



Library podcast

Virtual It's About Time Writers' Reading Series #379

00:00:01 Peggy

Welcome to the It's About Time Writers' Reading Series. Does anybody know the number? Three hundred seventy-two... three? I didn't bring my notebook. I'm on vacation. So from all different parts of Seattle and the country, welcome to the continuing online version of the It's About Time Writers' Reading Series, which is going for a new record in attendance. This meeting is being recorded. Your names will be removed later so that there's confidentiality other than that of the readers tonight. And later on this recording will be uploaded to the It's About Time Writers' Reading Series on its own YouTube channel and a podcast will be available on The Seattle Public Librar website. I can't tell you exactly when the podcast will be available, but this and recordings dating back to I believe last June or July 2020 are now available on the It's About Time YouTube site. So if you've missed anything, you can go back and see a wonderful set of readings and surprises over the last year.

00:01:23 Peggy

Tonight I'm very happy to welcome several people that I know personally and one I've never met before, but who became acquainted with one another in a writing class quite some time ago, and I've actually already received some questions about it. I get to do. Oh, here's Pam Carter who may ask those questions herself. She emailed me earlier. She had some questions about your process. So I'm sure we all do and that's one of the things that were able to do is have a little interaction, our first reader tonight is Millie, Millie Renfrow, and she was born in Ellensburg, Washington, where she lived into her mid-30s. Her parents sang and read aloud to her and her siblings everyday. Stories, the funny papers and poems. And the family lived in several houses built by their father on small acreage.

00:02:29 Peggy

After 30 years teaching elementary and middle school, Millie Renfrow continued exploring poetry in the University of Washington Certificate program as well as in a variety of workshops in the Northwest. She has been an active participant in writers' groups for more than forty years. Millie has published several poems and was an award winner at the Skagit Valley Poetry Festival several years ago. Welcome, Millie.

00:03:18 Millie

Thank you so much. Good evening, and welcome to my reading my poems, reflect my experiences. Approaching 80 and my experiences caring for an 80 year old woman. Poem. [Reading] "I live in a

hollow place where the song that sings to me comes from the heater. How long have I been here?
Oh, I think since last

00:03:50 Millie

year, when I became a lost woman, at the edges of a worldwide, pandemic caused by the coronavirus in a world that never can sing to me. Except when the heater is on. It seems pretty dreary walls. Do not sing floors, remain treacherous, and I probably have forgotten what day it is, and how to speak, as well as how to sing to myself in these dark days alone for hours and hours. At a time. I have yet to determine what day it is. Since this missile comes to me in the middle of the night, after I lay awake. For an hour and find no interest in the quiet of my bedroom of my brain. I wonder if anyone has ever written such a dreary poem that somewhere inside of me. The more I write, the more I am aware that I'm tickling those brain cells. Wishing. They would awaken. I know you are in there somewhere, come to me for a little Labiche poetry. I haven't written in these 10 long months who could have known the rationalists. The peppery flavor the smelling us of a poem drug from a sleeping brain. Just

00:05:21 Millie

these short lines. Keep me writing, who knew when I finished writing. I thought I remembered what year it is 2020, but I have yet to remember today's date. December. It's only 4:30 a.m." Thank you for joining me. I'm rather pleased with this crazy thing I call poem.

00:05:51 Millie

[Reading] "To her heart appealed. A shy little girl in the alfalfa field for curiosity and wonder spilled into song singing, her stories to her heart of healed. And she hummed with the wind all the day long, her curiosity and wonder spilled into song. The rustling of grass has Robins Feathering their nest and she hummed with the wind all the day long, the wheezing with astShma bound her for rest. The rustling of grass has robbins feathering their nests. Up high, are a melody above the winds, whistle though, wheezing from asthma bound her for rest. Her songs squeezed to silence words, soft, as a thistle. High are a melody, above the winds whistle rhyme, still dancing around in her head, her song, squeeze to silence words soft as a bissell. You know, singer. Now this fledging poet instead rhymes, still dancing around in her head stories and song to her heart a field. No singer. Now, fledgling poet, instead a shy little girl in the alfalfa field. [Turns page] On approaching 80. 80 a speed parents caution you about.

00:07:24 Millie

In the first years of driving 80 is along a lot of money for a teenager longing, to buy a wool, Tartan jacket hard-earned. And long saved for taking care of young neighbor, children at 35 cents an hour. But the choice is hers, any of 80 jackets on elegant racks in a women's clothing years. There were 28 more than 80 students in my graduating class in 1954. And now in two weeks fewer than 20 women who have been friends for 75 years and counting. We'll meet for a two-night three-day retreat at son Kate. Here over the Cascades near the community of of I know it starts with our my mind. A blank on this road to my 80th. Birthday doesn't want to share with this form at this time. Never a surprise. This happens frequently. And yet if I stop fussing, breathe deeply, slow, my mind. Sing a song that brings

me. Any joy perhaps in five minutes or an 80 that long-lost word will pop into my mind. I know it will and yet I feel so cut off and this poem about Rosslyn, and there it is. Rosslyn.

00:09:06 Millie

News of love. Massive, the burden this flash, must learn to bear, like mules of love from Ellen, Bass. It is embarrassing. This getting old getting needing help. But from strangers. I don't know. The days swing low and I am feeling cold. I pee. My pants. My bowels. I cannot hold. Will she wipe me? I weep to stop that flow. It is embarrassing. This getting old. Sweet. Sleep of sleep away. This life that holds me captive with the stranger body and toe some days, time slows. I feel a creeping cold. House cries, bend pick up the spec of mold. I been taste mold unsteady fall back. Slow embarrassed again. Legs out of control. I pull the dresser scarf. For help. She scolds this aging body, curled, arthritic, fingers toes. The day swing low. I dread the coming cold. The Stranger cannot sing. My heart and fold, and oh, I miss my dearest lost love. So it is embarrassing. Pressing this getting old the days swing low and I am feeling cold.

00:10:56 Millie

Farmers gift one the minute. I round the corner out of bend, east of Powell Butte the tart odor of junipers. Wrinkles my nose. I turn East on Neff Road. Drive 15 miles into the high blue-grey desert, just beyond the community church and the alfalfa store. The next mailbox. My cousins for Acres a small farm for retired folks, acreage for Alfalfa pasture for a dozen beef, cattle for four horses. Five Welsh ponies. No dogs greet me. A surprise, the front door is open, but no one answers. My hello. Uneasiness of a city woman hunches. My spine, I sit on the porch. Read my novel, a magpie were is the marrow of a neglected bone, Rufus, headed large sparrows, feed on the Russian sage beside me in the desert Garden. An hour later courses at the barn, begin a nervous pacing hooves thud against [audio breaking up] shiver the sky from beyond the canal behind the house. Talk of a hearse against stone low voices to women, right out of a dust cloud, my cousin on her pony, her friend. On the Palomino.

00:12:40 Millie

Cameras are the modern West. Two. Newly mown. Hay, lies and long windrows drying to a balable, crisp in the fall sun. Late afternoon, rain threatens and we hightail it from the magnificent monument stings pillar down through Prineville back to Alfalfa. My cousin jumped on her for a four races down to the drive, the track to drive the tractor, pulling the baler or emphysema got forgotten in the rising dust. I study kachunk kachunk, the rhythmic thump of bales hitting the shoot beats the air, as they drop a row ahead of the crew. Three dogs sniffed. The wind rose for broke Gophers. Garter snakes, mice tails, wagging, like semaphores, from eager sailors, jumper punctures, Jaws snap bring up. Up a mouse, he tears off to savor the catch, my cousin's husband and their neighbor back. The bales swing each one up to the wagon for a second. Neighbors tax 123, Bales dry as parchment almost four. Tons off to the barn in 45 minutes. Rain, for real. Three in the dusty orange of setting sun.

00:14:27 Millie

My hair, your hot flashes his white rump patch, as he dives swoops up. Talons gripping a small dinner. Tidbit. The moon ready faced sunburned draped in dark blue grey clouds rises over the

distant. Ochoco Hills. We sit down to the to our dinner, fresh elk steak." And my last poem is called Just Enough Light from Charles Cynic. [Reading] "A course Universe, unsolicited, divined. As proper silence. We know, no other gravity and light travel. Now, the physician physicists say at the same speed are the two related reverberations shifting ever. So slightly, or with a mighty shock from gravity to right light to gravity changing the image recomposing. Song. A clear echo, resounds dances into magma mountains, Rushing Water, trees, blossoms bacteria, viruses mitochondria. And where are we in this fury and discern? How we shudder at the chasm seemingly an endless void yet, conceived and cradle the infant, who will write a new poem. Rap rhythm that blazes into the night. Sky raises old familial ways, blasts and

00:16:13 Millie

abyss filling with gravity and light light. And gravity a poem. Only she can hear." Thank you very much.

00:16:28 Peggy

Thank you so much Millie. I've heard you read several times over the years but you're you are looking so beautifully and unflinchingly at aging, you know, of the view on things. It's... I'm so glad you're sharing that with us. Thank you.

00:16:51 Peggy

We now get to have.... I forgot to announce earlier that if you are interested in doing an open mic reading we have three minute Open Mic opportunities between between our readers. And one of the things has been delightful about the zoom experience is that I've also said if you're inviting your friends and family, why not invite your friends and I'm going to read as well. So our first open mic reader, having very nicely switched seats with her mother is Barbara.

00:17:30 Barbara

Hi, I'm Barbara. I have two poems tonight. Like my mom, I have taught Elementary School for 30 years. As of next week, excited about that. And one of my favorite things to do is to help young children write poems. [Reading] "Poem Makers. In our classroom on the warm Saturday, I type the words connected by children who write about rocks and candy turtles and leaves deciphering the skrulls and their journals, where they have edited and broken lines. Where I suggested in purple to preen a word here, call a word, they're often, they brandish a better idea a stronger image than I could have wielded. Are they too young to count enough years to know of lost loves and those found a phone call and dark sleep? The brain aneurysm in the Mother-in-law. I never knew and the premature baby. My friend cannot hold until his breath is strong. Yet these children we've words as if they had been breathing ideas. All their precious lives, the poems of the ages dripping from their sticky fingers, keeping onto the

00:18:49 Barbara

plates of the poet, laureates of the future.

00:18:56 Barbara

Where to land for Judy, your father bought the kit from an army surplus store in Portland before the war. Your mother didn't have a ring or a rug for the living room until their fifth anniversary. When you were four years old. He made you and your brothers, one sister assembled, the engines peers, the bolts thick with grease. The maze of wires strewn across the side of the tool shed. The Kings canvas and strapped in layers of resin drying in your nostrils. Then more resin more canvas, always resin stiffening your jeans, on Saturdays, when the plane was finished. You are not quite old enough to drive the reward for tedious assembly, flying wherever you wanted by yourself. Once you piloted your youngest brother across the mountains, singing. Oh, Susanna. Susanna until the gas ran low without a radio. While your brother cried, you had to decide where to put the plane down. There was a road and a field later your dad wired you money for the gas and the motel, the sun already exchanged for Mountain

00:20:14 Barbara

Shadows. Now, you must decide whether to keep your breasts or less than land on the field or the road before the genes that your women strike you in your playing like lightning." Thank you.

00:20:36 Peggy

What a delight to have you both read. You are not our first multi-generation set of readers, but it makes me think that we should make this an absolutely ongoing occasion. That was brilliant. Thank you so much. Our next reader is Madelle and she is much more cryptic in her bio, but said that she basically... we get to talk about this more later. Madelle Quiring retired 18 years ago as the secretary for a teaching and learning center at the University of Washington, and now enjoys a rural lifestyle in Skykomish, gardening, coordinating monthly summer open air arts and crafts markets in this very small historical railroad town, and creating an occasional painting, in addition to writing. Welcome Madelle.

00:21:46 Madelle

Okay. Hello. And thank you everybody for this occasion. [audio cuts in and out]

00:22:04 Madelle

doing poetry together. So, and we learn from my much from each other... so much. And really, really work for every group, [audio cuts in and out]. So I'll read.

00:22:31 Madelle

[Reading, audio choppy] "When you have gone, will salmon from the sounds that feed into the sound. That's healed. All the logs voices, echoing. Uncharged are remarkable writing in the Thunder of colliding, starved, clothes, raping the kept dropping the cow to make it bold to make hearts of my fight. People stock up. Now. I don't know what to do. Rocking the cultivated hearts of my people Teno and shelter raised to fear the wild. Oh, Chinook Sockeye sink. I Kobo Chums of many of, Millie of many childhoods. My eyes, my eyes move South to the felting style fighting steel here while grown by rainbow pickled Brown, the other Dolly, Martin trout, my father caught him. All right, California strings. Well, over and hump a century ago and oh, those culprit catfish that lay in his field all day. Gasping. Not dying. Some kind of missing link that he poured into the sink when he got home. And we watch

them swim again until he gave the coup de gras, and we ate them grounded. And for supper, oh, the soft half-bright Hatchery

00:24:21 Madelle

trout. He caught later on in strong stock strings. Never fought. So well. Never hold the same through. Never tasted free."

00:24:38 Madelle

This poem is called Wicker Dreaming. [Reading] "I passed the show with the fall with the life-size, proper weight quicker, motorcycle in the window. And each time, the scenes. That's my mind's puppy contouring turning over as the perfect slowly shaped mock. Mulder never will. Water, written woven wicker is romantic and frogs and light for summer, Furniture, ladies, dressing variables who had dreamed it into a longer cycle. I think of Willow growing in marching marshy, places of the processes to prepare, the twigs for bending or how or branch of it in the hands of a diviner finds water Huli flowing, underground tells the farmer where to dig a well, Willow thickets Rock crunch down pile up evolve into peat bogs in a few million years. The Irish cut it into chunks and lay it out to dry. It burns smoking in the cottages of the poor write this on that station or Mari, Mari with a rotor cycle, followed by a stripper.

00:26:26 Madelle

I am a teenager.

00:26:32 Madelle1

This one. Close to the cliff edge above the sea, the farthest. Apple tree lay on her side divided, from the orchard, by the pale of redrawing boundaries, a mound of sod covered her roots exposed by a storm. So yes and abundantly if and abundantly She bore sweet food. We walked up the trunk of the canted tree and reached her fruit. Without a ladder, the neighbors children, pick their film and still through a laying Autumn. We lived on bread and beef bowls of thick French episode. As we wrestle reverently eight. We took into the old trees story of a storm's uprooting and how she survived to bear hundreds of apples of a rare and wondrous place over every year."

00:27:51 Madelle

This poem is about U District where I lived. [Reading] In Words. Hello, ever so slowly this night, as I watch from my window, the falling snow filters through the grounds, change the chain turns, if white, the changing sound of the traffic. Whoosh hatches, my ears. Flakes, scarily stick to the blacks tree, but I know it would be more white in the morning. On the steps of the campus, where a student sits in large sunshine reading King Solomon's Ring. I flashback to Lorenz's chapter on the jackdaws that came back to his attic. Each year like Capistrano swallows. How he named a new the mated pairs the easy way. They greeted him those welcome houseguests pulling in for an extended visit every spring. Sparrows chirping scavenge in the alley where Scott Cafe tables, filled in fair weather, where patrons stiff exotic coffee. Drop. Pastry, comes and chatter a narrow ribbon out of the window roof, except the sky. If you are the artist Basquiat, you don't think about pleasing. The eye, your aim is to tell

00:29:40 Madelle

your hard story in fierce mark making flashing strokes carrying more surging powers in the blue lightning sparking from the overhead wires of Metro's Augustin electric buses. Hello, a gnarled old man thin as a twig bends down in the middle of the street picks up as in the ritual. A little brand and a big Golden Leaf shaped like tobacco and moves them to the size of the room. By the espresso stand in the busy bookstore, a family rests on the bus bench. Mother runs her fingers through most mother runs her fingers. Neatly your daughter's hair and out of sin. Are I pull this move? To capture a poem peak. Around corners across the gravel date, clear yard, a toddler drags, a pterodactyl by the tail Stan walked for these fall clews. Builds trust and sidle up. Only we the wild bird into your hand. At the Museum of Anthropology, apology. The grandmother looked at the shamans rattle in the glass cave marked, the tiny deer hooves passing around a twig bound. The strong hide and imagine clicking sounds

00:31:44 Madelle

dancing. Fireline, wailing harpoons, and fish hooks woven conical hats and baskets, contrasted with a modern button, blanket, sharing images of raven with the Cat in the Hat. Pilled up with spears, canoes, beautiful, beadwork magnificent totem poles. And their Restless Spirits. She rested on a bench by a window that opened on a patch of ground vibrant with wildflowers, right? With Wiz vibrant with wildflowers, native grasses. So live in the now that it calls her outside to find it. She stood in the natural garden with her daughter beside her felt the spirits of the ancestors hovering while Thunder rolled in a dark Squall Cather, while the sky opened and an elemental Lily, blue patterns of green light through term ruling leaves. Up Rose Bowl on that charge. Dear her heart and voice Rose in reply. Yes, messenger. I hear you're thinking I thinking white hard, rainfall wash the windshield and sunlight spit the clouds as the women took the scenic drive home along the beach. The ocean.

00:33:40 Madelle

Natural blessings. While seeds planted by the wind mantle of the earth feed. The birds everywhere. Two rares drawing of a patch of meadow. It's just vibrant to me as his famous rabbit and praying hands, great bushes of wild roses. Rise by the ocean, they're sent riding the breeze summer grasses, see from idiot City. Cracks their Castle castles back to verse 2. They could look shimmer with dandelions. The fresh flowers on the wild field pea vines that Britain's royal in-flight regime. Purple flower. We villains begins to below renew groans. Vern Braun and children bring home from these exotic. Exciting groans the neriah with parchment."

00:35:03 Madelle

And my last poem, a formal poem called A Pen. [Reading] "Boom. [unintelligible]. I am drawn to what prant be in down the power and range of expression that comes only from Stradivarius violins and modern science, hadn't found the secret, the power and mänge of expression call forth a rapper reverential wonder, and modern Cheyenne's. Hasn't found the secret of the sounds that skilled musician. Summer Sun earn from a strand. Stall, for call for some preferential window for this master Craftsman, who enabled, the sounds that skilled musicians Drummond from a strad to make music down the centuries. For this master scrap Craftsman who enabled through his art the power in the wood to make music down the centuries worked with an angel on his shoulder. Through his art. The

power is the wood resounded nosing knowing stradivari work with an angel on his shoulders and the wood and the angels conspired resounding nosing upside of

00:37:01 Madelle

already freed the soul and the songs in the wood and the wood and the joke inspired through Antonio's, love things, anger, and seal praised, the soul and the song in the wood that come only from spat Stradivarius violins through Antonio's, loving labor. And I am grown to, what can I be?"

00:37:39 Peggy

Thank you, Madelle. So have we... thank you so much. Have we had anyone else, if you are interested in doing the open mic, please let me know in the chat and we will get to in then because we'll have a little time afterwards. But next, I'd like to introduce the third poet. Miriam Bassuk has been published in Snapdragon, Between the Lines, PoetsWest Literary Journal, and 3 Elements Review. She was one of the featured poets in the digital portion of the WA 129 project sponsored by the Washington State poet laureate. As an avid journal writer, she has been charting the journey of living in these uncertain times with corona virus impacting us all. Welcome Miriam.

00:38:52 Miriam

Thank you Peggy. I am deeply touched to see all my friends and family from the East Coast from

00:39:02 Miriam

around here my daughter. So it's a very special reading and the chance to be together with Madelle and Millie. So I'd like to thank you all for coming out for this. It's really an honor for me to read with my poetry sisters. As Peggy might have said the three of us have been meeting for over 20 years to share friendship and poetry. So tonight what I'd like to do is to read a number of poems, which I've written over the past year of covid.

00:39:40 Miriam

[Reading] "Pandemic April 9th 2020. Some days are dark and heavy too heavy to bear. Whatever lights there are dim with uncertainty. All that is unknown is enough to let fear strike her match. The only antidote hope, but even she is a slippery. Mist of ill-defined future. We hold our breath. We stay home. We need our brows. Expect leadership to root us, out of this mess. But Trump, the man at the top is busy chewing gum blow. Being empty, bubbles.

00:40:31 Miriam

I walk almost every day in Lincoln Park, in West, Seattle. And these were my thoughts early on in the pandemic. On one of those walks rule Breakers. Yesterday at Lincoln Park, 15 or so. Rule-breakers assembled under picnic shelter, coffee cups and hand warming by the wood fire. As if the world had turned a page, erase the demand for social distancing, not one of them, wearing a mask. I had to still my teacher voice, which would have chided them for this get together all Or 60 all high risk. And yeah, the connection is what counts of force that overrides all rule mongering."

00:41:29 Miriam

This next short poem is a tribute to a father and his two sons out playing in that same park during covid. [Reading] "War With The Dragon. A father Dances With the Wind to kites one for each small child. They are careless hoping the dragon will never find them.

00:41:56 Miriam

In search of safety, enough of the Primal pain of this time. Enough of scarcity, of being stood up by sorrow or Joy, enough of Statistics, how they glow in the dark, infiltrate my dreams. Enough of fears, the way they bristle and implode how they lead down dead ends. Literally dead ends. Enough of long Winters closets, with heavy overcoats, I seek Sanctuary safety the sun, hammers to bang, all the assault rifles into plowshares. This next one, you'll have to forgive me for. It's pretty stereotyped and stereotypes. I recognize only skim the surface but it was a fun poem to, right. It's the difference between men's and women's programming and how it might relate to violence balls out. Men get a hard rap too much responsibility. We send them out to the, we send them out to war. They take the heat, The Hurt Play Ball, even when injured don't cry, Never Cry. Get up fight, like a man. It's all a Confidence Game. Never to show weakness. Our grandson learned early to pick himself up from the pavement

00:43:35 Miriam

even when his knee is busted and bleeding. He says I'm okay. Never to have the pleasure young girls do playing Jacks and paper dolls, sitting still while grading each other's hair. Aggression and dominance become middle names for men and they must like it like that Revel in being Top Dog, the hero who can fix anything under your hood. Never to be stroked. Oh, but we do stroke them massage their tight muscles stroke. Egos need them to be strong because we like to lean, what? Men Miss is softness surrender being free to preen and prance. After years of tamping down tender feelings. Something pent-up blows like a steam valve yearning for release. This one is something. I imagine many of us may have felt after being vaccinated. Gratitude after vaccination. Released from the Fatal Hammer of this virus released to sing hug wander aimlessly through new doors. Now, beginning to open. We bring our bucket of sadness loneliness. Unspent grief, still lodged in cells memory Loops that unspool with worry.

00:45:17 Miriam

One year later spring is here with its. Blossoms poking through.

00:45:25 Miriam

Aftermath. Hard to know what the clearing will reveal once. This pandemic is over even fortune. Tellers lisp and grow blank. There are those futurists who make their living on prediction. I am not one of them. I picture a slow-motion camera, charting our waking from this bad dream, all at different moments. Some will remain quiet reserved and Sanctuary suit them. Others will tumble into travel pursue what they have longed for all these many months, still anxiety lingers bedfellow with the unknown. I trust, we will drift each into our own future scarred by a disease. We could not control presently. We crawled toward more normalcy, whatever that means return to hugs. Now, switching from covid on a completely different note. These next three poems are more family related. Why I hate raw tomatoes to this day. Something about the texture, the Slime, that enters the mouth without

invitation the potent. Burst of seeds, bloody are in skin stretched taut belies the tendons and the stream of tiny

00:47:02 Miriam

corpuscles held by gelatin not a friendly. Mix. My husband wants, thought it was the size of the Tomato. I objected to and offered me a great tomato as if it were Earl. He fully expected. I would thank him for this pallet extension. The surprise of crunchy tight skin, releasing a burst of Pulp was beyond the pale and so it goes with hatreds. That won't budge.

00:47:39 Miriam

Blank pages for Jeffrey. I like the toughness of some poets who was just a few lines of ink can tell their story. I like the blank page that gives me breath. I like your soft breathing in the night, the way your legs wrap mine. So attentive to my restlessness and how you open the full page of your body for me to write on.

00:48:12 Miriam

Two birds. We watch the Prelude to a winter storm. First snow of the Season, whiteout Skies seem to be waiting for some Q to empty a white so dense it hers. What we spy on our decks are two frozen Birds. I want to cradle them in my hands, to feel the pulsing of imagined heart beats to warm their blood. They're Stillness is alarming. I stopped watching and we'll them to fly away one does but the remaining bird has now rolled over skeletal feeds clutch emptiness. I asked my husband to move her to a soft place in the woods now damp with snow and layers of leaves. It's warmer there."

00:49:13 Miriam

This last poem is What I See on My Walks Each Morning. [Reading] "Driftwood on the beach at Lincoln Park. Forgotten logs, some strip naked. Amber skin of Madrona, polished smooth. One tree takes the shape, our fingers make in shadow, puppets of lizards. I wink at him as I walk by. Then. There are those with roots like Honeycombs. A cluster of tendrils designed to drink deep. Picture cypress trees, but these go by a different name. They rest silent on a rocky Beach listing to the steady hum of waves folding in on themselves heart and breath in sync. Someone carved native figures on a few of these Fallen trees Raven. Salmon, they are speaking. Even now." Thank you guys. This has been a special treat for me.

00:50:24 Peggy

Thank you so much. It's so lovely to hear how your work is evolved. I just would love to steal that. The open pages. What was your life? Like black pages? Blank pages of beautiful. So have a few questions and then we'll here, we have an open mic person. Laura. So Pam wanted me to ask you. Three M's.

00:50:54 Peggy

Have you given each other topics or prompts assignments? And is your convening mostly critical or also generative? So who wants to answer that? Feel free to unmute.

00:51:15 Miriam

It's a combination. We've done favorite poems. We've done. We usually submitted a poem in advance and would review it with each other always in a really supportive response. And I think the most exciting project that we did that was, especially exciting to milling. And made a bow, is something called a wrench e in which we took the last line of one. On and use that as the prompt for what we would write as our next poem and what that generated is because it wasn't a line that you would consider for yourself. It generated completely new and more imaginative than we might have come to ourselves.

00:52:03 Peggy

And have you always like have you met regularly all these years?

00:52:09 Miriam

We suspended a bit once Madelle moved to Skykomish. We were meeting in homes. We met at the University at the Student Union and we suspended a bit but courtesy of Millie's

00:52:23 Miriam

daughter. We've been meeting on Zoom probably once a month and so that's been lovely and I'll stop being the person who answers all the questions, yeah. Can for somebody else?

00:52:40 Peggy

So we have another question. Although this one's for you Miriam, which is a sort of maze maybe a bit Insider, how has her life in West Seattle changed her poetry? if at all versus other places, she has lived? Although your last piece about walking in Lincoln Park by Linkin Park, clearly answers up a little bit. So, did your poetry change when you moved?

00:53:04 Miriam

It's been... I don't know how my poetry's changed, but it's been jarring as a difference from being a Suburban person and really enjoying the controlled environment of Mill Creek, to a much more chaotic Urban setting which I've never been used to, but I have the ocean. I've never been able to walk at the ocean every day, which is such a gift and We get a light show. I've always wanted on my bucket list to see their

00:53:37 Miriam

Aurora, but we get the Aurora every night, you know, there's a different sunset or a different Dawn and I never had that experience in this, you know, where we used to live. Yes. Pretty exciting.

00:53:53 Peggy

How about you Madelle. You also changed venues? How has that affected your work?

00:54:01 Madelle

Well, um, I'm answer that question, but I don't really know after just about it. I have a lot of rhyme and rhythm and natural choice of words. It was great, always with our our meeting together and critiquing

with grace each other's work and to meeting each time with a new car. But I have kind of script in the last ten years. I have so much poetry. My natural something-or-other, isn't it's different. It's just been too much. So instead I painted till I didn't do anything and very much you were close.

00:55:03 Madelle

The painting is a wonderful process to and so that that's been really nice.

00:55:18 Madelle

So many times through the years for a good 20 years and it was 97, 1997 when we took the creative writing and poetry extension class at u-dub expansion. And so that was really

00:55:48 Madelle

Really lovely amount of time together.

00:55:52 Peggy

Because did you have different teachers? Do you remember any of your teachers at the extension?

00:56:00 Madelle

I don't know.

00:56:06 Miriam

Ken Wallace and Bill. Randall. Okay,

00:56:19 Madelle

We had a different teacher each quarter and they were all wonderful and Brilliant. Miriam did John?

00:56:34 Peggy

And question for Millie and Barb. So have you shared? I know Barb that you've heard your mom's work before you share much of your work with her.

00:56:45 Barbara

I haven't done a lot of writing in the last few years myself. And so no, I haven't shared with her. She was surprised when she heard I was going to do open mic,

00:56:57 Peggy

We like a few surprises. Well, yeah, are you both? I'm so glad you're obviously so supportive of your mother's, you know, longtime writing and her her sharing their sale.

00:57:13 Barbara

She's a great great model in that. But teaching and and writing and art, all those things I tend to followed in her footsteps, a little bit. Obviously.

00:57:22 Peggy

Well, and of course, as Millie as you, so often share in your bio, so now you've passed it along to just think not only to your daughter, but between you almost 60 years worth of students that you've been encouraging in your poem that being, oh my God, because that was crazy. That's a lot of poems.

00:57:45 Peggy

Wonderful. I'm going to go now to Laura. She's going to be joining us in August and then we'll come back. And after I stop the recording will let people do a little chatting just as though we were in a milling around in a room. So Laura your Open Mic.

00:58:12 Laura

All right. Thank you very much. So my first poem tonight is called Super Moon. And this was published in Celestial music, musing, poems inspired by the night sky.

00:58:35 Laura

[Reading] "Eyes open enough to see the light streaming through the edge of the Roman shade. So bright. I thought it was morning. The clock told me. Otherwise, I got out of bed to see what was causing this Wonder a Faraway Moon Illuminating. The clouds as they billowed by concealing their light source, cumulus pulled back revealing a moon. So huge and close. It seemed to have sped at light speed to peer into my window back at me. I stood for a moment watching the clouds billowing like smoke from a factory. Some dark others gleaming in the Moonlight was Silver. Linings and I wondered were you seeing this to? Or were you fast asleep unaware of this magic? Are you my silver lining? I went back to my empty bed filled with hope and wonder."

00:59:46 Laura

One more. My True Voice. So gosh, almost 11 years ago. I had a traumatic brain event and Over the course of several years. I have had I have learned the value of the term spells. I have had spells. It's a fantastic word that old ladies used to use all the time and now I get to use it. So this is My True Voice. [Reading] "I think about burning my old journals so that when I die, no one has to deal with them. So no one will read my weakest moments when they thought I was being so strong and good. Then I realize these those words are in fact, my truest feelings and actions. The best and worst moments of my living they show that I was struggling when people thought I was fine. They show that I was humbled. When people thought I was proud, they show that I was brokenhearted when they thought I was healed and I wondered why hide those words from them when I die. Perhaps those words will inspire them to get through the next struggle. They will see. I laugh when there was much to cry about, they will see,

01:01:19 Laura

I was proud when there was still much to be humbled by, they will see my healing. When there was so much breaking my heart a window into my heart, showing my truest self and then I wondered. Why am I waiting until I die?"

01:01:41 Peggy

Thank you. I look forward to August. I look forward to July but I look forward to it. Thank you so much. Thank you. And actually hearing that spells are thing. Is it's helpful to me I can attest. I personally have an experienced TBI, but I've been to acquainted with it in my life. So our next reading is on and I just looked it up and I promptly forgot it. So. Whatever is the next thing in July, I think it's like July 10, and the only way that we can top the 3 M's is to allow seven writers. So next month. I am pleased to be welcoming a group of another group of writers that have been meaning to get it for quite a while. They, I read about them in the Seattle Times And they called themselves, the seven writers Northwest. So they have been particularly active in putting together, their work, their longtime writing group, and with covid, they decided to create their own Anthology and published it with the proceeds going to believe literary source, so we will be hearing from seven

01:03:06 Peggy

different writers, including Tyson Greer. See where I have my whole little break down here. Tyson Greer, Marianne Gonzales, Wanda Herndon, Laura C. Lipman, James Spaulding, Suzanne Tedesco and Beth Weir will be joining us in July. And then in August, as I mentioned, it will be Laura, along with Marjorie Oscar Howard. Who is doing an incredible thing, which is about kind of a live daily today in Salem about the Salem, witchcraft trials and spoiler alert, today was the first execution. So, and another young younger writer shouldn't call her that. But she's not here tonight who I met when I was at a lovely hedge Brooke opportunity who is working on our incredible series of essays together. So, I hope you will. Even if it's your first time here, always continue to come back and join us, and I'm now going to stop the recording so we can start chatting. Look forward to. If any of you missed it or your friends weren't able to attend tonight. This will be available on the It's About Time

01:04:28 Peggy

Writers' Reading Series YouTube channel, and at a future point on The Seattle Public Library, website in podcast version. Thank you all tonight.