

WEBVTT

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>> Stacy: Hello, everyone.

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>> Recording in progress.

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>> Stacy: Welcome, to everyone. I'm so excited that we decided to hold Mindful Poetry, the day before Thanksgiving. As you can imagine, Kim's giving us the finger snaps for this. It's one of those things that's easy to think like "oh, people will be too busy."

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But I know, for me, the space you've all created together, is one of the things I'm most-grateful for, over this last year, plus.

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So, thanks to everyone for being here.

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I see a lot of familiar faces.

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But I want to go ahead and just welcome everybody, once again, whether you're brand new to this space or whether you've been coming, and I wanted to give a little overview to the hour that we spend together.

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So, I'm Stacy and Rowe is that way. I don't know where Rowe is on your screen. We're with The Well and we create programs that try to speak to the potency of a moment, to help heal us, personally, relationally and collectively.

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For this program, we're so proud to partner with the Onbeam Project. As you probably know, and if you don't, look it up right away. Unbeing always celebrates poetry, but there's a relatively new podcast called Poetry Unbound. We share poetry from the gorgeous Unbound podcast.

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The way this hour works, we do a meditation, together, a short meditation, to get in the room.

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And then we have a poet come and talk about a single poem, give us some insights and then prompt us to do our own writing and we'll do our own writing for around ten minutes and we come back and we share.

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You can choose to share out loud, you can e-mail us your poem, or you can choose to keep that private.

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But, you'll see pretty quickly, it's a generous, generative space for creating.

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A couple other odds and ends.

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We have Anne with us, who is able to provide closed captioning. Thanks to Unbeing.

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All you need to do is click on the live transcript button at the bottom of your screen.

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Leading the meditation is the luminous, Kami Lerna. I've known Kami for many years now.

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Kami is also on our board of The Well and Kami is just a, I remember being with Kami at a group of women who are in recovery from addiction and trauma. Kami didn't have a large role in our gathering or circle. But Kami is the one who got a note from one of the participants who basically said, I just want to be, inhabit the world like you do.

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And that is who Kami is. Kami is all the wisdom, so, we're very happy to have Kami with us.

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Brad Aaron Modlin is one of my personal favorite poets. You're going to learn more about Brad, if you don't already know.

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We're going to send you links to his website and amazing books.

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Brad's a poet, he's also the creative, the Schaerr of creative writing at the University of Nebraska. And when the poem we're going to celebrate today, we thought of Brad right way, because, I'm sure Brad has many things he can write about, but I think of Brad all the time when I think of sort of, the domestic landscape of the familiar, for gorgeous meaning making.

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I think that's it. We're going to turn it over to Kami and begin.

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>> Kami, thank you, Stacy for that introduction. As we begin this meditation together, find a comfortable position where your body feels safe and supported.

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Close your eyes or allow your gaze to shift downward and soften. Notice the edges of your eyes and allow them to melt. Let your jaw be slightly open. Drop your shoulders into a relaxed position. Bring your awareness to your breath as it moves in and out through your nose. Fully experience the rising and the falling of your breath.

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Allow whatever has been happening, not happening or that you wish were happening in your life to drift off into the background.

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Right now, this time and space is for you. Drop your awareness down to your bottom ribs. And feel them flair out on the in breath and contract in on the out breath. Slowing down your breathing, take a deeper breath in. Hold it at the top for a second or two.

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And on an extended exhale, let everything go. Now, find the rhythm of the breath that is right for you. See that in this present moment, there's a sudden, small, spark that instantly grows and fills the room with a warm, gentle, comforting golden light.

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The light moves. You are keenly aware of the exact moment the light permeates the boundary of your energy field and provides a restorative, healing energy to your spirit.

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The light makes its way inward, making connection to all of the space, holding all of your life's memories in a jumbled, tangled timeline. This space is revitalized as the light travels deeper within.

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The light, passing through your field of feelings and emotions moves further inward. The light sinks into your physical body and moves into your heart space at the center of your chest, bringing healing and clearing to the space of timelessness and truth. The journey doesn't end here. The light, having entered your inner-most self now expands outward from your heart space, as if it has been exhaled onward through your emotional field.

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And beyond. The light, once again, illuminating the mind space, charged by the wisdom, bound at the innermost parts of your heart space, bringing new perspective and insight to the jumbled memories that live there. And finally, the light expands outward, once again to your spirit, illuminating it with the consists of the heart, bringing new awareness.

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Apath has been cleared. You're ready to begin your creative exploration. As we bring this to a close, flex your feet and ankles. Allow your awareness to travel up your legs and into your body. Up and across your shoulders, down your arms, and into your hands as you open and close your fingers.

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Coming up into your throat and jaw as the edges of your mouth lift upward.

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And now allow your attention to rest behind your eyelids. On your next exhalation, allow your eyes to blink open, slowly, feeling alert, deeply refreshed, and connected. This meditation is now complete. I'll turn things over now to Brad Aaron Modlin.

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>> Brad: Thank you so much for that, Kami. I feel very focused now. Well, let's open with the poem. Thank you, Rowe. So, here we have today's poem from Poetry Unbound. It's called when we were 13, Jeff's father left the needle down on a Journey record before leaving the house one morning and never coming back.

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AND THIS IS WHY NONE OF US SING ALONG TO "DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'" WHEN WE ARE BEING DRIVEN BY JEFF'S MOM, FOUR BOYS PACKED IN THE BACKSEAT TIGHT LIKE THE TOBACCO IN THEM CIGARETTES JEFF'S MOM GOT RIDING SHOTGUN WITH US AROUND I-270 IN A POWDER BLUE FORD TAURUS WHERE FOUR YEARS LATER JEFF WILL LOSE HIS VIRGINITY TO A GIRL BEHIND

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THE EAST HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD THEN LATER THAT NIGHT HIS KEYS AND PANTS IN THE SCHOOL POOL SO THAT HE HAS TO RUN HOME CRYING TO HIS MOTHER WITH AN OVERSIZED SHIRT AND NO PANTS, LIKE A CARTOON BEAR, AND THE NEXT DAY WHEN I HEAR THIS STORY, I WILL

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THINK ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS FOR SOMEONE TO BECOME NAKED TWO TIMES IN ONE NIGHT TO RUSH INTO THE WARMTH OF TWO WOMEN, ONCE BECOMING A MAN AND ONCE BECOMING A BOY ALL OVER AGAIN BUT RIGHT NOW IT IS JUST US IN THIS CAR WITH JEFF'S MOTHER, THAT

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CIGARETTE SMOKE DANCING FROM HER LIPS UNTIL IT CATCHES THE BREEZE FROM THE CRACKED FRONT WINDOW AND GLIDES BACK TOWARDS US A VAGABOND, SEARCHING FOR A THROAT TO MOVE INTO AND CRIPPLE WHILE NEAL SCHON'S GUITAR RIDES OUT THE SPEAKERS AND I DON'T KNOW HOW

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MANY OPEN WINDOWS A MAN HAS TO CLIMB OUT OF IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT IN ORDER TO HAVE HANDS THAT CAN MAKE ANYTHING SCREAM LIKE THAT.

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NOTHING KNOWS THE SOUND OF ABANDONMENT LIKE A HIGHWAY DOES, NOT EVEN GOD.

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IN THE 1980'S, EVERYONE WROTE SONGS ABOUT SOMEONE LEAVING EXCEPT

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FOR THIS ONE CUZ IT'S ABOUT HOW THE MORNING EXPLODES OVER TWO PEOPLE IN ONE BED WHO DIDN'T KNOW EACH OTHER THE NIGHT BEFORE WHEN ALONE WAS THE ONLY OTHER OPTION AND THEIR HOMES HAD TOO MANY MIRRORS FOR ALL THAT SHIT AND SO IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS IS THE ONLY SONG WRITTEN

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IN THE 1980'S ABOUT HOW FEAR TURNS INTO PROMISE I THINK I KNOW THIS BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH PIANO SPILLING ALL OVER OUR LAPS THAT WE CAN'T HELP BUT TO SMILE SINCE WE STILL BLACK

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AND KNOW NOTHING CAN RANSACK SORROW LIKE A PIANO.

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JEFF'S MOTHER'S HAND TREMBLES AND STILL WEARS A WEDDING RING SO SHE PULLS OVER TO THE SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY AND TURNS THE VOLUME UP SO LOUD AFTER THE SECOND GUITAR SOLO WHEN THE KEYS KICK IN AGAIN THAT

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WE CAN BARELY HEAR THE COCKTAIL OF LAUGHTER AND CRYING CONSUMING THE FRONT SEAT UNTIL THE SONG FADES AWAY AND THE RADIO IS LOW AGAIN AND THE RING ONCE ON JEFF'S MOTHER'S HAND IS ON THE SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY BENEATH US, A SACRIFICE

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AND SO MAYBE THIS IS WHY GRANDMA SAID A PIANO CAN COAX EVEN THE MOST VICIOUS OF GHOSTS OUT OF A BODY.

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AND SO MAYBE THIS IS WHY MY FATHER WOULD STARE AT THE EMPTY SPACES MY MOTHER ONCE OCCUPIED, SIT ME DOWN AT A BABY GRAND AND WHISPER PLAY ME SOMETHING, CHILD.

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>> Brad: Rowe, we can close the poem and come back to it. I just love this poem and have a chance to share it with you all.

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Poetry is often about knowledge and ignorance. What we know, what we don't know, what we used to know, what we don't know, what we've unlearned, what we, in retrospect, had no idea about, but now that we're adults, we see.

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That's one of the things I admire about this poem. It approaches that so wonderfully.

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The speaker is learning, through the examples of all the adults around him, the power of music.

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He's also learning that life brings us sorrow as comfort or partial cure to that sorrow, in this case, through music.

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The poem -- actually, could we pull it up again, Rowe? Sorry to close it and bring it back up.

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The poem begins with, saying, and this is why none of us sing along to Don't Stop Believing.

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The background to the song -- this is the song he put on and then he left the family.

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So, the 13-year-olds in the back of the car think, this song's on the radio, uh-oh, we're not going to sing it, we're not going to sing along.

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This is a painful memory, a triggering memory, we're going to avoid it.

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But then, what happens is, Jeff's mother hears the song and she doesn't turn the music down.

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She doesn't change the channel.

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She doesn't pretend this isn't here. She, in fact, turns it up.

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The poem, at the end, concludes with similar language. At first, we were told the poem begins "this is why" and look at the end, these last two paragraphs or stanzagraphs.

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This is why. Grandma said a piano can coax a vicious ghost out of a body. This is why my father would stair at empty spaces, sit me down and ask me to play.

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In the poem, the speaker has moved from thinking that music, sad music, maybe even just memory in general, that those are things to avoid, to having the realization that it's something that should be embraced.

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So, a lesson has been learned over the scope of this poem.

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With memory, of course, there's always two components. There's two time periods, right?

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There's now and the past we're looking at.

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So, here, we have, the poem was primarily taking place where the boys are in the car. I might call that a narrated time.

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That's where the majority of the poem takes place, sort of a story line. But it also has in the title, the memory of when Jeff's father set the record down and left.

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So, we've got the present and we've got the past, but, in fact, this poem, that's not all it has. A lot of poems will have present tense looking back at a memory. This kind of mixes things up, all over the place, so, that's something I would like to think about today.

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I think that's one of the lessons this poem can give to us. This idea of time existing all over the place and memory existing all over the place and then our knowledge actually exists in multiple times.

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So, I'm going to get a little professorship here, if you all will play along.

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And I thought we could make a timeline of this poem and look at -- what are the different points in time that we have present here? Can you see my wonderful substitute chalkboard here?

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One thing we've got is the narrated time with the boys in the car. Feel comfortable to wave your hand and let Rowe know, she can unmute you and you can help me know of other times.

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The poem gives us the potent in time in which Jeff's dad left.

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>> Josiane: When Jeff tells the poet about what happened to him. That moment. When he's doing the stuff and running back to his mom. Jeff is also talking about multiple times, when he's in the story.

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>> Deborah: We've got more people here. Some have a past and some have a present. So, Jeff's mom is in the present.

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Whereas, Jeff's dad is in the past.

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>> Brad: I love that

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>> Deborah: And Jeff is in the future, after the car ride.

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Assume the car ride is taking place in the present. Okay?

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Jeff, himself is in the future.

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And then [breaking up] past --

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>> Brad: Say that again.

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>> Deborah: The narrator has a past. That's when his father would ask him to play a song.

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There's, the mother which is gone. Sometimes the father's gone, sometimes the mother's gone. There's a couple different >> Brad: The part about play me a song -- we don't know when that was. Was that from the ages 8 -- the narrator says he's 13 in the car. Was that before the car when he was ages 8 to 12, is it after the car? We also have, now... whenever now is, let's say 2021.

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When we're thinking back on all these things. This, right, is so fascinating to me about the poem. At the end, he's like, had these realizations, when did he have that realization? When did he know that? Was he in the car? He probably wasn't thinking, literally of the song in the car.

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But he looks back at it now with his awareness and knowledge that he didn't have then. When we're in the car, we're flashing to the future. This wonderful mix of what did we know? What don't we know? What wisdom do we have and when did we learn a particular lesson?

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To me, it's offering a brand new way of thinking about knowledge and ignorance.

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Nothing knows the sound of abandonment like a highway does, not even God. Which is quite an interesting line, to think even God doesn't know something.

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When you're 13, he probably wasn't thinking about abandonment, a driver's license, that probably came to him later in his life and now describing this moment in the past.

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There's a realization about why the father asked him to play and now he seems to get it. At the time, he was thinking "don't sing this song that will set people to their sad memories."

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The poem has this overlap of when we are, where we are, what we know and how we know it. The three-most-important objects in the poem, I think, would be the record, the car, and the ring.

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A record is something that spins around and around in a circle. Even the song comes back circularly, it back into their lives. They're not on interstate 70 or 75, but those of us who have lived in Ohio might

recognize that 270 is a loop around the city of Columbus, right? They're returning, perhaps to where they earlier were and we end with a ring, another circular object.

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It seems like the poem is also inviting us to think about this idea that maybe we've been where we are before. Maybe the knowledge we're accessing at this moment was, in fact, knowledge that we had.

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Maybe, as an adult, I can look back and realize what Jeff's mom may have been thinking. Maybe, to some degree, I did know that as a child. I did know to be quiet during her turning up of the music, laughing, crying. I knew not to ask her what was going on. Even grown-up wisdom in that moment.

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Then it also talks about generational knowledge, the cycle of older adults in his life. Because they are black, nothing can ransack sorrow like a piano. The shared knowledge of a community.

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And sort of central to the poem, too, is this important night in Jeff's life when he became a child and adult at the same time.

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So, all of these things brought to mind, to me, this quote from Madeline Lingle [phonetic]. She said "I'm still every age that I have been." I still am every age I have been because I was once a child, I'm always a child. Because I was once a searching adolescent given to moods and ecstasies, these are still part of me and always will be.

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This doesn't mean I'm trapped or enclosed in any ages, but they are in me to be drawn on.

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Always, when we read a poem, there's what's on the page and what we bring to it. One of the things we may be bringing to this poem today is that, for many of us, we're celebrating Thanksgiving tomorrow. We're returning to traditions, returning to experiences we've had before, being with people since we were 13 years old, riding in cars.

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Returning to traditions. Maybe some of us weren't able to experience certain traditions in 2020. We're returning to those with a different knowledge, back to where we were, but somehow differently.

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My invitation to us today with our pages is to think about what we

know and what we used to know, what we know -- what different parts of ourselves knew in the past and didn't know.

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I have two parts to this. So, if you're ready, goat your pen and paper, I invite you to first, make a list of things that you know today. The word today is kind of big. You can make it really small and literally today on Wednesday November 24th and think about knowledge you have used today.

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This could be practical knowledge, such as a recipe you learned from your mother for baking, for Thanksgiving, or if you drove today, your knowledge of driving. You resolved a conflict.

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You found a way to get along with some people at work or in the family. What's some knowledge that you have now?

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Maybe we can spend about two minutes just kind of listing that.

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And we'll look at that knowledge from a slightly different perspective.

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>> Brad: If you can bring that to a pausing place. Not a stopping place, but a pausing place. We'll have the second part.

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The second part is, you can look back at some of the knowledge that you have and you know, we often say, if I knew then what I new now, let's flip that and say, I didn't realize it, but I did know then, what I know now. That'd be one sentence you can write, repeatedly, write that and fill it in. As a prompt.

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Or a second prompt would be "I'm ten years younger than I am." And I know I'm ten years older than I am and I know.

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Having that presence tense both times, with the sort of acknowledgement of Madeline Lingle's idea that we are all of our ages simultaneously. Do those make sense?

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>> Stacy: Brad, right now, we're just doing our two lists, we're not doing any comboing, right?

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>> Brad: Yeah, I think, if you want to combo, that's fine, but if you want to make one -- choose one list and do it, you may be able to get quite a bit of thought out of just one.

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As folks want to share in the chat, when folks are ready? Or save that?

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>> Stacy: I have one clarifying question for my brain, are we taking ten minutes to compose a poem out of this or are we still building our world?

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>> Brad: Thank you, good question. My thought is the poem we create is sort of a list poem that lists these particular things. If you ever get stuck, then you can return to that initial sentence and let that be the fifth line of your poem, kind of keep you going.

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>> Stacy: Now we should take more of our ten-minute writing time. Is that correct?

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>> Brad: Yes, that'd be great

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>> Stacy: Thank you. I'm going to set the timer, everyone, if you have any questions, I'll keep an eye on the chat. This is our writing time and we'll all be back soon.

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Thanks, Brad.

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>> Stacy: We've got about another minute before we come back and start hearing where we got. All righty, friends.

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Let's bring ourselves back into the container of the group. If you'd like to share, it helps us a lot, it helps Rowe be able to identify you, if you, at the bottom of your screen, you should be able to find a reaction button and there should be, at the bottom, or somewhere, a little hand up sign That would be great. You can also write in the chat "I'd like to read."

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And Brad will call on you as you put your hands up. And Rowe will unmute you.

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>> Brad: Well, first we have Kim Jackson, says she'd like to share.

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>> Kim: Hi, friends, thank you. Thank you for prompt.

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The dogwood tree on Bells Ferry Road. I didn't know anyone could see me with its branches gave me safe vantage of the goings on across the road.

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The way my legs dangled taught me to balance, more than my stakeout supplies. It gave me the notion I could fly. The way cars passed made me wonder where there was to go. So fast, so frequent.

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I didn't make note of scraped knees, the pang of hunger, lost soles that snapped off my shoe.

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The things I documented that may be needed to solve a mystery or locate treasure, or leave, I didn't yet know that I knew.

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Some windows don't open and stubborn vines aren't always in view.

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>> Brad: Thank you. I love "some windows don't open."

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Thank you, Kim. I see Hannah's hand up.

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>> Hannah: Hi, thank you. I'm 24, clutching a bundle of precious baby and crying into his newborn-scented fuzz, whispering "I wish I could thankful, I wish I could be more grateful, if only I were a better mother, if only I were more-able." I'm 24, clutching that swaddling like a life raft, knowing life is full, but overwhelmed and secretly wishing I was no longer alive I'm 34 crying again, over the same

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now-10-year-old on the couch.

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Fuzz growing on his legs and arms, his mouth opened, just as he called me a long list of names and wished I was dead, not of an hour ago.

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I now know my life is full and growth keeps coming, just as I knew 10 years ago. I'm clutching this bundle of hope and I know the overwhelmed doesn't overcome.

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I'm strong enough to hold the fullness of my life and my sons.

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Thank you.

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>> Brad: Thank you. Wade?

00:50:55.000 --> 00:51:02.000

>> Wade: All right. On that day at the beginning of junior high, which ended in tears, on that day on which I arrived smiling with a briefcase and a tie, on that night, when I burrowed into my soft bed, I didn't realize, I may grow more in the dark than by the light of day. Like a limestone tower, laid down, light list over countless time. Each night I grow.

00:51:02.000 --> 00:51:20.000

In the morning, when I arrive, I discover, I did know then what I do know now.

00:51:20.000 --> 00:51:27.000

>> Brad: Thank you. Looks like I see Nina Lewis' hand?

00:51:27.000 --> 00:51:50.000

>> Nina: I didn't realize that many every day [indiscernible]

00:51:50.000 --> 00:52:18.000

come from my mother. I smile at the fact she's been teaching us all this time, stealth mode learning, far too wise, she knew if she said "this is the way" or "it works best if you..." we'd never take her [indiscernible].

00:52:18.000 --> 00:52:23.000

Mother car clock set at 4 minutes early, mother, the position of my driving hands mother, remembering a [indiscernible] by landmarks. I have to pause, father. Mother never remembered right. Pink wall, she had my brothers driving around the city searching for, was a scene with one pink house, depicted somewhere in its multicultural center.

00:52:23.000 --> 00:52:43.000

My photographic mind more like my dad's head four music.

00:52:43.000 --> 00:52:56.000

Mediating, resolving conflict mother. Making sandwiches from frozen bread, childhood lesson job at 8. Box them up five ways mother. Snowman mother. To try to keep my rage under control mother. I realize now, my rage is bad.

00:52:56.000 --> 00:53:03.000

And before he left us, she spent a lifetime, three decades, at least, reigning his temper in, soothing, mothering.

00:53:03.000 --> 00:53:18.000

Most of our learning stems from our caregivers, but sometimes life throws you one or two.

00:53:18.000 --> 00:53:36.000

>> Brad: Hmm. I suppose we have time for one or two more?

00:53:36.000 --> 00:53:41.000

I think I see George's hand. Oh -- maybe still on mute.

00:53:41.000 --> 00:53:54.000

>> Stacy: Georgia, I'm sorry, we have to unmute you. You have to do it again

00:53:54.000 --> 00:53:56.000

>> Georgia: No problem. The title of my poem is Now I'm 75 and I'm Still Afraid.

00:53:56.000 --> 00:54:17.000

>> Brad: Hmm.

00:54:17.000 --> 00:54:22.000

>> Georgia: Mom was mad again, grabbed her fur coat, screamed "I'm not coming back." It is night, I'm 4. Looking down from the second floor, mom's in the model T, driving back fast.

00:54:22.000 --> 00:54:43.000

It's dark. She's left us.

00:54:43.000 --> 00:54:49.000

Dad's at his office, away from mom. He'll come home. I tell the operator 8. Dad says hello, hears me cry, that mom is gone.

00:54:49.000 --> 00:55:13.000

Dad says go back to bed.

00:55:13.000 --> 00:55:19.000

>> Brad: Hmm. So much knowledge that we have hidden or up front or not realizing. I think, Elena says in the chat that she'd like to

share? Maybe that'll be our last one for the day.

00:55:19.000 --> 00:55:21.000

>> Elena: Thank you, I'm never sure if I get the prompt right, but this is what I came up with

00:55:21.000 --> 00:55:23.000

>> There's no wrong or right.

00:55:23.000 --> 00:55:26.000

It's like eating a Reeses.

00:55:26.000 --> 00:55:46.000

However you do it is the right way

00:55:46.000 --> 00:56:13.000

>> Elena: . That Iyou, I feel unfinished. A painting left in outline. Two deaths, two surgeries, meeting the same type of person over and over again.

00:56:13.000 --> 00:56:21.000

Yet, no one left to follow my dying mother's mandate. "Take care of my little one." I'm constantly a child, a motherless daughter. Trying to fulfill broken promises. I'm on the brink of enunciation, tasting what my path might be. This is what happens when the cold it say no.

00:56:21.000 --> 00:56:33.000

Left in a state of unknowing, there exists a certain joy in just being okay.

00:56:33.000 --> 00:56:38.000

I look at the past, today, and I'm still hiding, keeping safe for the next phase, where all my fears are lamps to the future.

00:56:38.000 --> 00:56:43.000

Thank you.

00:56:43.000 --> 00:56:49.000

>> Brad: Seems like a nice, final line for us to end on.

00:56:49.000 --> 00:56:53.000

All our fears are lights to the future.

00:56:53.000 --> 00:57:10.000

>> Stacy: My golly, friends, so much beauty, again.

00:57:10.000 --> 00:57:16.000

So, before Brad reads us out with another final reading of Hanif Abdurraqib -- did I say that right? Can you say it?

00:57:16.000 --> 00:57:33.000

>> It's Hanif, with an N.

00:57:33.000 --> 00:57:37.000

>> Stacy: An Ohio poet, hanging out in the middle part of the state where Brad also spent some time, I believe. Who is really getting a lot of wonderful attention, so, follow him in his work.

00:57:37.000 --> 00:57:50.000

Super grateful to all of you.

00:57:50.000 --> 00:58:16.000

As always, you will get a note from Rowe and that will invite you to share anything you've written with us so we can put it on the blog, that it, with the recording of this beautiful time together.

00:58:16.000 --> 00:58:33.000

And we'll also make sure that you get information about upcoming events. Our next one is December 22nd. So, we'll see if we can take another moment to mine all the gorgeousness about family and past and history and complexity, right before the next holiday we share together.

00:58:33.000 --> 00:59:03.000

Again, thank you to On Being, Poetry Unbound, Mercantile Library and Word Play, our cosponsors. And all of you. My goodness.

00:59:10.000 --> 00:59:14.000

I'm going to have a better Thanksgiving for all of your beauty, so, we'll turn it over to Brad for a final reading and also, thanks to Kami for the beautiful meditation.

00:59:14.000 --> 00:59:18.000

WHEN WE WERE 13, JEFF'S FATHER LEFT THE NEEDLE DOWN ON A JOURNEY RECORD BEFORE LEAVING THE HOUSE ONE MORNING AND NEVER COMING BACK.

00:59:18.000 --> 00:59:29.000

AND THIS IS WHY NONE OF US SING ALONG TO "DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'" WHEN WE ARE BEING DRIVEN BY JEFF'S MOM, FOUR BOYS PACKED IN

00:59:29.000 --> 00:59:36.000

THE BACKSEAT TIGHT LIKE THE TOBACCO IN THEM CIGARETTES JEFF'S MOM GOT RIDING SHOTGUN WITH US AROUND I-270 IN A POWDER BLUE FORD TAURUS WHERE FOUR YEARS LATER JEFF WILL LOSE HIS VIRGINITY TO A GIRL BEHIND THE EAST HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD THEN LATER THAT NIGHT HIS KEYS AND

00:59:36.000 --> 00:59:47.000

PANTS IN THE SCHOOL POOL SO THAT HE HAS TO RUN HOME CRYING TO HIS MOTHER WITH AN OVERSIZED SHIRT AND NO PANTS, LIKE A CARTOON BEAR, AND

THE NEXT DAY WHEN I HEAR THIS STORY, I WILL

00:59:47.000 --> 00:59:59.000

THINK ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS FOR SOMEONE TO BECOME NAKED TWO TIMES IN ONE NIGHT TO RUSH INTO THE WARMTH OF TWO WOMEN, ONCE BECOMING A MAN AND ONCE BECOMING A BOY ALL OVER AGAIN BUT RIGHT NOW IT IS JUST US IN THIS CAR WITH JEFF'S MOTHER, THAT

00:59:59.000 --> 01:00:10.000

CIGARETTE SMOKE DANCING FROM HER LIPS UNTIL IT CATCHES THE BREEZE FROM THE CRACKED FRONT WINDOW AND GLIDES BACK TOWARDS US A VAGABOND, SEARCHING FOR A THROAT TO MOVE INTO AND CRIPPLE WHILE NEAL SCHON'S GUITAR RIDES OUT THE SPEAKERS AND I DON'T KNOW HOW

01:00:10.000 --> 01:00:16.000

MANY OPEN WINDOWS A MAN HAS TO CLIMB OUT OF IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT IN ORDER TO HAVE HANDS THAT CAN MAKE ANYTHING SCREAM LIKE THAT.

01:00:16.000 --> 01:00:24.000

NOTHING KNOWS THE SOUND OF ABANDONMENT LIKE A HIGHWAY DOES, NOT EVEN GOD.

01:00:24.000 --> 01:00:30.000

IN THE 1980'S, EVERYONE WROTE SONGS ABOUT SOMEONE LEAVING EXCEPT FOR THIS ONE CUZ IT'S ABOUT HOW THE MORNING EXPLODES OVER TWO PEOPLE IN ONE BED WHO DIDN'T KNOW EACH OTHER THE NIGHT BEFORE WHEN ALONE

01:00:30.000 --> 01:00:40.000

WAS THE ONLY OTHER OPTION AND THEIR HOMES HAD TOO MANY MIRRORS FOR ALL THAT SHIT AND SO IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS IS THE ONLY SONG WRITTEN

01:00:40.000 --> 01:00:43.000

IN THE 1980'S ABOUT HOW FEAR TURNS INTO PROMISE I THINK I KNOW THIS BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH PIANO SPILLING ALL OVER OUR LAPS THAT WE CAN'T HELP BUT TO SMILE SINCE WE STILL BLACK

01:00:43.000 --> 01:00:58.000

AND KNOW NOTHING CAN RANSACK SORROW LIKE A PIANO.

01:00:58.000 --> 01:01:13.000

JEFF'S MOTHER'S HAND TREMBLES AND STILL WEARS A WEDDING RING SO SHE PULLS OVER TO THE SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY AND TURNS THE VOLUME UP SO LOUD AFTER THE SECOND GUITAR SOLO WHEN THE KEYS KICK IN AGAIN THAT

01:01:13.000 --> 01:01:22.000

WE CAN BARELY HEAR THE COCKTAIL OF LAUGHTER AND CRYING CONSUMING THE FRONT SEAT UNTIL THE SONG FADES AWAY AND THE RADIO IS LOW AGAIN AND THE RING ONCE ON JEFF'S MOTHER'S HAND IS ON THE SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY BENEATH US, A SACRIFICE

01:01:22.000 --> 01:01:32.000

AND SO MAYBE THIS IS WHY GRANDMA SAID A PIANO CAN COAX EVEN THE MOST VICIOUS OF GHOSTS OUT OF A BODY.

01:01:32.000 --> 01:01:55.000

AND SO MAYBE THIS IS WHY MY FATHER WOULD STARE AT THE EMPTY SPACES MY MOTHER ONCE OCCUPIED, SIT ME DOWN AT A BABY GRAND AND WHISPER PLAY ME SOMETHING, CHILD.

01:01:55.000 --> 01:02:00.000

>> Stacy: Happy Thanksgiving, everyone. Take care yourselves.

01:02:00.000 --> 01:02:02.000

We'll see you in a month. Thank you, Brad, thank you, Kami, thank you, thank you, everyone.

01:02:02.000 --> 01:02:03.000

Goodnight.