilliant, bright colorful, shamelessly, bold and proud. Let the world, let the world laugh. Let the world laugh. Black poem deep down in your throat. Laughing loud laughing. Anything that floats your boat. And let that world, let that world quote a Black poem with the rich and metaphors and Nikki Giovanni, Maya Angelou dripping, honey, and a lot of others following in their footsteps, taking stock, let the world, the world [deep breath]

00:26:33 Jaye

Breathe in a Black poem the rigid breathes taking [unintelligible] lows to the magnificent Shanghai Tower. Let the world vote for a Black poem. Voter suppression of faint memory dead and long gone. Let the world embody a Black poem moving and Rhythm, emotion seeping through every pore, the continent. Beating in unison Hearts, moved to the very poor. Let the world bloom a fragrant, the Black poem. The Roses orchids, a black Iris, and delicate to lips. Suggesting peace, harmony, harmony and lingering. Blessed let the world. Let the world throb Black poem. Whispering, healing before the post fades. Were there will be no more poems to recite read or say in pain."

00:27:45 Jaye

As was mentioned by Peggy that I perform spoken word, Cynthia you like this by going to art galleries, they might have an opening and viewing the art and then writing a piece in response to the art. This is one of those pieces. It's called "Mustard Seeds." Anytime I go to an art gallery and I see a picture a painting of children or older elderly seniors, seasoned members of society, I am drawn to that. So this was a painting of a little girl's head with lots of curls. And in those curls is said, when they buried us, they didn't know.

We were seeds, here we go. [Reading] "Mustard seeds. When they buried us, they didn't know we were seeds. Mustard seeds. A little girl's sprouting. Wild curls, I'm able to soar with a flock of wild women who changed the world, when they buried us. They did not know. They didn't know we were seeds. They could have no not known. We were black mustard seeds from the Middle East full of Promise the promise of little girls with a wild curls ready to bloom into the hope of wild

00:29:25 Jaye

with who changed the world. When they buried us, when they buried us they refuse to believe, we were seeds, brown mustard seeds, Himalayan little girls with wild curls, with the power and potential to become strong. Wild women who changed the world, when they buried us rich, nutrients soil till to receive healing mustard seeds of little girls with wild curls are breaking ground. Checking into the sky, to touch the stars of wild women, who nourished and replenish the world. When they buried us the earth, warm and protected. The medicinal mustard seeds of little girls with wild curls, becoming the ghosts of wild women who dared question the world when they buried us. They minimize the importance of pods containing mustard seeds of little girls with frizzy curls, a future leadership and influence as wild. Fearless women who changed the world. When they buried us, when they buried us, when they buried us, they bury seas of life darkening. The World War where little girls with wild unruly

00:30:40 Jaye

curls. Innocent, wide-eyed spirits with hearts of gold. Crying mother will never hold future untold of Afro greys and dreadlocks playing in the park running inside after dark climbing trees breaking leaves. Becoming [unintelligible] faith. And the nectar for honey bees who changed the world." End poem.

00:31:08 Jaye

Okay. So moving on. This is called "Voice." [Reading] "Voice. And it was written at the request of an organization who wanted me to write something about women. And I've never written anything really about women. I'm like, okay. Let me see what I can do.

00:31:29 Jaye

This one's just called "Voice." [Reading] "There's nothing more calming nurturing than the tender touch of a woman's voice. Soft humming, rocking you back and forth to sleep voices of comfort. When a friend, is in despair offering solace to sense of peace. The peace, the peace. And a woman's voice is vulnerable, holding hurt inside, finding a quiet place to hide releasing a flood of emotions breaking down in a truly good cry. That voice crying out. Welding a wrecking ball and anger and rage when you step out calling a stuttering, lie, cascading and screens praying. The death of a loved one was some kind of joke, a cruel twisted dream, not joking, not joking. With a stern voice that can cut you to the core in a heartbeat. Have you lost your mind? Who do you think you're talking to? Seeping out of every pore, pivoting to a sultry, silky, smooth as honey when it desires, then they have so much more by dripping, honey and rich. Blues, Gospel, country, and all that jazz crying out 'sing that song, girl.'

00:32:43 Jaye

Tap dancing as fast as you can to a world of precious and unreasonable, demand. Shouting, marching for women's rights. Equal pay, respect and dignity deserved by every woman. And man, a forceful voice, a forceful voice. Strongly held beliefs rallying against workplace, violence, safety in the streets and relief from abusers, inflicting unwarranted, harassment, and grief- grief stricken. These restricted women's voices [unintelligible] and her raucous laughter rising from deep within the gut, dancing on dusty floor shaking swing in the room. Jubilant. A succulent flower in full bloom. Holding a bouquet of flowers in the stands on the football and baseball field. There is no, 'that's

my child,' sweeter sound for the voice of a mom cheering in her urging from the sidelines of white roses social white roses of scenes from Private Ryan. A soldier blown apart when he touched down, down with an he's suffocating on the ground. Her mother's loving consoling, voice and prayer kissing away tears. The last though held to the

00:34:12 Jaye

breast so comforting, so precious. So, do you? And a woman is No Nonsense. Yet forgiving boys has the power of a rumbling, restless, gushing wind. Lightning strikes from the sky patiently. Battling storms the serenity of a calm sea. Call me to the heavens from the branches of the sacred fig, giant sequoia trees, calling out two sisters flying by hollering and encouragement her warm breath bellowing beneath our wings. Our positive affirmations are sweet, holy water for nourishment." End poem. Thank you.

00:35:06 Jaye

And then I moved to the longest one that I got to do real fast. Where I do this real fast. So, of course we had Black History Month. We had Martin Luther King. And now, of course, we've got the Women's March and Women's Month and then we have April Poetry Month. So I got to go all the way back to Martin Luther King. So the question usually is, what would King do? What we can do? What would King do. Well, ah. Clearly his life was clear in terms of what he would do in certain situations. So this is called some now we need to have this interview so this is called "The Interview." [Reading] "The Interview. It was long overdue excited by the thoughts. Interviewing an icon of historical figure that brought legal system to their knees and transit systems to a stop. So many questions and emotions. Invaded his mind, the interviewer cannot help but feel anxious by the pressure and he began to a pine. Am I the Right One? Well I asked all that needs to be said should I wait for a better day? A different time instead of

00:36:11 Jaye

grabbing his pen and pad, as electronics are not permitted inside, he's prepared. It is possible to avoid Boondocks version ensuring his interview of what it all aspirations. The king, just for him to come sit with him by a soothing lake flowing with milk and honey, as golden flakes gently drifted down the lake [unintelligible] sparkling shiny, like freshly fallen snow. The interviewer gave homage to King, praising him for virtually everything. The Montgomery Bus, Boycott watching, Washington, Edmund Pettus Bridge, meetings, being jailed. Unable to be present for his wife and kids. The interviewer had a job to do and hoped he would do it well. Thus he began his question searching for responses to silence the endless debates, lifting pulling aside the curtain setting the record straight knowing all of his name is close the interview to begin to see intending to provide the context and closure man has continued to seek. Dr. King, he said, and I quote, 'The ultimate measure of a man is not where

00:37:13 Jaye

he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.' You also said, 'An individual has not started Living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all Humanity.' In addition, you quote it. And I do want to quote, 'Even passively accepts evil, is as much involved in it as he perpetuates it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.' And finally, Dr. King you have said, 'We may all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now.' So Dr. King, if I might ask: What would you do today about environmentally irresponsibility? 'As an ultimate Measure of a Man, I would kneel. Even if uncomfortable and inconvenient, to help the environment is one's responsibility.' Thank you so much Dr. King, and what would you do today about rampant homelessness and abject poverty? 'For the broader concern of all Humanity. I would kneel asking for wisdom to feed the people and


00:38:25 Jaye

house the homeless.' Thank you, Dr. King and what would you do today about ongoing racism, discrimination and Injustice? 'In times of challenges and controversy, I would kneel and continue to love with nonviolent resistance.' Thank you, Dr. King. And if you would answer this, what did you do today about rising police brutality against African-Americans? 'Not one to passively accept evil, I would kneel as I have also experienced brutality.' Well, what then, Dr. King? Doctor, can you please answer this question? What would you do today about alleged harassment, unequal pay and disrespect towards women in the workforce? 'To rise above the narrow confines of individual concerns, I would kneel and stand with them as I stood with Rosa Parks.' Then Dr. King, we have constant shootings in this country and what would you say today about the proliferation of guns?

00:39:37 Jaye

'It is always right to do what is right. I would rightfully kneel as violence begets violence.' And as a minister a preacher. Reverend. Then Dr. King, what would you do today about the absence of prayer in schools and the lack of faith? Or even a belief in the existence of God and the lives of over half the American population? 'On behalf of our doubt and unbelief. I would kneel and pray for all to find what they truly seek.' Well, Dr. King, you did kneel with others on the Pettus Bridge. What would you say today about the kneeling controversy concerning the national anthem? 'Refusing to cooperate with evil and solidarity and unity, I would kneel.' Thank you, thank you. Thank you. I only have one, one other question. What would you say to the people? What would you say to the people after hearing Trump call all Mexicans rapists referring to Haiti and African nations as shitholes and describing Kim Jong Il as a lunatic, loser madman, and Little Rocket Man. The brilliant orator, Reverend. Compassionate

00:40:53 Jaye



and selfish humanitarian. Nobel Peace Prize winner was imperfect but he cared deeply without reservation for the well-being and fair treatment of all human beings with that. He said, 'I would kneel, praying with others that are although we came on different boats, we all are on the same dark day, hostile, violent, and tormented slave ship now. Little chickens have come home to roost.' From a second floor apartment, he woke as a clock began to ring- light breaking through the night, shining on his balcony, a pad and pen in hand, specks of gold on his pillow. Unsure if the interview was real or if he had just had a dream." End piece. Thank you.

00:41:57 Peggy

Thank you so much Jaye. I had the good fortune to have Jaye read open mic at the, when the African American Writers were reading and convinced her to come back for a, didn't take a lot of convincing, but I'm very happy you're here tonight. The was all stunning. Your piece, "The Black Poem" reminded me that the Ballard library is doing a lovely thing.

00:42:30 Peggy

Talk about the different months, they're combining poetry, month with all African American women poets. Wow. I was there today and I had meant to look for a picture of a friend of mine, and they were putting poems in each book, when you pick them up, and that reminded me of the windows, that normally would be the windows that survive, you know, it's around the conference room. Some are covered with photos and samples of poems and so I sent a picture to my friend. I said no pressure. You're right above, Nikki Giovanni and your next to Maya Angelou. Yeah.

00:43:14 Peggy



Well, is Colleen McElroy there? Like, I haven't had a chance to absorb them all. It's wonderful. So if you have a chance, I mean, what a wonderful way to combine things and a big shout out to the incredible Librarians. I was a little confused when the librarian kind of called me back. And like, hey and he says, yeah, the Librarians are having so much fun doing this and they keep scribbling more things everyday like scribbling, and then I realize they're decorating if you want not, if it turns out that I don't share everything on my computer, I have a photo because what they've been doing is in between these beautiful photos of the women and some of their poems and the books below. They've also been drawing, you know, flowers and different things and all the window things. So they're going to keep adding to it throughout the month of April. So and I will look and see if Colleen McElroy is there, she definitely should be. I saw Audre Lorde. You know, Maya Angelou and a poet. I hadn't heard of who

00:44:24 Peggy


I'll be checking out. Warsan Shire was on the same page right below Glenda and Nikki so well with that I have received a couple people willing to do the open mic and so I'm happy to introduce Asia Renee. I hope you're hearing able to join us and thank you again.

00:44:53 Asia

Hi I'm Asia Renee. And a I'm also a member of AWA so I'm just going to get right to. It seems like I've got a few minutes. This first piece is called "Leanin' on Me."

00:45:10 Asia

[Singing] "I'll be your friend, lean on me." [Reading] "When you can't walk our crawl with you inch by inch through the depressively dark days months or years, when fears consume you, I'll sing to ease your attention, real friends. Listen and hear you out, even



when giggles and smiles, elude you invisible, within the scope of the white gaze spit shine. In your confidence and know that you are the inspiration of rulers and deities of nations and globes and other galaxies. We are trendsetters. And every space we enter funky out the box, urban to rural, we are the litmus and the Muse psychedelics and motion. We are the potion. We've been hoping for the cure the maladies that plague our souls. When we grow older, who wants to look back and lament a wasted life? As long as there is tomorrow, it can get better. We can survive and be real friends to kinfolk and if you ain't got no real friends, be the rock formation in your corner until the heavens open to receive you. We owe it to us to just try." End poem. Thank

00:46:26 Asia

you. This next piece is called "Boned Corsets."

00:46:33 Asia

[Reading] "To him, to them, we are just massa's bastards. Stocks to market. Byproducts of violence. The stains of my mother's mother's dresses are imprinted like footprints on my face. Shame weighs me. The scarlet and Jezebel's letters branded on my neck, my navel, my thighs lies, gas-lit the rapes. My ancestors were women, who could settle earthquakes, who shielded young eyes and Blessed seeds to grow amidst the thorns. Women who broke the mold from which they were crafted limited edition Heroes without capes. We must remember not to forget that bravery and vulnerability are co-conspirators echoing in a hollow dance. Whirling like tornadoes inside their chest, beneath the steely-eyed gaze. They stared down there with crackers with resolved in knowing like proud, mountains, refusing to bow in pain." Thank you.

00:47:32 Peggy



I'm so glad I was saying how exciting it is, when, especially online right now, people invite more people and then we get acquainted. So you must come back and read longer for us and be a featured reader. So

00:47:45 Peggy

whatever you see like you can see my name, you just take Peggy Sturtevant, you add Gmail and contact me, and we'll schedule it. So great to meet new people, I think. And I'll double-check after we hear from CJ, that Minnie is also going to do the open mic? Yes, exactly. And thank you so much for Asia for a little bit of song, because Jaye was asking CJ, if he was going to sing, perhaps will be inspired. So I now like to welcome CJ Dudley and it's my pleasure to have him recruited by Jacqueline. That we had a chance to meet tonight. Born and raised in Seattle, WA, CJ Dudley is an accomplished singer, song writer, poet, author, actor, painter, and clothing designer. Writing his first song at the age of 14, he would soon come to realize his natural gift for creating melodies and witty punchlines. As he began to gain more experience within the highs and lows in life, new creative avenues were birthed, which allowed him to be able express himself through means other than just music.

00:49:07 Peggy

Welcome CJ.

00:49:11 CJ

Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Good evening everybody. Um, so I'm a little, I'm a little different. I am just I'm kind of the definition of extra whenever the camera is on, you know. I mean um so I like to perform mine and I can't really read out loud that good. I'm just be, I'm just be honest with you. I'm not a good out loud reader guys. So I'm going to try to do something now. This first piece that I'm gonna do it. What's your view now? I

got to be honest but this whole covid thing going on. I have done a few online things, but I used to beat the street. I would go out and I would hit the club's, the music venues the church's, anywhere and speak. I haven't done it in a year, like consistently. So, excuse me. If I'm a little rough, if I stumble. [Reading] "What is the American flag mean to you? I ask because I come to the realization, that it means different things to different people. Now I can admit I was an impressionable child, because under the government

00:50:18 CJ

mandated Pledge of Allegiance in school, I was taught to believe the underneath this flag. We're all equal. But truth is, I see the Injustice this flag has no substance. Oh, you want my allegiance? But you can't be trusted. I'm distraught and disgusted minorities. Dusted, a broken taillight leads to his chest looking like a hot dog busted. Now, I see them, ran an innocent man down, there were six cops on that, they snapped his spine in half, like it was playing Mortal, Kombat triggers, get happy bullets, get excited to pierce. The Flesh of a black man, and they hoping we Brian Seekers this. Well, see, that's when they militarize themselves and then hit the blacktop shells, flying everywhere. Like they work at the crab pot, or what you think. I'm playing. Look it up. On your laptop, a crackhead one from a lazy cop. So we gave him a backstop bra. No, I'm not just talking out the side of my neck here, okay? Because I have been through our justice system, okay? And I've seen it with my own

00:51:23 CJ

eyes. The corruption of law. I'm talking officers, prosecutors, judges and all. They played a game dirty. Boy, they rough and they raw. I'm talking Tom Brady texting about deflating the ball then going to the Super Bowl and winning it all. Unnecessary roughness against a defenseless playing man. They making the call. You see the courts in the precinct of work in harmony the same damn time. See a cop sings an unarmed black man, a lullaby. And the chorus comes in singing the same damn line. The officer

is on paid leave while we gather the info. Now a forte is coming, I can hear the crescendo. We on the edge of our seats. We holding hands with our kinfolk waiting to see if the choir can reach up to that last note, then the finale happens and a split second there is silence. No clapping. We just cannot fathom we witnessed what happened yet them facts somehow got past them. This little show that they do that. They swear is so tight is the equivalent to Roseanne Arnold on the mic. Boo,

00:52:29 CJ

That concert was horrible. I need a break like a Kit Kat. I want my refund. Some reparations, and a kickback. Your presentation was terrible. Intonation irreparable. How can you be so insensitive. This is obviously intentional. It must be nigga hunting season and a badge is your license. You're allowed to hunt deer, rabbits, niggas and bison. It's ironic were such a threat to you. Oh but you want us to see the best thing. The only difference is our skin tone. We the same. This the resting. Yes, I'm upset. I'm pissed at the situation. See minorities get treated like dirt in his country but with some there was a legitimate deliberation and this unstable degenerate. Actually became president now. Look me square in my zoom squared face and tell me he was America's best representative. Boy. He spicy like jalapenos, I see like cappuccinos. We're gonna build a wall and keep out of the Latinos and Mexico's going to pay for it. Hit it. So what happened there right now let's just forget for one second

00:53:34 CJ

that those words came out of the mouth of one of the dumbest people we have in captivity and let's just think about America without minorities. I mean the US without us, well that's shaky and hollow. I'm talking 911 cover-ups. Bobbleheads and gelato. So you see equivalent to you making a homemade taco but skipping the meat, cheese, sour cream, avocado, tomato, tomahto the mole and horchata with us missing boy. You given up the whole enchilada, potatoes. The top is your salsa and a cha-cha without

minorities. You wouldn't know how to Lambada. The excuses, the caca, the repercussions are nada. Black bodies, do it faster than a bucket of water to see the streets of getting hotter heat nothing like it's lava. Black men are targeted. No wonder we ain't got father's. You see it started with slaves. They call this the savages they stole. The soldiers beat us, leaving families in ravages. Work the black man to death. Just to build this economy and I know what you thinking: 'Slavery ended a long time

00:54:35 CJ

ago. Get over it. Settle down homie.' Just follow. Time for a history lesson. You see, from 1865 to. oh excuse me, from 1619 to 1865, it was law of the land to rule over the black lives. Backs look like trees, blacks on their knees, they still a mother from the child, then, demanded some fees. Then they castrated them. There was nothing they can say to him. If you even gave an aside, I think got that shot. Gonna turn your dome to a stadium. See then from 1865 to 1968, we had Jim Crow, lynch mobs, [unintelligible] being black was a crime, Black Wall Street got the bomb squad. Four little girls in a church that exploded and material drag from the [unintelligible] His beaten body was bloated, It's gotta be noted that the system's corroded from the inside out. The framework is eroded. Now in the 80s was the War on Drugs, which destroyed the black fabric. Battering rams running through communities causing havoc. So you understand this, they drove military-style tanks into houses

00:55:45 CJ

just to eventually admit that we was on the wrong street. I mean I could have thought this was the house. I saw drug dealers here last week. Now someone's home is reduced to rubble crumbling under they feet. Meanwhile first lady Nancy Reagan, smiling in the front seat. They now- now my people getting beat up, run down, hands up, come down the officer fear for his life. Was no gun found. And you look at me crazy when I say 'Hell no, I ain't calling the police up in here now.' See, Kapernick took a knee

in the land of the free to peacefully, speak out against Injustice for people like me. See, but in order to change the subject and forget about the truth, they said he disrespected the military and look down on the truth. I still don't understand how you got to that conclusion. I mean, he said nothing to that effect. Actually said the opposite for the troops he has the utmost respect. See, but that flag doesn't just represent the troops. It represents me to, which takes me back to my original question,

00:56:53 CJ

what does the American flag mean to you? See some folks may see that flag differently because the things this country is put us through. So please don't be upset if we can't see the sun rise on the same Horizon as you. We may have a different view."

00:57:10 CJ

Thank you. Whoo, struggled through that one. Okay, um, this next one, you know, I and Il, just I like, I love to write. I love to those punchlines the witty things. The things that shouldn't make sense, but but somehow you weave them together. I love doing that, you know? Um, and please, for those of you that have never seen me before, please do not take this as me being conceited about or have big It energy, but I am, I want to be great, okay, I'm striving to be great and on my way to being great, I'm going to say, I'm great at this. If I believe it, there's some things I'm pretty trash at in writing, but some of this is really good. So, with that being said, this next piece is a piece I called "Drinks Up" and it's really just a toast to being literate and lyrical, okay, called "Drinks Up." [Reading] "I want to be one of the greatest one of the ones you want to listen to and when you do you're entertained and pick up a jeweler to lyrics, that cultivate your mind to get your blood pumping. See people say they

00:58:23 CJ

want to change but you never does nothing but now it's real opportunity it's time to come up with something but you shriveled up like a shrimp. Like Bubba Gump is come sit with me, I start conversation. I hustle like a Jamaican. They try to Railroad my story but that's The Birth of a Nation. See the government don't wipe their hands on the same bloody towel and they plan to reuse it. You try and hold them accountable, they dismiss an excuse it, people ask why go so hard. Why do I do it America's a time bomb? I gotta defuse it. Whether rain, hail, sleet, snow- you're gonna hit the best of me. Put your hands on me and you won't feel rest in me. They tested me, pressing me. Ain't got no respect for me but everything is A-OK homie. I'm blessed to see because absolutely nothing is what everyone expects from me. So now I'm able to roll. Okay, I'm talking under the radar, I'm an Undercover Brother, I drive around and playing ball. Well, okay, that's cap. I'm lying. I drive a convertible BMW. If

00:59:24 CJ

you ain't never rode with your top down in that sucks for you, but let me try to stay on topic. This ain't a subterfuge. Let me take you back to school.[unintelligible]. You understand that, my word play is on another level. Metaphor so high that I can't even see the devil and I'm like a music staff. I got the bass and the treble because I'm deep with it to stick when I'm saying whom you will need a shovel. I mean so many different sides to me. I got more walls in the Octagon schedule. Going crazy. Don't run around more than a soccer mom, See, I'm building a company that produces books music and a clothing line and I got a 6-3. But I'm really working 6 to 9. See, I want to make, you think I'm talking buying Pilates. Now you say you love the hood but now you say, you let hood while they starting to push your Bugatti. You know what you mean. Black lives matter homie. You shooting the shotty. Y'all tearing down an Enterprise beam me up. Scotty, see, I'm a mix between a psychological

01:00:20 CJ

stimulator. A philosophical curator a lightning bolt lyricist, a human defibrillator. It's bigger than rap, it's more than poems. It's deeper than that. The pressure is on, I feel the heat of my back. I got a platform in a voice on microphone, in a choice. I give my gift as a present. Merry Christmas girls and boys. I'm nice with it. I'm bout to spaz. Check out this [unintelligible]. It might leave you speechless. Have you doing that - thing get on my team. This is my dream. It's a time thing and soon the whole world going to be doing my thing. Now, I got people sleeping on Saying that my balls is trash. I got people hating on. Okay, now, let's have had. All right, so I got people's hating on - your take on my balls and throw them in the trash. I got people sleeping on..." Sorry guys, I'm gonna have to dig my way out of this hole. I have to meet it.

01:01:17 CJ

Here we go, [Reading] "lyricist, human defibrillator, bigger than rap is more than poems, it's deeper than that. The pressure was on, I feel the heat of my back. I got a platform in the voice, a microphone in the choice. I get my gift as a present. Merry Christmas girls and boys. I'm nice with it. I'm bout to spaz. Check out this rhyme scheme. It might leave you speechless. Have you doing that - thing? Good on my team. This is my dream. Mr. Time thing and soon the whole world won't be doing my thing. See, I got people sleeping on them. Portland, when they stick the rent and picked Odin in the draft. I got people hating on me. Take all my balls and throw them in the trash. Now, I got people showing fake love. They hyping me up and I know it's gas and I got slick people trying to go behind my back like a no-look [unintelligible] pass see but I'm a visionary, I'm picturing things I don't even have it. My card never declined and I never had a bad check. But then I watched the movie [unintelligible] and ironically I hear

01:02:12 Speaker 1

the words of my man X. 'Yo, shut up. You ain't even put the weed in the bag yet.' Okay. For those of you that don't understand that, that quote, let me break that down for you.

See, as Americans we be eying, inspired dying and trying to skip the process. See, but the journey's how you learn the skills to enter that contest. I've got the Blessed so I got the best subliminal chemical rhyme scheme. A ritual lyrics, you heard in your life. What you think? I'm kidding. You must not be listening. I got punched last hitting harder than [unintelligible]. It's show time. When the cams on, Mike's on the bands on, I got Adamantium lyrics. Yours are softer than a tampon. See, I brush up. You rush off, I go around, you will across. I'm rough like a jagged edge in your lyrics, baby, but saw see, I got two unknown undiscovered crazy binocular. I'm flipping words like pancakes. While I'm a lyrical spatula. A lot of people sweating know me. I don't even know happier, but if I make you think that's my goal, I couldn't be.

01:03:13 CJ

Happy. See, I'm the plug. Show me love. I'm blowing up. That's what's up. So if you down with all the lyricism in the world, I'd like to say drink something."

01:03:27 CJ

Wow, we stumbled through that one, didn't we? Okay, so I'm going to end it with this- every time I am on a program to show anything with Miss Jaye, she always request one thing of me all of the time and she's always cooking me up and tell me about things to do so, because I see her lovely face. And she always got my back, Miss Jaye. Thank you for everything. I appreciate you and I'm going to do your poem for you. This one is called "Black in America." And I love doing this because I'm black and this is America. So it fits me perfectly. Okay. [Reading] "Black in America. An American Black, not to be confused with an African-American cuz I ain't never been to Africa. And I dare someone to send me back. Now, that's no disrespect to my African brothers and sisters. Understand, I love you with all my heart, see, but I was born and raised in Seattle, Washington, so labeling me American is where it starts. Now, life for a Black person in America is never dull and full of action, but if you don't live it, you might not get it.

01:04:38 CJ

So let me break it down like a fraction. Not all Black people are hoods and thugs, not all Black people selling do drugs, not all Black people want to take your purse. Ask me what I do for a living. I work. I have a nice office. My desk is dope, but stereotypical undertones make it hard cope. But I'm an upstanding citizen. So I keep my hope. But being Black in America, I'm walking a tightrope. See, life ain't fair. Reaganomics. Get ran up on this. Empty Pockets. You ain't got nothing on you. You clip and clop it. You close your eyes. Praying that the Lord going stop it. Now if I still on this fool and I hope he drop it. I might rob him. I'll take his head wallet. I'll put them all world star and I'll make them watch it. Wait wait wait wait, wait, stop it. See, it's back to reality. I'm back on the scene, everything that just happened was all the Daydream, except the gun still present. Dude, still mean, honestly, it's taken anything not to scream. I ain't thug, I ain't a gangster. I just got

01:05:40 CJ

caught slipping and if this is how I died and Lord, please forgive them. Ahhh, but then I seen one time, blow up the spot, I ain't never been so happy in my life to see a cop. Then the dude gets spooked and he dropped his glock. He took off down the alley and he circled the block. I said, 'Yo, police.' I wave my hand in the air. 'Dude just tried to rob me, and he ran down there.' Then the cops were abducted. Jumped out the coop. Pulled out the heating said hands up, or I'll shoot, whoo, boy. And I'm really tripping. I don't know what to do. Oh, but I mean I put my hands up. My mom didn't raise no fool and my daddy can hear that. You know what the deal is? David does that. That's my dad. We put our hands up. Mama didn't raise no fool. 'Don't shoot officer. I committed no crimes.' 'Man. I'm so sick and tired of you thugs and your lines, say one more word, I'll put 5 in your gut. Now, get on the ground and keep the mouth shut. Thugs think you slick? Now what [unintelligible] are you repping, you on the wrong side

01:06:35 CJ

of town with an illegal weapon.' 'Nah, you got it all wrong, man. That ain't my gun. Why you think I waved you down and chose not to run?' He put his knee in my back. He slapped on the cuffs forearm around the neck. And now choking me up. And now my breath is getting short and I'm losing my vision. And then he cracked me over the head and said stop resisting. I can see the people panicking. Ain't coming to get me though, but everybody got their phone out taking the video. So, is this how I die? By a cop that's so smooth? Honestly, I prefer getting shot by thug. See, politicians, and police saw standing in unity. When one less Black man needs a better Community, they get a paid vacation and granted immunity and you wonder why Black people write it in? Mute me. Flashback to the 50s. Oh yeah, I'm bringing it up when they was torturing Black Folk and they were stringing them up. When the KKK was patrolling at night, looking for a Black face to smash with a pipe. I'm talking kids, preteens,

01:07:30 CJ

young adults and old people. All I ever wanted was a chance to be equal. We hit him with the Civil Rights? What we swerved on political response, hoses turned on can't use the same bathroom and drink the same water. You get attacked at the lunch counter placing an order to the back. Back of the bus, got to stay in your place, you disrespect a white person and vanished without a trace. See we shall overcome was the song that we sing till America showed us how you wrote a face off a king. Now with no rights, no hope. You wonder what's next. Keep your hand out they pocket while they cross that X. Now seems like the government's content with having local enemies. And when they tried to do right, they just snuffed out the Kennedys. I don't know, man. Just a just seems like the law ain't nothing more than white thugs with black slugs with a clip in a steel mat. Yo, I'm amazed, I don't [unintelligible]. We hungry for justice. Boy, we stay starving Skittles and iced tea. That's

01:08:28 CJ

Trayvon Martin. You want to buy a cigarette? Don't ask me partner because I can't breathe. That's Eric Garner. Who gon get popped next? It's just a roll of the dice and not avoid swingset surrounded like Tamir Rice. Now, they say, it's part of the job, but it's more. We all know. And don't drop your [unintelligible]. Oh, trust me, the list goes on, I'll continue the countdown, Dontre Hamilton, John Crawford, Ezell Ford and Mike Brown, Sandra Bland, Tanisha Edison, it just ain't right. Michael Ealy Akai Gurley, Tony Robinson and Phillip White. Whoo boy, let me tell you something. Tamir Rice was a 12 year old Black child alone in a park And he took one today chest. Meanwhile, a grown white man murders nine Black people in a church and they give him Burger King in a bulletproof vest. Now, let the media tell it, non-black people were slain. I mean, I find that covers disrespectful because one of the nine has a senator in front of his name. Now maybe it's just me, okay, but it also

01:09:40 CJ

seems like Very subtle attack on the judicial, I mean, you know, knocking off a state official. See now I'm willing to bet anything that if the roles were reversed in the suit was black, they would have made that fool had, but a missile on the contrary. The police were very nice silver see now. Why wouldn't dealing with Black folks? It's never so simple. When will it end? When is the victory one? Humility American politics is built. So that nothing ever gets done. So here's what I think. All right, I'm still a little late. I mean, what they doing a working? So some new ankle hurt right now. Where does it end? Well, it is where it starts, but like Marshawn Lynch, don't nobody want to tackle this Beast. It's too many moving parts. I mean, honestly, just by bringing it up. Some of y'all out here you gonna break on it, but you ain't gonna kill my vibe because here's my take on it. See now the attack is physical, all right? But the route That's spiritual. And if you don't kill if your children

01:10:49 CJ

Roots first, then any progress is minimum, you got folks who are cynical some analytical. I understand that too critical. So let me make it a little more. It's like when you cut down a tree, you get a better view, you seeing things different data, say they brand new, but in a couple of years that tree start to grow, but it ain't in your view yet. So you don't even know. But you look up one day and that's We full group, you brag your head and say, oh we forgot to pull the roots, you see The Roots run deep and they don't be playing and if you never dig them up, you better believe that they stand now. Imagine what it'd be. Like, if we all start praying, instead of each other, it would be the demons. We slain, you see, we buried understand like a base under triple. And when you bear each, how you supposed to rise to a new level? You see, we need to follow Jesus, but we follow the devil. It's like we really know that fool on a personal level until we all meet. Jesus, but a lot of taking Satan,

01:11:47 CJ

you can look at me funny if you want to, but you know what I'm saying? See if we all had Jesus, we have love in our hearts and that brothers and sisters is how you win a war on hate before it starts. Now, before I get up out of here let me just make one thing real clear for you. This is not an I Hate Whites poem. It's not what it is. This is a I Want Rights poems, okay? And hit me. Now when I say this is definitely not an I Hate Cops poem. Okay, but more of a, When Will It Stop poem? Okay. It's a taking the truth from the bottom, to the top poem, it's a stop doing wrong time. I understand it with a long poem. I did my best to put it in some kind of song for him, but it's a stop doing wrong poem, even a Rodney King. Why can't we all just get along home being black? In America comes with a lot of stress. Is it fair? No. Is is reality? Yes. So how do I choose to respond in the midst of all the ignorants? Simply by saying God bless." Thank you. All of those pieces were from my book: "Letters

01:13:01 CJ

to a Blind Man, America, God, and Myself" available on Amazon or my website. cjlw.com. Thank you guys so much.

01:13:11 Peggy

Thank you. I am so glad that was recorded and that you told us where we can read those because it's like-

01:13:17 CJ

I know I talk fast. I meant to give that- I meant to give that warning.

01:13:21 Peggy

Each one of those is like a feast. Is like wow, you know. I'm so struck by the fact that your piece was it called "Toast?" What was the one that-

01:13:31 CJ

Oh, "Drinks Up."

01:13:32 Peggy

"Drinks up?" Yeah. That actually, we always used to have a writer's craft discussion and what really fascinates me is that could be a whole new take on a writer's craft discussion. Well, it's more than a discussion.

01:13:47 CJ

I think- I think, you know, especially with that, and I and I apologize for everybody for stumbling through. Without the stumbles, it gives you a whole, you know, different feeling but my my goal with that piece in particular was to find the witty things that nobody talked about. How Kevin Durant is an All-Star MVP champ of the NBA, but he was

01:14:13 CJ

passed on for somebody who got out of the league that year, using those things people don't think of and turning it into some kind of punch line in my mind. This is my definition of lyrical, Brilliance using those things. Nobody thinks of and make it, make it something that matters. So that was the whole point with that, that "Drinks Up" piece.

01:14:36 Peggy

Well, but it's also about it's about creation. It's about you wanting to be great at what you do and your creative process and that seems very different than sometimes we think of poetry is quiet. And this goes beyond spoken words. This is spoken passion.

01:14:53 CJ

So I would definitely like to say that I thank again, I want to thank Miss Jaye. Because when I started writing poetry, I mean, post on though, I started writing poetry four years, five years ago now, but I wasn't a poet. I know I do poems. What I knew how to do was write music and I was able to translate that, that may be why I'd go so fast, you know, when I say it, but I'm trying to fit into

01:15:20 CJ

this poetry lane but kind of create my own because I, you know, I'm a little different like that but thank you guys for having me.

01:15:27 Peggy

Great. I'm so glad. So yeah, it's like I said, my brain is about to explode just because you covered so much ground so fast but in a hooking way. I love it. Absolutely love it. So powerful. Come back anytime. Now, I believe, you know, so many times in my reading groups, people say, well, I don't want to follow that person, but seriously, okay, that's got to be hard to follow CJ. So I'm just checking whether I understood correctly many that you wanted to do the open mic, check in side, put it out. Our to everyone. And I was thinking that Minnie had said yes. Yeah, great.

01:16:18 Minnie

I love following CJ.

01:16:22 Peggy

All right. Good.

01:16:24 Minnie

Because he is extraordinary and don't try to create your portrait to fit my style. You got your own stuff, therefore, with the music in the background. I know, You would have blown me out of the room and I would be up dancing. Okay. Okay. Your historical

01:16:49 Minnie

narrative was really impressive and I'm just going to bring it closer to home. Essentially Seattle, specifically to a sculptor in Seattle, his name is James Washington Jr. Sculptor. And in Seattle, in the Capitol Hill was really off of 23rd and in between them, a okay, there is a James, Washington Jr. House. It's a foundation. I wrote a poem at their last celebration and here it is. "When Stones Talk." [Reading] "Have you ever held stones in your hands caress them, even inhale, but Earth in those stones perhaps you thought a fire water, vapor. Even a chisel grinding and mixing and diffusing and freeing the spirit in that stone.

01:18:07 Minnie

Mr. James Washington romance, his stones. Sensual satisfaction. Temple leading filling a void. Rhythmical salvation, even restful meditation. Hands and heart building and pressing reborn life-forms, Master sculpture James Washington Jr. Romance, just Stones. He is the messenger of God, Shay. Are you Aruba belief? So be it. But I have the power to make it change. With his pneumatic hammers, he created narratives and sort of freedom for the young queen of Ethiopia, renewness of life and the head of job, a wounded Eco. Frederick Douglass. Martin Luther King jr. And the Oracle of Truth, his spirit is in all of his sculptured Stones, listen to those do Pick them up around you and listen to the stories embedded. In those stones, they reveal our ways of knowing our ways of doing how ways of thinking, and believing it acting to know the sculpture James Washington Jr. Is to hear the ancestral stories to see the visions. Embedding in those stones and we can free them, listen to The ancestral stones

01:20:00 Minnie

and of that goal. And the last one is called pandemic shoots pandemic shoes. Thrusting up those Rising worms, pushing through ice snow. Oh broken, rock ruffling. The grass is sprouting and spread in sky with this. Digging out those abrasive. Isolated restrictions, those shoots grip under between around heart unknown. Those unexpected places don't shoots a line and defiant. Eating never spread and reconnaissance has to restrain those onslaughts of pandemic, blades, piercing fear, anxiety, death, those Shadow demux. They are Sunseeker on. Caravan Quest shoots thrust up. Stretching for the sun like spears, heralding trumpets of saffron yellow and cream, ever multiplying reblooming restoring energy against all of those unforeseen? Variants On The Rise. Meaningful possibilities for us like suits and spears. We can stretch skyward, restore energy and rebloom. I watch the birds come up out of the ground early spring, and I saw them as examples of me and others, how they can push up stones, they

01:21:51 Minnie

can push through mud. They can dig up worms. They can spray it out, four yards, and yards and yards, and they rebloom every year to get rid of the pandemic in our minds and in our bodies." The End.

01:22:13 Peggy

So glad you were always able to join us and delighted. Asia has already contacted me so that we can like, schedule new voices. I'm always open, you know, tell your friends. This writing series was founded for new and experienced voices and no matter whether we're online or in person, we're friendly place and it's always a great place to come home to or else to be the first place that you ever read, so it has been a really magical evening. Our next reading is on May 13th, I am going to turn off the recording so that we can chat in the old-fashioned way. So thank you all for coming tonight and I look forward to being able to re-watch this and have it be shared on The Seattle Public Library website through their podcast. Thank you all.