

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.

Welcome back to The Audio Guard and my friends. It's always fresh to return and see
the changes, colors, the leaves dancing down to the ground,
the sun shining on the water, creating illusions of bright white flickering gems.

It's magical as I sit here and I'm about to welcome Sherrie Flick.

She's the author of "Homing, Instincts of a Rust Belt Feminist,
a book of essays published by University of Nebraska Press. And later on we're going
to hear from Tony Roblitz, our roving poet bee, pollinating poetry gardens near and
far. And this time he went to Greensboro, North Carolina for the abbreviated North
Carolina Writers Network 2024 conference. Today,
he's brought us Kenlee Correa from the North Carolina Lit Review,
Paul Riali from Charlotte Lit, and Peter Grimes from Pembroke Magazine.

And of course, we're still talking about book banning because it's still happening
but let's start with some poetry. The 1990s New York City band Homer Erotic first
release was a four song EP and from that EP here is King of the Ghosts.

♪ And if I had wings, I would

just all run ♪ ♪ As I pull all

over the city tonight ♪

[MUSIC]

♪ Long time ago in some small town I know ♪ ♪ But

outside my window I learned to drink their fire ♪ ♪ They swear and they laugh as
the sun and the sky rises higher ♪ ♪ It sails [MUSIC]

♪ Jesus, they call them Jesus ♪ ♪ Hey, hey, hey,

you go down ♪ But So.

women poets who were performing in the 1990s in New York City and elsewhere.

I was there too, a single mother, then a married one in California and now a
divorced empty nester in Greenville, South Carolina, where listen and be heard is
recorded and I continue in relations with the flora and fauna and the feminist
thoughts in my mind and in the books of others, like Sherrie Flick,
telling tales of a feminist in motion, making bread and traveling around,
who takes a turn, slows down, and returns to
her latest book, A Collection of Essays,
and here she comes now.

Sherrie Flick, welcome to the audio garden here on the Listen and Be Heard Hour for
readers and writers. I have been reading your book, "Homing Instincts of a Rust Belt
Feminist." And it's been a very interesting journey. Thank you for joining me here
today. Thank you for inviting me. I'm excited to join in. Let's talk about the
title, because I find almost every word of it very interesting. What does homing
mean to you? And I should say this is a book of essays. In this collection,
it's funny because all along, as I was writing this book, I was thinking there

would be a pigeon on the cover. There isn't a pigeon on the cover, but I was thinking of the idea of homing pigeons. And this idea that we have this natural impulse to return to places, even though we don't know why, or maybe even reluctantly return to a place. So I was exploring that idea throughout the book, throughout the essays, kind of asking the question for me, because I returned to Western Pennsylvania after being away for over a decade, kind of asking the question, why am I here? And what is this place that I should know well, but I seem to overlook constantly? Well, and I think up until that point, um, you traveled a lot and that was sort of part of your, your, your lifestyle or the way you were seeing life as these, um, that's sort of what I got out is I saw these essays progress a little bit. So you, you really kind of changed in the process of holding back where you started. Yes. Um, I was was a Feral Gen X road trip obsessive for a long time. I loved leaving. Leaving was very interesting to me. I loved traveling. I loved being on the road. I would work my temp job or my hours at the bakery to get enough money to travel again and then take off and get people to cover my shifts and come back. And that was wonderful. And I loved it. It was such a, such a strong, strong impulse. And then when I moved to Pittsburgh, I had just gotten married, and I realized I had to start understanding this concept of staying. Like, what did it mean to stay? How do you stay in a place? I had really never considered that until I was about 30 years old. And, and then When I started, yeah, I was like, "What can I do to kind of switch gears but not stagnate?" And what ended up happening is we looked at a little house on the south side slips of Pittsburgh and I walked into the small backyard and I said, "Garden, I'm going to plant a garden," Which was not something that anyone would have predicted that I would do, I don't think. And it's just kind of funny because it's rooted, you know, and it's, you know, literally I was rooting myself and figuratively and metaphorically rooting myself in the gardening. And that really helped me. It really just helped a lot of, kind of form a lot of a base, I guess for myself in this new place that I kind of that I kind of Dwelled in as I tried to figure out my next move You know as far as my life my career all that kind of stuff And I guess that was your instinct to move on with the title of your book you talk about the instincts of a rust belt feminist and so I think You know, a lot of women of your age, I think it was almost part of their feminism to be traveling and to be free and untethered and not trying to live up to expectations of, you know, I guess just settling down and doing traditional type of things. But you followed your instincts into this returning to Pittsburgh where where you were from and you talk about rust belt feminism I had to think about that for a while like what does that mean is there like a particular type of feminism in the rust belt or is it just that you're from the rust belt and you're a feminist but you know you talk a lot about the identity of the Rust Belt in various ways in your essays and it all kind of ties together the Bruce Springsteen where you talk about his sort of appeal to both liberals and conservatives of the time and I remember just like hearing him ad nauseam on the radio at the time and feeling like

he never actually represented my kind of feeling of rebellion. So, maybe you could talk about how Bruce Springsteen kind of came to represent a lot of the sort of Rust Belt or people's idea of what the Rust Belt was.

What does that have to do with feminism? Yeah, it's an interesting and complex connection. I didn't start off writing the book thinking overtly about Rust Belt feminism. The subtitle sort of arose from the collection after it was finished. And I'm not trying to define a new kind of feminism. That is not the goal here. But part of what I started realizing as I was writing, I came to this interesting connection between labor and intellect. And I realized I was a baker in when I left Western Pennsylvania and I went to New England and I was an undergraduate. I got a job baking bread, midnight to 7 a .m. shift. And I loved it and I realized not then, but when I was writing these essays many years later, that it was that combination of labor and what I was learning in my classes and I worked at a bakery that was a very feminist bakery. It was all women with an excellent owner who was 20 years older than me. So I had these kind of big sisters leading the way and this kind of feminism that dealt with community, that dealt with providing a safe space to eat in a kind of simple domestic way, but they were all sort of just completely strong and amazing women.

So I came to feminism in that way. It was a dual purpose feminism where I wanted to use my hands in labor and that's I'd grown up in a mill town and that was the kind of world I was surrounded by as far as the Rust Belt part goes. And I was learning feminist theory as an undergrad And I didn't want that to be isolated. So, you know, kind of weaving those two ideas together is who I am as a feminist, how I sort of sit in that definition. And Bruce Springsteen, yeah, it's funny. It's sort of by Osmosis here. If you live in Western Pennsylvania, you know everything about Bruce Springsteen and the Steelers, and And there's weird sports connections that you don't know why you know things. But when Born in the USA came out, which was in the mid '80s when the still industry was collapsing, where I was going to high school, there was an appeal the Springsteen wrote to the working class. but there was also this appeal to rising young Republicans of this idea of this pure, born in the USA idea. And so Bruce Springsteen ended up appealing to two different groups at once, which is really fascinating and also very macho, right? And so the idea, right, We see Bruce Springsteen up on the stage in the in the book. I show myself going to the concert And seeing him at an arena up on stage and I'm realizing, you know I don't want to be Courtney Cox who he pulls up on the stage to dance with him You know, I want to be Bruce Springsteen and and how is that done in a world that is, you know, Very male dominated right And so some of the themes that come up in these essays is you kind of address that from different angles. You talk about ink space, you know, which I think is what you're referring to is this idea of where are the women Bruce Springsteins, you know, who would ostensibly not be saying the same thing that he was saying, but you know, where are his counterparts? And we don't see them. I think we still don't see them in, you know, as we look back,

it's hard to find ourselves represented in the music of the, you know, the pot music from the 50s, 60s, 70s onwards. Yeah, it's definitely true.

And it's also true that women traveling, women travel logs, you know, like Jack Kerouac on the road, we also don't get those stories by women and it isn't that women weren't traveling, it's that, you know, as you quoted, that we didn't get the ink space to talk about it. I'm trying to remember which essay that was that you were talking about that, but it just struck me in that term, you know, the ink space because it's so important and we forget like I sometimes I think about in my own education, which is not extensive, that I read so many men and and and onward from there to the point where I wonder if I only read women from like this day forward, if I could catch up, or if I could even find a lot of those stories because they've been repressed by just not being given that ink space. I hear you. It's so true. I quote from the book *Minor Characters* by Joyce Johnson in my book and she was Jack Kerouac's girlfriend off and on and she wrote this great book about the minor characters of that time and how there were all these women artists I was trying to figure out how to break out in the same way that the beats did, the beat poets, and you know, it didn't have the opportunity. And so I just wanted to give a shout out for that book because it's great and it connects directly to what you were just talking about.

This is the Listen and Be Heard Hour for Readers and Writers. I'm Martha Cinader here in the audio garden with Sherrie Flick, author of "Holming Instincts of a Rust Belt Feminist." We're going to listen to her read now from an essay in the book called "Bank Shot."

- A bar with a pool table rests in my third eye. The table's felt is teal, wrapped in ugly brown, wide and sturdy. Cigarette smoke wafts, lifts up to the ceiling. The word feminist rises from the haze, lingers. The pool table is the bar's heart. Thump, thump, goes the jukebox. Thump, thump, thump. This isn't a metaphor. It takes bravado to function in a bar decorated with beer posters boasting ample cleavage. I've just walked in with my cowboy boots and jeans, with my bright red t-shirt that reads "piggly wiggly" and stark white lettering across my breasts. I wear my leather wallet in my back pocket and thick black eyeglass frames perched on my nose. I take off the frames, order a whiskey, and ask for change in quarters from the bartender. There's the low hum of conversation and that smell that comes from years of musty beer moped and lacquered into the bar's corners. At the pool table, I line the quarters up in their slots, experience the push-pull release of tension as the balls drop and roll. That release is the metaphor for my rage, simmering on the back burner, released with a clunk and a rumble as the balls clatter and snap into line. I fit them firmly into the black plastic rack. How to operate in a bar, how to walk up to a pool table without hesitation, what I wear, how I move, I learned through the osmosis of growing up in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, a booming and then not so booming and then finally dead steel town. Whether your parents worked in the mill or not, you learned a few things, how a plate pool, the lyrics to every Bruce Springsteen song, the

talk yelling banter needed to communicate with the mechanic, the ins and outs of the corner bar, and the nuance of pierogies, square cut pizza, and oversized fish sandwiches served up by church ladies. If you're good at pool, which I am, you can garner some respect from the men who grip sweating bottles of beer along the bar top over there, not cat -calling body objectifying respect, but instead a nod and a nice bank shot respect, a kind of "I see you" respect, a stoic respect that has more to do with power than sex, more to do with skill than what the posters offer. This very specific, pool -related niche respect has transferred to many different geographic locations throughout my lifetime.

You describe in your essays the sort of rich cultural life that you are a part of in Pittsburgh that is really kind of I guess you could say underground, it's not something that you can just go look up in the newspaper and find a lot of these events that are that happen that are arranged in a more underground got to know about it to to to be there and got to be there to understand it kind of that's sort of like the feeling I got from some of the things that you But what does it mean to not be a sellout in 2024 because you talk about that, not being a sellout and that, and that you relate it to that kind of cultural scene that is non -commercial, decidedly non -commercial. Right. The whole Gen X credo of not selling out, you know, is also connected to the road trips that we talked about earlier, this idea of kind of falling underground and staying there and having a whole different system underneath it all. Yeah, that's interesting. I actually hadn't made that connection to Pittsburgh the way you just articulated it. But Pittsburgh is interesting because it's a place where you can start things. I lived in San Francisco and other cities and you know, there you just kind of go to things. They're already happening. But when we moved here in 1998, we sort of were like, there isn't really a literary reading series that's kind of showcasing emerging authors with first and second books.

And, you know, maybe we can do that. You know, so my friend, James Simon, who was a sculptor who had just bought this great old building for a studio said, yeah, I would love to have some people in my space. And so we just started offering a monthly reading series that was soon, you know, we could fit about 100 people in there. It was sold out every month. It was a potluck, there was beer in the bathtub, which was in the center of the room. And I do feel like part of the allure was that it was a little bit of a secret thing. You had to kind of know about it to to go, you know. And Pittsburgh has changed since then, of course, but there still is this air of, let's just try it out. You know, what do we have to lose kind of thing? I think that it does fit into the kind of working class idea of, we've kind of lost a lot.

Let's just try Um, and so that is still happening in the book. I talk about this excellent, um, kayak, uh, tour I went on that had a whiskey rebellion and David Bowie theme, you know, like who does that, you know, and it was just this fantastic event, a one -off event never happened again. Um, that also is when Western Pennsylvania is kind of working at its best, I think, when, um, all of these weird, the history and weird connections are made. And you have this interesting experience

that can't be replicated. I guess that is kind of a not selling out idea, right? You know, it only happens once and if you were there, you were there. So this collection of essays, some of them were published previously. What did you want to accomplish by pulling together this group of essays and, and what kind of life has it taken on since it was published? Yeah, ultimately, I wasn't sure where this manuscript was going. It ends up sort of being creative coming of age story, how a Gen X Rust Belt feminist is created, you know. So, once I realized that those were sort of the connecting themes, and I kind of went back in to, you know, revise in that direction. And I also, the very last essay in the collection called Instincts, which really looks really more directly at my feminism and how it started and changed and what it is today through personal narrative, that was written last. So that kind of, you know, ends up pulling the book together in a lot of ways. Tying everything together. Mm -hmm. I was at a book club last night. I visited a book club because you were talking about what life does it take on. And it was interesting. It was 10 women and they were all boomers. They're all a different generation than me. And they had actually lived in a much different Rust Belt. They had lived in a Rust Belt that was thriving. And they were often college by the time it had died. And so they were really interested in the book because it showed them an entirely different experience of place, an entirely different sort of origin of feminism than they had experienced. So would you say maybe they were first wave and your second wave or I'm not sure I get a little lost in there trying to figure out between and the waves of feminism. - I know, I know, I hate those labels and I get confused too. They were definitely of a different time period. They were talking about remembering, only being able to play half court basketball. When women's basketball first started, they couldn't run the whole court 'cause I guess women were too meek and mild to run the full court. - But so But they were living like when the manufacturing was actually happening and it was more of a thriving kind of environment, whereas later on it became this thing of trying to define or maybe not even trying to define, but just the feeling that the bottom had been taken out of a lot of that stuff by the time that you're certainly when you've moved back there. - Yeah, and my senior year of high school, which was 1985, is sort of considered the bottom bottom of the still industry here kind of dying. But no one knew that at the time. That's the interesting thing to point out. This history has been defined and labeled in retrospect because at the time, layoffs were common in mills. And so no one knew the mills were really closing when they closed. So it was a kind of hidden in plain sight fall. And I think that really impacted the culture in a way that, you know, it's hard to define a place that isn't defining itself, that isn't talking about itself. Well, Sherrie Flick, you've written Also, a volume of short stories, another one of short short stories and a novel. We've been talking about homing instincts of a Rust Belt feminist from the American Live series. How can people learn more about you by your books? Where would you like them to go for that? - My website, which is just my name, sherryflick .com, has information about me, has links to all of my books.

They're also available via Bookshop and Pals Online. You can order them from your local bookstore. They're widely distributed. So if you'd like the book, you should be able to grab one. And that's S -H -E -R -R -I. It's S -H -E -R -R -I -E. Let me say that again, that's S -H -E -R -R -I -E, sherryflick -F -L -I -C -K dot com. I want to thank you so much for taking a little time in the audio garden today with me, and I hope that our listeners will visit sherryflick .com to find out more. Thank you so much.

Thank you for joining us in the audio garden Sherrie and for writing your book of essays, "Homing Instincts of a Rust Belt Peminist" published by University of Nebraska Press. I'm going to tend to the baby goats and meet you all on the other side of the bridge in about a minute.

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

This is the Listen and Be Heard Hour for readers and writers.

Once it's heard, it can't be unheard, once it's published, it's not going to be unpublished. Once You read the poem, 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.

I

think, you know, we learn compassion and empathy through reading situations and stories we don't quite understand, you know. We come to an understanding through reading, it's so important, and banning books just takes away an opportunity, you know, to learn something new, and It's never a good idea.

Thanks again to Sherrie Flick for sharing her thoughts about banning books just before leaving through the Garden Gate. Tony Robles, our busy bee, went to Greensboro, North Carolina for the North Carolina Writers Network 2024 conference.

Originally planned for a weekend in Asheville in October, it was canceled in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, and a shorter version of the conference was moved to Greensboro in November. Today, we're going to listen to Tony in conversation with Kenly Corya from North Carolina Lit Review, Paul Reali from Charlotte Lit, and Peter Grimes from Pembroke Magazine.

All helpers in the literary garden, clearing some brush and allowing the sun to shine on writers previously shaded from readers.

♪ Yeah, yeah, yeah ♪

This is Tony Robles with listen and be heard radio from the North Carolina Writers Conference Fall Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. We're speaking with Ken Lee who is with the North Carolina Carolina Literary Review, Kenley, thank you for taking time with us. Tell us about the North Carolina Literary Review. The mission of the North Carolina Literary Review is to preserve and promote North Carolina's rich literary tradition. We have been doing this for about 32 years now and as of this year we have become a quarterly publication with one print issue coming out in our time and three is coming out throughout the year. - Okay, and I know that the conference was supposed to be in Asheville, that Helene has impacted our writing community as well as the overall community.

Can you talk a little bit about that, what you've seen in terms of the impacts of Helene on the literary community in North Carolina? - Absolutely, you know, following the hurricane, I've really seen a community stepping forward to support North Carolina writers, artists who have been impacted. As far as North Carolina literary review, in the past several weeks, we've of course always want to support our actual writers in those in the mountains, but are of course pushing for those kind of features, anything we can do to support their voices and get them hurt. But just in general, you know, as I said, we've seen this outpouring of support in this broader North Carolina writers community for those impacted by the hurricane. And yeah, it looks like you have several copies here of the review. And it looks like you have one here on disability literature. Can you tell us about that? Absolutely. So the disability feature or the issue has come out this year. And again, our mission with every single publication and our theme for every year is to support those writers within these specific communities. So this year, of course, was the disability literature. Next year is going to be LGBTQ + writers. In the following year, we're going to be focusing on veteran writers as well. So every year, we really do make a big push to support those writers from North Carolina in those communities. - All right, I appreciate you taking time. And finally, one last question. For those who would like to get a copy of the North Carolina Literary Review, or perhaps submit, can you maybe tell us a little bit about maybe a contest that might be running right now? - Absolutely. In January, we'll have the Creative Nonfiction Contest coming out, and then later in the spring, we'll have a poetry contest as well. If you would like to check out any of that information, go to www.nclr.ecu.edu. >> Thank you so much.

We have Paul Reali with us. Now, he is a wordsmith focused on fiction, all kinds of fiction. Paul, thanks for being with us. How are you doing today?

- I'm doing great, thanks for having me, Tony. - Let me ask you this.

We have all kinds of genres here. We've got poetry, fiction, non-fiction.

What was it that drew you to fiction? - Oh, I don't think there's an answer to that question. I think we are drawn where we're drawn. Poetry never appealed to me growing up maybe it was the way I was taught poetry in school I'm one of the co-founders of Charlotte Litt and we work with writers of all kinds and my partner Kathy Collins is a poet and so I've been trying to learn to appreciate poetry I should say I've come to really appreciate poetry but also discover that poetry does not call to me what calls to me of the the worlds that I invent.

It's funny, I was trained as a journalist and I think it may have been a reaction to not wanting to be bound by the facts of how things actually are and to invent whatever I want to do invent. Has your journalism, you know, I'm sure it comes into play, I'm sure it's been helpful in your work, however, right? - Well, it does help in the terms of research. I don't know if you probably know when you're writing fiction or when you're writing prose, there are research rabbit holes that happen. Is I'm doing a setting a story in Buffalo, New York and I need to know how many stories City Hall is. And the next thing you know, I'm discovering about the architect who designed it and eventually I get back to the

writing. but the research skills certainly do come in handy. - Can you give us, let's just say for people that are listening that, let's say, are maybe more novice and more beginning writers that are interested in, let's say, historical fiction.

What are maybe three tips that you could give in terms of research?

- Well, I think the first thing to do is to read as widely as you can in the genre you want to write, and then in the period that you want to write. So if you want to write World War II, read as much as you can in World War II, both historical fiction and non-fiction. On the research side, I would say a second thing is to take advantage of your local librarians. There's still great sources for kind of pointing the direction.

I'm from Charlotte, and there is the Spangler Room at the main library, which is just a wealth of resources, because the Internet can guide you wrong. But there are people who are trained in whose job is to take you where you want. And then the third tip is not to let the research bog you down. Like I was just talking about, the research rabbit holes are fascinating, but you don't want them to keep you from your writing. Sometimes the best thing to do is to do your writing in whatever scene you're writing and put a little thing in brackets that says, go look this up later. Oh, this is really excellent advice, Paul. Thank you so much. And before we end, I'd like to again say thank you once again for taking time. You know, it seems like, you know, North Carolina, you know, you've got the writing community coming together. It's a fraternity. You know, I'm originally from California. You know, what makes North Carolina writers, you know, what gives North Carolina writers the North Carolina vibe if, you know, if I'm not misspeaking, you know. That's a really good question. I think one of the things that's about North Carolina they're really a couple of things one is there's so much there's such rich literary history here but in diverse when you think about coastal writing versus the uh the area of Appalachia um so there is there's a great tradition of writing here but also North Carolina is a transplant state especially in the cities is I'm from New York um my uh my partner was born in Illinois um I would have to say that half of the people here have come from other places and so they bring their writing traditions with them and that's one of my favorite parts about North Carolina. Writers, they come from all over. Well, both you and me, I mean I'm from the San Francisco Bay Area and I feel very much at home here. I've been here for about six years. Again, Paul Reali, last name is spelled R -E -A -L -I.

Pembroke magazine is on display here and we have the editor of Pembroke magazine, Peter Grimes. Peter, thank you for being with us today. Tell us something about Pembroke magazine. Well, Pembroke magazine started out as a student magazine in 1969 and has been published every year since edited by a faculty member. I currently edit it and I have a student worker with me, Kayla Wingfield, who helps out as well. So we publish annually, we publish literary fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, book reviews.

It's definitely one of my favorite parts of the job, and we have writers from all over the country. No particular theme. Oh, that's fantastic. You know, being an

editor, you know, you're assuming the eyes of a reader.

Can you talk about that process? Because our program is known as "Listen and Be Heard for Readers and writers. But, you know, there is editorial, there are editors. You know, talk about that, maybe the challenges that you have right now.

Well, the, you know, the biggest challenge is reading and giving all my attention that I can to each submission, and then especially when it comes to working with writers whose work we accept. You know, we want to make sure that it has several eyes on it and we go back and forth with the author to make sure that what we print is what they want.

I also find artists actually through using Instagram to find the artwork for the cover And so I've worked with a lot of international artists and that's been a real plus for the magazine too. Can you talk about that as well?

Because there are a lot of poets that use Instagram. I think sometimes there are poets that are using it kind of exclusively. Can you talk about how the impact of that, let's say, because I don't use Instagram, but What are you seeing if there are any shifts in poetry or in literature in general through social media?

I honestly don't keep up too much with it, but I follow artists on Instagram, but you're right. I think that that has changed things. People posting their writing on social media, and often people who publish in Pembroke magazine will share their work there afterward after it's been published in our pages. So it must be a wonderful thing, but I don't have a lot of insight on it.

And in looking at the magazines that you have here, which one is the latest issue? Is it this one here or number 56? Is there anything that stands out about that one that may be of interest to our listeners? Well, the cover art is by a man in Utah, I'm trying to close the name up here, Grant Foost.

We have a wide range of content in this one.

Well, we've got a story A guy who whose marriage is breaking up and and in his grief. He's trying to find his lost cat and We've got some we've got a sort of Hollywood Western feminist Western called even the Sun seeks the West We have some all sorts of creative nonfiction in this in this issue a librarian who writes about the challenge she's had with not wanting to censor her library but also trying to figure out what's appropriate for children in her library. And I know that's an issue that you know I know educators have been confronted with.

It looks like we also have a story by Kristen Garza why we Chicanas listen to Los Coyotes. Now that sounds like a very, very interesting story. You know, for those who want to know more about the, about Pembroke Magazine and perhaps even submit to the magazine, how would they go about doing that? Well, we have a website which is PembrokeMagazine .com and you can see the tables of contents for all of our archives, and you can submit to the magazine. You can subscribe through that website as well. So that would be the place to go. All right. All right. Thank you, Peter Grimes, the editor of Pembroke Magazine. We are at the North Carolina Fall Conference of the North Carolina Writers Network, and this is Listen and Be Heard for Readers and Writers.

Thank you to Tony Robles for those reports from the North Carolina Writers Network Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. Next week we will hear more from the conference when Tony conversates with novelists Cassidy Collins and Michelle Tracy Berger and poet Joseph Mills.

Here's a little bit of Tony's conversation with Michelle.

I draw on several traditions and including black folklore and African diasporic world views and where many communities have stories around

experiences that are not easily classifiable. Let's just say that and there's a rich tradition in that and I like drawing on that and I like drawing on kind of that

language. So Haines definitely comes out of, you know, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and the sense of being, I think people of color in the U.S.

are haunted in different ways in speculative fiction. We can deal with that both at the metaphorical level as well as the actual kind of ghost level and so some of that is reflected in the collection.

the collection centers women and girls of color and and that's a relatively new in speculative fiction and of course I bring some of my experiences to that.

I think that black women women of color historically have felt very and been made to feel very quote -unquote perpendicular to culture but we are very much committed to, you know, giving our all to this culture and I think the book is really about

how do the characters navigate those psychic, both external challenges and psychic challenges around race, class and gender and they don't all end happy but I think

the characters find a sense of agency so they're definitely not victims even though they might face challenges.

So my grandmother, my maternal grandmother, danced at the Cotton Club and she was tall and considered pretty and light -skinned and at the time they used to call them "hoofers" and she couldn't sing but they put her in the back and she looked good.

So I grew up with stories also about colorism and how that played into her experience and so in Edna Zora and the First Serpent, I got to bring those loves

together, Zorinal Hurston, the Cotton Club dancing. And so my grandmother also wanted to be a journalist. And at the time in the 1940s, '50s,

it was very difficult for her to do that. She wrote for the Amsterdam News for a little bit. So I often think about that ancestral energy. So sometimes as writers

and creatives, we are bringing through opportunities that other people in our family didn't get a chance to do, so I'm very aware of that.

Thanks, Tony. We're looking forward to joining you here in the Audio Garden again next week to hear from other authors at the North Carolina Writers Network Fall

Conference, which took place in Greensboro, North Carolina. And I will welcome T .R. Johnson to the audio garden to talk about New Orleans as a literary city.

Cambridge University Press publishes a series called A Writer's City, and T .R.

Johnson wrote New Orleans, which I am finding to be a treasure of literary lore,

so I hope you'll join us for that conversation and Tony Robles in conversation next

week in the audio garden. The Listen to Be Heard Hour is produced in Greenville,

South Carolina, here at Martha's Kitchen Garden, where I keep a routine with goats,

Muscovy ducks, New Hampshire from the Rhode Island, red chickens, a 13 -year -old cat,

and a great Pyrenees dog. A few years ago I only had an older dog who passed away, the cat, and some chickens. So I've learned a lot after adopting first the muscovies, then the goats, and Bobo, who sometimes reminds me of a wolf, and could scare me as he runs toward me if he wasn't so sweet and fluffy and eager for dog biscuits. I witnessed for the first time Thelma and Louise giving birth to baby goats, and although they are tamed by food as well, they have their instincts and need no assistance with caring for their babies. The Muscovies honor their flocking instincts as one starts to follow me and the rest gather in the evenings to be fed and locked away from predators for the night. I was thinking about all this before you joined me here in the audio garden today how I too am a mixture of wild and tame and I wrote a poem while I was waiting for you so I'd like to share it with you.

Animal Instincts

I'm an animal, walking, learning language, reaching,
speaking dialects, imperfectly.

I train my brain to grow into its home, roam without words,
the wilderness each day I say good morning to the wolf who I set free but he
stays with me and the cougar always waiting at the door crows and hawks fight in
the treetops I harvest weeds and words as crops.

Thank you Once again for joining me here in the audio garden, I'm Martha Cinader.
Our featured spoken word today was "King of the Ghosts" from Homer Erotic's first CD
"Yield." I spoke with Sherrie Flick, author of the book of essays "Homing,
Instincts of a Rust Belt Feminist." Tony Robles spoke with Kenly Corya from the
North Carolina Lit Review, Paul Reali from Charlotte Lit and Peter Grimes from
Pembroke Magazine. Band book comments were by Sherrie Flick. Our associate producer is
DJ Jeannie Hopper, editing 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. Thanks as always to Davyne Dial,
the manager of WPVM in Asheville, North Carolina, for introducing "Listen and Be
Heard" to the broadcast airwaves Wednesdays at 4 p .m. Thanks also to KCEI in Taos,
New Mexico, KHOI in Ames, Iowa, and KEPJ in San Antonio,
Texas, for welcoming us into your neighborhood. My name is Martha Cinader,
and I want to thank you for listening and for the opportunity to be heard.

Livin' it, givin' it, havin' it, takin' it,
shakin' it, creatin'

it, livin' it,

Living it is. Sewing a coat. Investing each stitch with magic.

Creating a unique design. Putting it on and wearing it for the rest of their 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

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
♪ It is a one-way ticket and no solid plans ♪ ♪ It's smokein' a J and a smoke
cafe in Amsterdam ♪ ♪ It's sayin' the day is pretty in a strange new city ♪
♪ Livin' it is givin' it, givin' it is havin' it ♪ ♪ Havin' it is takin' it,
takin' it is movin' it ♪ ♪ Shakin' it, creatin' it, lovin' 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 ♪ 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 together ♪ ♪ When you're falling apart
♪ ♪ It's writing poetry to ease a broken heart ♪
♪ Living it is, knowing the stage ♪ ♪ Looking into bright lights, late nights ♪ ♪
Far room fights, fantastic sights, inspiration ♪ books, and some garden poetry.