

Join

me in the audio garden to cultivate our collective wisdom, nurture creativity, and spread love. My name is Martha Cinader.

Welcome to Listen and Be Heard.

The summer season is suddenly just a memory my friends. And even though it's still hot in the afternoons here in the audio garden, it's chilly in the early morning when I make my rounds feeding and checking on all my animal companions here. And after all the destruction of Haleen and Milton, we welcome some new life here with no memory of the storms. They're so young. The storms that changed the landscape here in the southern Piedmont where the audio garden is located.

We've welcomed baby Haleen and Milton, Nigerian dwarf goats.

The literary landscape has changed too. There was another kind of storm and in the second part of this hour for readers and writers will talk about how it's been for writers, publishers, and others since small -press distribution suddenly stopped doing business back in April of 2024. But before that, our featured writer today is Anne de Ville Cardinal. Her latest novel is "We Need No Wings" and she will join me here in the audio garden in just a few minutes. But first, let's listen to something I have played for you before here on the "Listen and Be Heard Hour" for readers and writers. And we'll likely play again. This is "Making Waves" featuring Gaia's eyes from Boba Brinkman.

[MUSIC]

People leaving homes, tell me where they'll go now
Look around and see the morning signs
Every morning rise, see the storm in times Well,
I ain't waiting for the day I change
What I do today, yeah,
I'll be making way, yeah
Someone told me the climate is changing
And all we can do is watch as it warms
Somebody told me that we could reverse it by changing the stuff we buy in stores
But the stakes are enormous, I'm talking floods and forest fires and storms
So I'm thinking that we can make progress by changing the climate of norms
The climate of what's cool and what's taboo, cause we've been in this place before
It's kinda like segregation in the south before MLK kicked in the door
It's kinda like apartheid in South Africa before Nelson Mandela walk free
It's kinda like gay People trying to get married in the States before 2015 those laws all needed changing and so do the laws we have now
Only this time the laws are passing oppression down to your grandchild now it's someone in a coastal city in a developing nation
Being treated unequal because one meter of sea level rise displaces 100 million people
But the cultural climate is changing - we can feel that as social animals whether or not your neighbors have them is the best predictor of you getting solar panels
you're not going to stop people from competing with each other or keeping up with the joneses but you can channel those competitions into clean energy
explosions you can amplify the upside of heroic sustainability leadership you can celebrate success stories and spread the message over digital media you can name and shame offenders and car for the end of fossil fuel subsidies you can make it a political liability to give a free ride to polluting companies and you can reduce your energy use
yeah that's a luxury you can afford so go on and flaunt that green

bling and signal other people to get on board you can make waves in so many ways as many as possible just to be safe each of us is just a drop in the bucket and buckets add up to a sea change

It's a pleasure to welcome Anne de Vila Cardinal back to the audio garden to talk about her latest novel, *We Need No Wings*, published by Source Books. Most of the action in the story takes place in Avila, Spain, hometown of the mystic nun, Saint Teresa, who had to prove to her inquisitors at the time that her experiences levitating were miracles and not witchcraft. Our protagonist, a descendant of Saint Therese's family, journeys to Avila to try to understand why she started levitating in her garden in Vermont and if she can gain any control over it. There's Anne now. Please join me in welcoming her to the audio garden. I'm so happy to welcome you here today to the audio garden and Davila Cardinal. Thank you. I'm honored to be here. You have been on listening to her before with Tony Robles speaking about your previous novel for adults. Your newest one is *We Need No Wings*. And I have to tell you, I think one of the nicest things about reading this book for me was that I could identify with the protagonist, Tere, who is just past her 60th birthday.

- I'm so glad that was one of the things I wanted to accomplish, honestly, Martha, because I wasn't seeing myself in the way many women of a certain age are represented in other books. And that was important to me to sort of, you know, we're not all coastal grandmas and we don't all carry candy in our purse. And you know what I mean? It's, it's, we've gotten stuck in an image in the media, like in the, if we all turn into that, no matter what our personalities were for that magic number. Exactly. And we're children of the sixties where we are a different breed. And I don't think that they've caught up quite yet. When you say they and what you're used to seeing, maybe you could elaborate just a little more on what it is that you about yourself that you don't see in the images that we are generally seeing. Well, you know, I actually wrote a piece on this for she writes about sort of my issue with the way older women are presented in that It hasn't changed since I was a kid, and it's certainly the way I imagine older women, but I actually am one myself now And I was a punk rocker. I have tattoos. I you know It just isn't happening and I had an interesting experience that I haven't really talked about that much where One of the five editor at the top five publisher who was in in her early 30s, read my punk rock Ms. Marple, which is my next, oh, we're coming out in 26. And she said, you know, I found, I loved it, but I found the older characters' voices inauthentic. And I was like, okay, so you feel at 31 years old that you understand better what my generation sounds like than I do.

And these are the gatekeepers, these are the people deciding what older people look like in books. And it's like they don't, I don't think they understand that it's changed. Do you know what I mean? I do know what you mean, although in a way it's really stayed the same. And you kind of go into that in the book because as far back as you go, all the way back to Santa Teresa 500 years ago, she as a nun in the church was facing very similar type of prejudice,

I guess I would say.

Really things haven't changed for hundreds of years now, right? That's true. That's a very good point. I mean, you know, her two choices, we have a lot more choices. Her two choices were you get married to someone your father arranges or you go to the church and she was devout to begin with she was always sort of obsessed with Saints and their stories and so she decided to go to the church but it's The choices were much more limited. Of course, they had the average life span I think for a woman in those days was 34 and she lived to 67 so she had a long life given but I just feel like you were not the

We're not the the old ladies with the support hose that that the the images try to portend Right, and we're almost invisible in a way And I jumped ahead in the story and I really actually wanted to start with the beginning it's a work of speculative fiction and or I guess it could in one way be described that way because right in the beginning she begins to levitate our main character and you know if you started levitating you would have an inclination right away to keep that a secret and yet if no one's paying attention to you, if you're not seen, then you might be levitating and people just wouldn't notice. Absolutely. And that, I think, is the point.

Because of our invisibility, we can accomplish a lot. And I also feel like one of the main messages is, yes, we're invisible, but there's this incredible freedom that comes with being this age in that, you know, your kids are grown, you know, you don't have to build your career anymore. And you really don't care what anybody thinks. I mean, you think you don't when you're 50, but when the older you get, the less you care. And, you know, it very much is a freeing time. And I was not told that I was told that we decrease in value every decade. you know, any fan says are that our only purpose should be raising the next generation. It's like, we did that. We did that. And so what should we do just what we want? I mean, I think, if you want to do that, that's great. I totally understand that. But if you want to travel, I have a dear friend who had worked her whole life to raise her child as a single parent. She paid for their college with two jobs. She was an academic. And she retired in her 70s, and one of her sons called her and said, OK, your only job now is to take care of my children. And she said, and I was like, who decides that? And she said, no, I'm going to travel if I'm around great, but I'm going to enjoy, you know, the the life I built. And it just it just should be a choice because where's grandpa on all this? Is he is he playing golf and he doesn't have any responsibilities after a certain age. So I don't feel it's fair to make an assumption about what we want to do. If that's what you want to do, then great. And so that's the position that Terri, the protagonist finds herself in where she has a choice to make about her career. And the people around her are making assumptions about maybe what she should or shouldn't do. And then she starts levitating. And it's a bit of magical realism, but it's also a bit of history in here. Santa Teresa was a real person.

And it's also not completely nonfiction. You did actually take a trip to her birthplace. Can you talk a little about how you approached the story and mixed fact

with fiction? Sure. I mean, I think that the levitation, I've made it, I've made it sound like it's about sort of the freedom of being this age. And it is in part, but a lot of it is about grief.

Most of my work is about grief, you know, I would, my father died when I was eight of ALS. And it very much is in sort of informed to I became. And so that theme comes up a lot in my work. But in terms of the trip, the first line came to me from nowhere. It was in the first person, it was, you know, the first time I levitated, I was in the garden. And I hadn't really pursued, I've been told my whole life that we're descended from a sibling of Saint Teresa of Abila, and I just sort of dismissed it as And I, the person who, who said this was actually a very renowned scholar in Puerto Rico, so I tend to, I don't want to dismiss his findings, but, you know, I sort of dismissed it in the old days and when that line came to me, I started looking into her and she was a total badass. I mean, she just defied, you know, she did what she felt was right, whether or not she asked for forgiveness, not permission. And I, And in those days, that was sort of miraculous. So I decided I would go and research it. This is where my family supposedly from. Our last name is Babylon, not supposedly who we are. And so I wanted to walk the streets that she walked. I wanted to go to the places that were important to her. And so I spent three weeks by myself doing that. And it was incredibly powerful.

It's a beautiful city, very small in the middle of nowhere. And I just sort of fell in love. And it was interesting. I'm, you know, I go to Puerto Rico. They talked to my husband and Spanish and me in English. He's Native American. You know, he has, he has, I'm very pale. I look like my father. When I go to Avila, they asked me for directions. And so it was, it was sort of an interesting process. and it felt a bit like going home.

The first time De Desanches levitated, she was in the garden. She aimed the hose and an arc over the lush peony bushes, the stream of all -in -water, glinting -like diamonds in the sunlight. The blooms were releasing their clean, sweet scent in clouds, and she closed her eyes and inhaled deeply, her mind and body slowing. Her husband had planted them for her, since she found the scent of the many peddled flowers intoxicating. She remembered the day she'd come home early from the university to find his muddy, but fine, jean -covered ass sticking out from between the three young bushes. He was so excited for her to see the new additions to his immaculately manicured garden. The man wasn't effusive, rarely expressing his emotions or complimenting her, but he demonstrated his affection in more tangible ways, in ways that lasted. They'd made love right there on the grass, next to the newly patted down earth, that still held imprints of his big knuckled hands. Now, ten years later, the peonies were wild and unrestrained, their bloom -laden branches breaching the careful mulch boundaries he'd laid for them, and in this state, the bushes were more like her.

This is the Listen and Be Heard hour for readers and writers. I'm Martha Senator speaking with Anne de Vila Cardinal, author of "We Need No Wings," just published by Source Books.

You're very closely related to the protagonist in this story in many ways. How do you write fiction out of a story? How do you manage that when it's about yourself in many ways. And yet, it's, it's not about you. It's an interesting process. And I think there are always elements of a writer themselves and their characters. It was a way to feel, you know, I feel very strongly about writing what I know. And so I start with that, and I start with emotions.

And they diverge at a certain point, you know, they go and take and become have their own identity at a certain point, and you can separate them. But you, you know, the emotions, the feelings in the body have to sort of come from you because you have to sort of imagine it as you're writing it, right? So it's always sort of a balance.

Storyteller's death was very, was sort of about who I was as a child and this is very much about who I am at this point in my life. So there are definitely elements. It's the things I know best and can write about with passion and be articulate about, but she's, you know, definitely a different person.

Now what shines through for me in this story is the story really, it's a story about women and this badass nun as you describe her and your character discovering that just what a badass she was. So maybe I think part of it was that just like now, and we kind of were talking about this at the beginning, even then, the two women face a lot the same issues in terms of just freedom of expression or even the freedom to say, "I can levitate." And I think that's, you know, part of one of the themes, anyway, is that those restrictions are still put on us, particularly when women reach a certain age.

I started calling this a coming-of-age novel because I, you know, the first thing that most of my books are are teen, and they're real coming of age, you know, they're about that time when you're a teenager and you become an adult. This I think that there we have more periods of coming of age. And I think particularly as women, there's one that happens when you're 5565 around that age. And I really believe that it's this becoming of who you're really meant to be. And that is sort of symbolized by the levitation. You know, my psychoanalyst brother was really helpful in feedback on this book, but he took the levitation as a metaphor.

And you know, for me, do I believe Saint Therese of Avila levitated? I mean, there were witnesses, the nuns had to hold her down during church because she was so embarrassed by it. You know, I don't know. I don't disbelieve it. I believe that we are capable of many things that we're not even aware of. I also did a lot of study into mysticism because she's one of the, she is one of the most famous mystics and it is just fascinating. So after reading, I read like 10, 12 books about mysticism and really dug in and I, you know, amazing things happen all the time so I don't I don't know and it goes through I mean that the whole. Just of I mean her whole problem during this whole trip is that she actually never knows when she's going to begin levitating and it frightens her.

So it's not necessarily and I think you know Lightning can be a little frightening too, that type of growth that happens when you start recognizing things that perhaps

you didn't want to really think about. Absolutely. I mean, it's like having a new set of lenses and all these things become clearer and they're not all beautiful. And the fact that she can't control it is incredibly important to the narrative. And when she begins to accept it, you know, does it keep happening? I don't know. But it's just, it is, it is about sort of her letting go, her letting go of the things that used to hold her back and keep her tethered to the earth. So I just think the whole, and her whole story and the experience of this levitation, she also

It's a, it's a fascinating, she had a fascinating life, um, particularly given what she was up against. And she and the, the nun who's actually alive and a cousin of yours in the, of Therese in the story, um, they also defy the sort of stereotypical idea of an elderly nun as well. Yeah. She's my favorite character? As well as being, I think, sort of very disruptive of the structure of the church. Absolutely. And that's what Teresa of Avila did. You know, she would, they would tell her don't found any, don't, don't create any more monasteries. And she would go and secretly buy buildings, and they would hold, once you hold a mass in it, it's, it's established. And so she would go and go in the middle of the night, the nuns would clean it up, and the next morning they'd hold a mass and they couldn't say no anymore. So she was constantly, I mean the whole, her three books, which are literary canon in Spain, were written to keep herself alive, because she had to prove that these experiences, these mystical experiences were from God and not the devil. So she was constantly under threat from the Inquisition too. Just an amazing story. So I love the idea of bringing her into this and weaving it. It's more deadest story. It's more now, but it also enables me to sort of share the fascinating things about this saint too. Well, thank you. And Tavila Cardinal, author of *We Need No Wings*, you mentioned briefly that you had another book coming out. Why don't you tell us both about your children and adult books that are forthcoming? Sure. I had a book come out on the third of this month, which is a biography of Bat Bunny, the Latin trap artist. That was so much fun to work on. And that, I wouldn't be surprised if that gets banned, Martha, honestly, because he's controversial because of the language in his music. But it's like, you like, you know, this is how the demographic speaks, but he's also very important. So he changed the face of the music industry. He opened Latin music up to the world. So I loved working on that. And then I have my next adult book is a punk rock Ms. Marple story with a woman of a certain age who is way more representative of the women I see in their 60s at this point, which is also a blast. And I have a 4RYA coming out next year called *Yuva Wokenher*, which is sort of a take on a HP Lovecraft monster, and I had a really good time writing that one too. Would those all sound very entertaining? And I read, "We need no wings from cover to cover," and I highly recommend it to our listeners. What is your website if people just want to find out more about you? Sure, it's [www .andabelacardinal .com](http://www.andabelacardinal.com) and that's A -N -N -D -A -V -I -L -A and then Cardinal like the bird. Thank you so much for spending some time here in the audio garden with us today. Thank you for having me. I'd love talking to you guys. Be well. You too.

Many authors who have visited us here in the audio garden have talked about the importance of seeing themselves at least sometimes in the books they read and lingered a little longer with me as I accompanied her to the garden gate to talk about banning books and listening and being heard. You can watch the unedited video of our conversation as well as the video of Vince Cotera and Tony Robles from Episode 31 at listenandbeheard.net where you will also find transcripts of each episode, book reports, author bios, and what's growing on This is Kitchen Garden. You can't unread it. No matter how an individual may try to push it to the side, forget about it, it's still in there. And it's the words, the meaning, the feelings behind it are taking root in their psyche.

And they can't get rid of it.

As far as I know there's no book banning in Vermont, you know, we're sort of a different place

But it's I find it terrible. I feel its censorship. I My book breakup from hell was banned. I believe in Florida due to the title and Which is ironic because it's a very sort of it takes place in a Catholic school and you know, she fights the devil I mean, you know, there's nothing about it that's satanic, but, you know, it was sort of shocking to me, and we did fight it, and, you know, my publisher had my back. But it's just your silencing voices.

And the whole reason I became a writer, particularly for young people, is because I wanted kids that didn't normally hear their stories or see them in books to relate to something. And if you're going to censor the voices, then they can't hear the stories that they relate to. And those are the ones that get banned.

So you're an author who has actually been banned then, and you say that you fought it. How did you go about doing that? I left that to the legal team. You know, the lawyers for HarperCollins got involved and they, I'm not sure where it stands now, but it was really great to know that they were behind me.

There was always this myth before that, "Oh, it's the best thing that can happen because you get attention for your book." It's not, because it means that particularly if you're a trans writer and you're writing a book about a trans kid, you want kids to get that, the ones who need it, the ones who want to see their stories, and then they're the ones that are getting pulled. And so I feel like this book banning is taking the very books that would help these kids and give them stories they could see themselves in out of their hands. Mine is a minor detail. It was for one word, just the word hell, which is just ludicrous.

I went to Catholic school, we heard hell all the time, and it is just, it's just bizarre the way it's arbitrarily being done. I wanted to start something new with you, which is just to ask you to give me a sentence with the words "listen and be heard."

I wish that the people who are battling these books to listen and that they would let these stories be heard because this is just such a crime and it is the best books that are getting banned and it's kind of terrifying, quite honestly. So I would say in terms of listening and being heard, in terms of book banning, for me in particular it's a matter matter, allowing those voices to be

heard.

This is Listen and Be Heard Radio, WLBH .org.

Thanks to Anne de Ville Cardinal for sharing her thoughts with us here on the Listen and Be Heard Hour for readers and writers. We've been doing cleanup here in the Piedmont, where the audio garden grows, following Hurricane Helene.

The publishing world experienced a shock, too, that is also still being felt months later now, with the closure of small press distribution back in April of 2024.

Some of the mopping up has been done, but Many titles have suddenly gone out of print for lack of a replacement distributor.

Small Press Distribution, known as SPD, a non -profit book distributor for independent publishers, closed on March 28 after 55 years in business with over 300 small presses who were using their services. The sudden closure was covered at the time by major news outlets. Some not -for -profits stepped in with assistance to small presses, which are often not -for -profit themselves. The Poetry Foundation established a \$150 ,000 bridge fund to help poetry presses, and New York State Council on the Arts gave grants to 21 presses based in New York State. Some indie presses went to asterism books for distribution. Now, it's months later, and we're checking in here at "Listen and Be Heard" on what's growing on in the IndiePress Community Garden. My guests today are Eileen Tabios, a writer whose book, "The Inventor," a poet's trans -colonial autobiography was released when SPD suddenly closed. Diane Goettel, executive director of Black Lawrence Press, which relied heavily on SPD for distribution. Annie Groover, manager of Hub City Bookshop, an indie bookstore in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Kate McMullen, the managing editor of Hub City Press, South Carolina's indie publisher. Thank you all for being here today.

I'd like to start by talking about how it felt back in March and April, and Eileen, your book was just coming out. It was just coming out. What's interesting is that I had two books come out that year, so the other was a poetry collection because I love you, I become war. So I could actually compare the before and after SPD demise based on looking at those two books. So one statistic that came out is that SPD had a good, I thought, library placement system.

So for my book that came out before SPD went down, the last time I checked, it had over 20 libraries had ordered my book.

The book that came out after SBD demise, the last time I checked, it still had only seven libraries, so it ordered that book. So just by comparing the library placement statistics, you could see the effect on those, you know, whether SBD existed to distribute my particular books. What's interesting is that beyond those two books, I actually had a dozen books, I'm prolific, so I had a dozen books affected by SBD's demise, and I see that eight of them became out of print as a result of SBD's demise. Well, that seems like a pretty dramatic testimony to the influence of small press distributors.

to tell. I got your newsletter. I've subscribed to the Black Lawrence Press newsletter and that was actually how I learned about the closure of SPD and read your appeal to people who were interested in keeping your your books and titles going. Maybe you could talk a little bit about how you felt back then. I only knew

at the beginning that it would be very bad for publishers and authors alike and that we would have a long road ahead of us to sorting this out. I thought at the time this will be the end for some very small presses. We don't yet have sort of a fatality count for how many presses actually will go under because of this. But one of the things that was very important about SPD is that they made space for the tiniest of presses, the micro presses. I think the metric was something like you had to publish one book every two years to be one of their presses. There are no other distributors that will take presses of that scale. I know for a fact because of conversations that I had that there are other presses that are much smaller that simply cannot find distribution and distribution is so key. I'm sure we'll hear about that when we hear from our bookseller in the room today about what it means to have a distribution for a book versus not. So I knew that it was going to be bad And I also knew that we had to act really quickly to try and write the ship. So we sent out a newsletter. We immediately explained our situation and asked for donations. Black Lawrence Press is not a nonprofit. We're a small women -run business based in New York State. So we Fortunately, we're not eligible for any of the grants or the funding, so it really came from our communities of authors and writers and people that read and support our books. We did not know at the time how bad this would be for us financially, and the price ticket for us of SPD closing has only gone up. At first, we assumed it would essentially be the \$17 ,000 that they owed us in royalties at the time of their closing, then we found out that we would have to pay more than a dollar per book to withdraw the stock that had been abandoned in another company's warehouse, and we had 18 ,000 books in those warehouses. And then we also had to calculate in the immense opportunity cost of not having a distributor And basically receiving no distribution royalties for now that we're looking at the fall, almost 12 months. So as I said, I knew that it would be bad and now looking at it, you know, half a year later, my prediction was right, it was very, very bad. We are limping along for the very first time this month, for the very first time in the press's history. We have taken out a loan to keep us afloat until we do receive our first royalties from our new distributor. And in the meantime, focusing the light back on our authors, this has been incredibly hard for our authors that have been on book tours, that have been trying to launch new books, and have been showing up to places to say, "Oh, we're so sorry, we couldn't get your book."

This is the Listen and Be Heard Hour for Readers and Writers. We're gathered here in the audio garden, talking about the closing of SPD, and just heard from writer Eileen Tabios and publisher Diane Cattel. Now, we'll hear from Annie Groover and Kate McMullen from Hub City store and publishers in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Maybe we could start with UK Hub City Publishing is a not for profit press. Perhaps you could give a little different perspective about what's going on. And also the landscape is so different in Spartanburg. There's really not the same type of literary community that you find in New York. It's true. We're very lucky, I'll say up front, to be distributed by Publishers Group West, which is owned by Ingram. And we came on in 2017 with PGW when I first started at

Hub City, and even just a standard moving of distributors was incredibly difficult. We also weren't paid, you know, there's always kind of a gap. when you're moving to a new distributor, there's always like, they got things have to go through the warehouses, things have to be refilled, and all of this stuff is like incredibly difficult. So did you move from SPD to Publishing Group West at that time? No, we were at a smaller publisher that no longer exists or a distributor that no longer exists. They were a regional publisher out of Winston Salem, North Carolina, and we had moved. They didn't have really any warehousing or sales reps or anything kind of west of the Mississippi, and we were looking to expand our reach a lot more, which PGW has really done for us. I think we might be the smallest press that PGW distributes. I don't know if that's exactly true, but we're quite small to be on their roster. So we really lucked out. But even that was incredibly difficult. So just hearing Diane talk about the just insane stresses of having to shift after this, like really disastrous closure of SPD is just kind of heartbreaking. Because I know it's been it was difficult for us, even to just juggle a lot of things while we were doing that back in 2017. And it's just making me feel very lucky especially because it is true what she said that we're kind of down here in a semi-rural you know area in South Carolina and while our town loves and supports us and our bookstore there isn't a ton of publishing industry around us for sure. So having that national distribution through PGW is essential for us so presses that are missing out on this after SPD has closed. I really really feel for them. It's incredibly difficult to do this job when bookstores can't get a hold of your books. I was kind of reviewing some of the coverage of the closure and I was reading a couple quotes from folks who are and Annie maybe can talk about this who are like well now I have to replace you know I can't replace SPD with like 300 different press relationships. It's really impossible to have that many relationships with so many little presses. - I would like to hear some of those thoughts too. Thank you, Kate. But before we get to that, I did want to ask Annie. I don't know a lot about running a bookstore, but I imagine that you don't rely on one distributor that you're the person who you know like a self-published author you probably sometimes have to decline their book if they can't get into some kind of distribution but you kind of have a survey of the territory and so I would like to hear from your perspective you know where you were relying on SPD and how has it affected your ability to like curate what you have in your bookstore? Just to lose the option of something that had been around for a long time and you know, it's it's a real bummer because it's hard to kind of start from scratch with other distributors and figure out, you know, can you do EDI ordering? you know, can I just, you know, zap you my order through the computer? Do I have to call you? You know, and everyone is a little different. And so I think it's hard to find the time as a bookshop manager and the primary buyer to make those connections and to provide a browsable collection that anybody can come in and find something they like. And so, you know, when it's coming from library land, it's a different animal. But, you know, we're trying to be a bookshop that has a little taste of everything. And when that pool is just smaller, it's just, you know, makes us all homogenous

more so than otherwise it would be.

- Thank you to our panelists today. Eileen Tabios, Diane Gattel, Kate McMullen, and Annie Groover. We will bring you more of that discussion on episode 33. We will also play the unedited version of the entire conversation on our streaming radio station, WLVH .org, where you will find literary programming 24 hours a day and seven days a week. My co -host Tony Robles flew to San Francisco to participate in the seventh annual Filipino American Literary Festival and he talked with the keynote speaker Ninocha Rosca. Here is some of that conversation.

Hi this is Tony Robles of listen and be heard radio for readers and writers at the Filipino -American International Book Festival. We're here with author Ninochka Rosca. Wonderful to see you. I know that you did the keynote presentation for the book festival and you talked about the state of publishing and writing and the need for access for Filipino and Filipino -American writers. You know, Can you speak about your perspective on that and where we're at right now in terms of our literature? We're still struggling basically. When I first got to the United States, I was told to go to the small publishing houses and I just absolutely refused to do that because I think that we should insist on our presence being felt by the general American public. And right now, I think we're publishing between 12 to 20 titles of Filipino -American books, as opposed to the one million titles published by the as an industry at large, so we really need to build the infrastructure for publishing.

You said that you don't necessarily have to be a writer in order to affect change in the publishing industry. Can you give some examples of what people can do in order to grow our body with you? We are grossly underrepresented in the publishing industry infrastructure. We don't have enough agents, literary agents.

We don't have enough acquisitions editors. We don't have enough editors.

We have a few people who are embedded in periodicals, but few, one or two or three, we need to increase that number.

I mean, I get hundreds of inquiries asking how to be a writer and I keep, I'm always tempted to say you don't have to be a writer to help build our body of literature. You can be an editor, you can be an acquisitions editor, you can be an agent, you can be a book marketer, you know, because it's not only publishing that creates literature, the body of literature that we need.

It's also people who distribute, to select, who edit, who make sure that the books are accessible, and who make sure that writers have access to publishing. Let me ask you this, Ninochka, how, you know, how did you become a writer and who were some of your influences? How did I, I don't remember the time when I was not a writer. I started writing at seven was published at the age of twelve and I just kept on going it didn't seem like there was something else I could do better although if you had asked me before what I wanted to be I wanted to be an astrophysicist actually but my family said what is that yeah So I ended up writing, then I always thought that Filipinos would make really good astrophysicists or quantum physicists because we are familiar with the metamorphic quality of reality.

Well, in terms of metamorphic reality with things that are happening across the planet. Where do you think we're going, you know, in terms of what we're morphing into? We see a planet that, you know, there's constant conflict and we have, you know, the hurricanes that have happened, these, they call them natural disasters, but there are people that are calling them unnatural disasters. What opportunities for positivity are you seeing with these different things that have happened? We are disasters only in terms of human perspective. Really, they occur all the time. Perhaps not at this scale that we know, but they are disasters because of what we do. That's the first. Instead of being cognizant that these things happen, We tend to ignore them and try to impose ourselves on nature itself, which is very wrong. And also to monetize nature, which is really bad. The second thing, what is going to happen? We really have a man, a real man-made disaster. I think the world is heading for a global war, And we seem to be unable to stop it. Yeah. And right now I'm very worried because the Philippines is led by the most incompetent people you could think of. And I don't know how we're going to survive the coming war. That's really a big headache. Thank you so much for your time. And Just one last question, kind of the elephant in the room. What are your thoughts on AI and the impact of AI on our art? I will have to quote Chomsky on this one, when he said that AI is the means by which the wealthy gain access to the skills of the not wealthy and prevent the not wealthy from gaining money from the wealthy. So it's all out theft. I think he likened it to the theft of the lands of Native Americans, you know, just on a different plane, a different scale. They are now mining our minds. In Nocchka Roska, thank you. This is This is the Filipino American International Book Festival. This is Tony Robles for our Listen and Be Heard radio for Readers and Writers.

Thank you to Tony Robles for that interview with Nanasika Rosca at the Seventh Annual Filipino American Literary Festival in San Francisco. He spoke to many more writers while he was there and we will feature them on episode 33 of this season 2 of the Listen and Be Heard Hour for Readers and Writers, as well as part 2 of our roundtable discussion about the closure of small press distribution. Our spoken word featured today was Gaia's Eye from Baba Brinkman's Rap Guide to climate chaos. Our other guests were Anne DeVila Cardinal, author of We Need No Wings published by Source Books, author Eileen Tabios, Diane Gatell, executive director of Black Lawrence Press, Kate McMullen, and Annie Groover of Hub City Publishers and Bookstore in Spartanburg, South Carolina. All joined me to talk about the SPD debacle. I am your host and producer, Martha Cinader. My co-host is Tony Robles. Our associate producer is DJ Jeannie Hopper. Editing is done by Jeremiah Cothran. Music by J. Rodriguez Sierra. The band book theme is by DJ Jeannie Hopper with the voice and words of Yvette Murray. Thank you for listening and being heard here in the audio garden, please let your voice be heard by visiting us at listenandbeheard.net or by calling 864-397-5748.

Share your thoughts about this program, banning books, a book you're reading. Thanks

as always to Davie and Dyle for introducing the Listen and Be Heard Hour for Readers and Writers to the Broadcast Airwaves on WPVM in Asheville, North Carolina, and to KCEI in Taos, New Mexico, KEPJ in San Antonio, Texas, and KHOI in Ames, Iowa, among others for airing our weekly show in your community. My name is Martha Senator, and I want to Thank you for listening and giving me the opportunity to be heard.

Shake, create,
live in it, live

in it is, sewing a coat, investing each stitch with magic,
creating a unique design, putting it on and wearing it for the rest of your life.
Living it is knowing that what you see, what you hear is tangible. It's being a rock in the river and being the river too. It's hearing you'll never be able to do that.

Living it is knowing you will do it. It's speaking the unspoken. It's thinking the unthinkable. It's doing the unexpected. It's quitting before you get fired.

Living it is giving it, giving it is having it, having it is taking it, taking it is moving it, shaking it, creating it, loving it. Living it is loving it.

Living it is loving a man you're not supposed to love. It's giving way to emotions, creating commotions, calling attention to yourself. And I got that.

Living It is burning from someone who can actually show you. It's cleaning your teacher's house or helping her to find one. It's never ever saying J -O -B. Living It is a one -way ticket and no solid plans. It's smoking a J in a smoke cafe in Amsterdam. It's saying the day is pretty in a strange new city.

Living

it is giving it Giving it is having it Having it is taking it Taking it is moving it Shaking it, creating it Loving it

Living it is Having nothing to lose and everything to gain It's putting all of your chants and attributes Every single one of them to good use It's knowing the kindness of strangers And love for sale

Living it is Knowing where to buy rice and beans And bulkets knowing herbs Are cheaper than doctors It's keeping it When you're falling apart, it's right in poetry to ease a broken heart.

Living it is, knowing the stage, looking into bright lights, late nights, bar room fights, fantastic sights, inspiration. And just moving on, and moving on, and moving on, and moving on, and moving on, and moving on, and moving on, and moving on.

Because living it is giving it. Giving it is having it to give. Having it to give is taking it, snatching it, moving it, shaking it, creating it, loving it.

Living it is being responsible for your own groove. It's playing on street corners for nickels and sountains and being asked to move. It's sleeping in ruthless squats and ancient commons. It's running up against police getting thrown into the streets where you belong because living it is settling.

Living it is, knowing your feet belong on the ground That life is a dream That

things are never ever ever ever what they seem And the certainty that the good things