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[Music] Welcome to the Audio Garden, where we cultivate our collective wisdom, nurture creativity and spread love. My name is Martha Cinader, and this is Listen and Be Heard.

The diversity of America can create and mature this incredible democratic experiment to the sacredness that we will seek.

Welcome back to the audio garden my friends. It's good to be here with you. I'm so glad that you came. My co-host Tony Robles has invited a very special guest and we are honored to welcome him to the audio garden today. He grew up on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and won the gold medal in the 1964 Olympics in the 10k event and now Billy Mills is the co-author of a children's book called Wings of an eagle, the gold medal dreams of Billy Mills. I'm digging up some roots as we speak for later in the hour. We'll listen to a live recording from Listen and Be Heard Open Mic in Vallejo, California in 2002, when we featured Alejandro Murguia, reading from This War Called Love. But let's get started with a poem. This is Blagovesta Momchedjikova, reading her poem "Tree and Dancers".

Trapped in the dark shared back alley among several houses on West 55th Street, amidst barrels and bins and discarded materials, a tree, Taller than the buildings surrounding it and so much thinner and greener, stretching its long bony branches onto fire escapes, window panes, curtains and clouds and winds, curiously and consistently reaching for more air, more sunlight, more New York City gossip inside every window it can peek into, But mostly, the wall-sized windows of Den Studio 2B. The tree outside sees what the dancers inside feel. Their extended arms, contorted bodies, splits, acrobatics, pulsations, ancient rhythms, heavy breaths, small steps, leaps, movements from somewhere far or from around here. Their sweat, frustration, hurt, uncertainty, tears, smiles, joy. Fourteen tireless dancers and then one leader, master, mentor, with the patience of spirit, who adjusts, inspires, pushes, awaits, encourages them all, bringing a calm sweetness and grace over everyone. Is this his space, are they his guests, or is he theirs? They all come here to play, try things out, discover, make mistakes, be strong, be weak, be quiet, be loud, doubt, trust, cry, sing, think, laugh, in pairs, alone, but mostly together, for two hours the day three times a week. Every time, it is different. The dancers inside see what the tree outside feels. The urban pressure of just wanting to be your own being among so many others. The tight space it has learned to call home and grow into. The little light, the little sky, the impossibility to move freely or ever the way they can. The realization that this one space is all that you'll ever have and you have to make the best of it, every single day. The ability to present yourself as strong even if you might be sad or lonely inside. The loneliness of it all, and the cold and the rain and the snow and the heat, the perseverance, the

emerald joy of being alive against all odds, of being the shade for others, if only for a few months a year, of being majestic even if trapped. Can dancers and tree ever meet, touch? They do all the time. Not in the big windows that divide their two worlds, but in the dance floor mirrors, where their reflections are always together. There, the dancers like birds fly in different directions and the tree branches try to chase them and tease them and catch them and hold them. These unlikely companions teach each other life lessons. The dancers teach the tree how to move. The tree teaches the dancers how to stay. The reason dancers and tree work so well together? They both aim for the light, always. This is the Listening Beheard Hour for Readers and Writers. We've been listening to poet Blago Vesta Monti Tigova, reading "Tree and Dancers." Billy Mills did not have an easy childhood. Surrounded by poverty and orphaned at the age of 12, he started running to channel his energy into something positive. In Lakota culture, someone who achieves great success has a giveaway to thank the support system of family and friends who helped him achieve his goal. As part of his effort to give back, Billy helped found Running Strong for American in youth and became the organization's national spokesperson. Today he travels over 300 days a year and speaks to youth about healthy lifestyles and taking pride in their heritage. Let's join Tony Robles now in conversation with Billy Mills. Our guest today is somebody who I really feel it's an honor and a privilege to speak to. Billy Mills is the author of a new children's book called Wings of an Eagle, The Gold Medal Dreams of Billy Mills, which was co-authored by Donna Janelle Bowman. Well, first of all, Billy, thank you for being with us. And you know, your book here, Wings of an eagle. It's just lovely. I picked it up here in Hendersonville, North Carolina. I understand that, okay, Donna Janelle Bowman contacted you, and she's I guess the co-author of this children's book. Tell us about that. She actually talked you into it. Yes, Donna had to work very hard to come out and talk to us. She had been writing and studying the Lakota culture and writing about me, I believe, starting in 2014. And of course, I always wanted to do a children's book, a book that I felt could change lives for the better. And I just had a couple of concerns about writing a book, not with Donald Junow, but just writing a book that I felt had to be addressed by me. One of the concerns, for example, I wanted to make sure oral history was a vital part of the book. Written history has so many untruths based on opinions. And Donna Bowman walked in with knowledge to a greater extent than I thought you would have of oral history. And putting all history together comes truth. And I wanted to write a book that was based on a strong concept of truth. And Donald brought that to me. So It was a real collaborative effort where, I guess, two hearts that were kind of beating in tandem kind of came together towards that race towards truth. I wanted to ask you, you know, the book starts October 14th, 1964. I happened to have been born in '64. So when you were on the starting line in Tokyo in the Olympics for the 10,000 meters, I was about three months. So like, perhaps didn't even know how to walk at that time. You know, we always have this vision of, okay, runners, you know, starting line on your mark, get set, go. But for you, you know, the, in reading the book, your race really started way, way before that. You know, take us there because getting to that starting point, there was a starting point that came way, way before that starting point. You know, tell us about that because it's so beautifully illustrated and told in your book. - Well, I'll tell it more of a complete concept, but for me, the book was born when my mother died. My mother passed away I was approaching nine

years of age and my dad told me son you have broken wings it takes a dream to feel broken wings he told me it takes the dream takes you down a path introduces you to a passion in life so you develop your skills to equal the passion bringing them together magic happens. And over your lifetime one or two of the magical things you do just may be looked upon as a miracle. And my dad had me believing in magic. He had me believing I could create miracles. Then he died and I was not ready. I was not ready to meet the challenges that I faced then, just the lack of diversity in America, the lack of inclusion, for example. And I broke. So then the book was solidified, the Olympic race was solidified. When I stood on a chair last year in college at the National Cross -Country USA Championships. And being asked frequently to get out of the photo when a photo was taken of the top three or top five, I was going to jump. I didn't want to kill myself. I just wanted to go where it would be quiet. And then I heard, underneath my skin, movement, energy. That sounded, spoken unspoken word. Don't. And that it sounded like my dad's voice. I got off the chair. I wrote down a dream that I was gonna pursue to heal a broken soul. And it was not the destination, it was the journey that was gonna heal me. I wrote down gold medal, Olympic 10,000 meter run, Tokyo, Japan. The Creator has given me the ability. The rest is up to me. Believe, believe, believe. This is the Listen and Be Heard Hour for readers and writers where we've joined Tony Robles in conversation with Olympic champion and children's book author, Billy Mills. You know, there are many things in the book, many lines in the book that are really telling that really kind of get into the depths of the soul of who you are. One of which is all you need is one person to believe in you. You know, and I know that there were many people that believed in you. There was the community. In terms of your writing, you know, you had written down in journals things that you were going to do so in a way you were You were kind of running, but you actually actually writing towards your your dream as well There are other writers that I know that have been Have been runners for instance run rash who's a novelist here in North Carolina? He ran long distance in college the Japanese writer Hiroki Marakami Actually is a marathoner who's run marathons, I think the Honolulu marathon and the the Greek - Greece marathon, since 1982. So there are connections with the riding and the running. Can you talk about those connections as it relates to your, just your journey in getting to this children's book? I wanted to take that feeling I got from running and I wanted to be able to put that into writing. I wanted to share, when I ran, when I was trying to write, I wanted to share my emotions and my feelings with the reader, honestly. But I had to be cautious because I wanted to do it truthfully. Truth is an accurate expression of what you honestly feel and what you honestly want to share through words, your emotions and feelings. I had to avoid getting trapped, which most people do, when they look at honesty just as honesty. And that's shown your emotions, your feelings honestly, even though what you're saying may not be the truth. So Ronnie, one of the most challenging things I had to do was to truly say to myself I want to heal a broken soul. I want to pursue the Olympic Games and I'm willing to do the training to make the sacrifices, to totally commit to the pursuit of trying to win a gold medal at the athlete games to heal a broken soul. The race and that whole scenario may have been a race towards truth. Absolutely. On the one hand it's the physical but in that whole process the discovery and getting to that destination of truth is where the real race really began. You wanted a race, but that's where it really began at that point.

There was a part in the book where it shows the interconnectedness of community by way of a blanket where the people that had resources or were able to have some kind of success or material items would share those things with the community. And I thought what was beautiful was that, I guess, in your journey, in your life, was what were you going to share, right? You know, what were you going to bring to that blanket? The images in the book, there were three that kind of really stuck out to me. The circle, your father had you in the circle and said, "Hey, you have broken wings." The blanket, which was the community coming together in this interconnected community, regardless of what other band or whatever tribe you happen to be from, you're part of one spirit, one people. And then also the wings. Can you you know maybe one of those symbols. When I was trying to make the Olympic team, one of our elders on the reservation, a descendant of Chief Red Cloud. His name was Oliver Red Cloud and he became our chief and for about 15 years in the 1990s and then departed on a spiritual journey. But Oliver Red Cloud said, "Billy, Remember, you come from the heart of everything that is, the Black Hills. Remember, our most powerful prayer, we are all related. So you make the Olympic team, you're going to another country. Many other countries are going there. You'll be meeting our relatives, we're all related. So you take the heart of everything it is. You take a most powerful prayer with you. And share. My father told me earlier before he passed away to sit down with other societies, take my culture, traditions, spirituality, extract the virtues and the values from them, and sit down and share them with other cultures. You'll find common ground. That common ground would bond you, friendship, and then you can discuss your differences in a civil manner to empower one another rather than hurt one another. So I'm going to the Olympic Games with those virtues and values. I'm flying into Tokyo. My wife Patricia came ten days later. I'm flying into Tokyo. I look out the window and I saw Mount Fuji. It was so powerful, so spiritual. I thought, "Oh my gosh, this has to be the heart of everything that is the Japanese." I watched as we walked sightseeing throughout the communities in Tokyo and I saw the Japanese men and women bowing to the Peans. And I think as one of the few that understood, they were not submitting. They were saying, "I still respect you. I'll still respect you." And that just took a hold of me. In the village, I read this book that the Japanese leaders wanted the children born On the first day of the first atomic bomb being dropped to the day of the opening ceremonies They went at their children Born during that period of time To see the world as one. I took that with global unity to the dignity character beauty of global diversity and we're all related. And then he said, "You must have your giveaway. You must give back the concept of the blanket in the book, where people are putting things on the blanket that they're given to somebody, maybe in need, or to honor somebody. You must have your giveaway when you come back, Billy. So, I win the gold medal. My wife and I decided we're going to pursue global unity through the dignity, character, beauty of global diversity. And that fits right into this democratic experiment. One nation at a time, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. So we will pursue that. And I wanted to take those virtues and values and those concepts to the classroom. Well, You know, the book is beautiful, the illustrations are really, you know, are really lovely. You know, we have the image of the circle and in the 10 ,000 meter race that you ran in Tokyo, it's not exactly a circle but an oval and you're running 10 ,000 meters, I guess it's 25 laps. You know, in watching that, it was one of the most, as far as inspiration, one of the most prodigious

things that I can say that I've seen. And I'm not talking, I mean, I have admiration for people that can achieve a lot of physical things, but it just seemed to me in that race that there was something else going on. I mean, you're among the elite athletes in your sport, you know, in the world. But that final kick, it was almost like, I mean, I'm not trying to be funny, but you know, you ever see the Road Runner cartoon where, you know, he's trying to catch the Road Runner, he has that thing with the dynamite and you know it's like the rocket to try it was almost like that I'm like well God where did that come from that the energy was almost like it was almost like you had just started the race fresh and not the final lap I mean can you kind of take us to that I mean it's just very with me because I want to set the stage and after my dad died and I'd say I came so close to suicide. I said junior in college going into my senior year and what I mentioned earlier I was going to jump. I just wanted to go as quiet and never come back just where it was nice and quiet and it's like hearing my dad's voice don't. I wrote down the dream to heal a broken soul. Olympic gold medal 10,000 meter run Tokyo, Japan, and I started training for that, and that's when I dealt with truth and honesty. I truly had to be honest, truthfully, to myself that that's what I wanted, and I wanted to heal. And in college, my college coach asked me, "What are your dreams?" And I said, "I want to make the Olympic team." He said, "Don't dream too big. You faltered in the latter part of races. Said it was mental, psychological, low self-esteem. I knew I didn't have low self-esteem. 13 months before the Olympic Games, I was diagnosed as borderline type 2 diabetic in the Marine Corps. And they said you'd track drastically, but not into the danger zone. And that's where your energy goes. You have no energy. We don't know how to help you. Just experiment with diets. Try a high-protein diet. So the last 13 months of my running was my career. I started trying to address that and I was able to start focusing. I trained through every race in 1964. I did not rest up until Tokyo. I was trying to find out how can I keep from going low blood sugar. Tokyo, Japan, 25 minutes before the race, I'm going low blood sugar. I begged the U.S. officials for give me a candy bar. They said, "No, you don't eat candy before a race." A Japanese official came to me and in his broken English, he said, "I find you bar." I ate the candy bar 20 minutes before the race. I was going low blood sugar, but I wanted the whole concept was to heal the broken soul. We line up, the gun goes off, I didn't see the smoke, I was close enough to hear the sound, and my first step was I have to win this race. I had no idea at the time where it was coming from, but my first step I have to win this race. Clark on the second lap hits on world record pace. I joined the field five of us I'm almost ready to break, but it was not I can't stay with them. It was still positive I've got to take the lead and strategically slow the pace down I took the lead at the 5,000 meter mark were on world record pace and I thought it's a slow the pace Clark went by me and I thought of you oh my gosh Before I could analyze what he's going to do, 30 yards, then he slowed the pace. That was positively. The pace is too fast for him also, running on a cinder track. We're off world record pace, but we're on under an Olympic record pace. Two laps to go. There's four of us left. Mama Walding broke. He starts faltering. The pace again is too fast for me. I can't, I was not, I can't go with him. I have to strategically slow the I took the lead, clock went right by me, 38, 30 meters, and he slowed the pace. So I'm into the race to the finish. Four days before the Olympic 10,000, I ran 200 meters out of the blocks to see how fast I could run. Slow start, slow start, a coach from Germany timed me. And he said, "Just do a running start, "just do a running start." So I slowly could start

running across the starting line. I to cross the infield. How fast? He said not too fast. I said what was my time? He said 23 -3. You know how to start. Proper start. Maybe 23 flat. I'm going yes, yes. He said what event? I said the 10 ,000 meters in the marathon. He looked at the watch. He said oh very fast. But that gave me confidence. If I could be with him to the finish or to the last lap, I'm in the race to win. One lap to go, Clark took the lead. I'm on his shoulder. We're coming up on a runner from Africa. We're ready to lap. And Clark was letting me box him in. He lost the Commonwealth games earlier by being boxed in. He was like, gosh, I can't believe he's letting me box him in. Once I get him boxed in, I'm starting, I'm starting my kick. And that's when "Gamutty, who's gonna go past me?" Clark pushed me out into the third lane. I stumbled. Gamutty told me later, "My friend, Billy, is pushed. "He's out of focus. "Clark has to be out of focus. "It's time for me to strike." I closed the gap and Gamutty's into full sprint already. He told me later, "Billy, I thought I could squeeze through. He tried to turn, tried to squeeze through. He said, "I know I pushed you. Not intentional." He just said, "It's the moment, it's the heat of the moment." Clark pushed me out, not intentionally, just the heat of the moment. "I'm going low blood sugar, so I decided I'll let them get maybe 10 yards ahead of me, 100 meters to go. I'm going for the gold. were there, but I'm still somewhat low blood sugar. I'm struggling, lengthening my stride, lifting my knees, pumping my arms, and Patricia, my wife, was 14 rows up, three seats in, about 85 meters from the finish. And I'm going by, and I don't want to look because I could see her as I'm coming out of the curve. And I had a runner come in front of me, we're lapping. I go by the runner, I go inside of his, my high, he turns a little bit, the center of his jersey was an eagle. I'm back to my dad. You do these things, son. Someday you can have wings of an eagle. Wings of an eagle, I can win, I can win. In this incredible moment of empowerment, I'm gonna win. But I may not get to the finish line first. It's like I can't evict myself. I'm gonna win and I'm gonna try to get to the finish line first and then I feel the tape break across my chest. There is just no way we can end this conversation here with our elder Billy Mills. We're going to take a moment to reflect on what we've heard here in the audio garden and I'll meet you on the other side of the bridge in about a minute. This is WLBH .org in the Carolinas. Listen and be heard radio. Thanks to Mr. Billy Mills for joining us here on the Listen and Be Heard Hour dedicated to readers and writers entirely non -commercial and available for free on your community radio station and as a podcast at listenandbeheard .net or your favorite podcasting service. One edited video of Tony Robles speaking with Lakota Elder, Olympic Champion, Children's Book Author, and National Spokesperson for Running Strong for American Indian Youth, Billy Mills, is available on the post for this Episode 3 of our Season 3 at listenandbeheard .net and also on the Listen and Be Heard YouTube channel. We're going to go back to Tony Robles now where he asks Billy Mills for some words of inspiration for our young man. I told the official that came up to me. I have to find the German. I have to tell him the eagle on his singlet helped me win. With the wings of an eagle helped me win. I found the German, there was no eagle. It was a perception. Then the official said, "What can we do for you now?" I said, "I want my wife." Within moments they're tapping Pat on the shoulder. Mrs. Mills, the new Olympic champion, requests his wife. She comes down, we hug and with him, I don't know just when, but I told her, "Pat, I know what it meant." I saw the eagle up at German's shirt, there was no eagle there when I'd after the race. I'm going to win, but I may not get to the

finish line first. I'm healing a broken soul. And in the process, I have a chance to win a gold medal at the Olympic Games. And it was just empowerment, just lifting my knees, pumping my arms. And I think what people see and what you saw was the gift being put in me. The empowerment I found is just and it was there was not to become an Olympic gold medalist. It was I'm I'm healing I'm healing myself and the tape broke across my chest and I immediately felt I choreographed it. I orchestrated it. I believed in it. I truthfully wanted to achieve it and it's a gift it's a gift. So back to Oliver Redcloud. I had to get back back to the blanket in the book. I had to get back So we co-founded running strong for American Indian youth and been working in poverty communities of America I put the players together for bread and water for Africa under Christian relief services and why I think Bread Britain Water for Africa started, we started with Kip Keno, the gold medalist from Kenya. We're helping many communities. We help his wife at the school in Eldorat doing many charitable things all because of a gift. So I was able to take the blanket, put people on the reservation of put gifts into the blanket globally because of sport and because of unity through diversity. For a lot of us, what I was so inspired by was when I saw you run that race and that final kick, that was that kind of dream, that kind of moment that we all want. And that race, seeing you do that, is an example that, you know, it doesn't necessarily have to be a 10,000 meter race but that moment that there's a moment for us that's out there and you know particularly for young men too you know like you know a lot of us are portrayed as you know being no good and the way it's being portrayed right now I think men particularly young men uh need to to know that because I think with your father telling you that that was I guess a way of building some character in you and if we could build that in men as men we can build that because we can tear we can tear down that's been proven right if we can tear down we can certainly build what's the message that you would have for young men young men in particular I would start first by telling the young man America needs to hear their voice America needs to hear their voice one of unity what I've wanted to make the world a better place I would challenge young men all young men, to read and learn about the doctrine of discovery, written in 1493, courtesy of the Vatican, encouraged by the kings and queens of Europe, the doctrine of discovery, in reference to the New World, Artica to the Antarctica. It simply states, in regards to the indigenous people in the New World, the indigenous people must come under international rule of law, their laws, their religion, their songs, their dance, customs, will no longer belong. They must get rid of them. They must come under international rule of law. They must become Christians. But then within a decade, if we became Christians or ancestors, they could own land. So that's that period of time throughout the Americas. This is not an attack on Jesus Christ. It's how people misinterpreting are using wisdom knowing that's not the truth. To deceive people can be vicious, the doctrine of discovery in indigenous people cannot own land. If we became Christians, we could own land. So that's when they said, "We were not human. We were not human. We had no souls." And Father Sierra, from California, was made a saint at the request of multitudes of indigenous women who were violated. Children were imprisoned. All they asked was Pope Francis to denounce the Doctrine of Discovery. It created altitudes of hardships. He did a year ago, July, he called it genocide. So the Western movement began, the Doctrine of Discovery, genocide, then slavery, treaty signed, treaties broken, and than the barren slavery gym crow, than the warren drugs to make hippies and

young black men felons. They dropped hippies, included men of color, indigenous men from the Americas to make us felons. The warren drugs has been very successful in damaging our young men. So those footprints are etched into every fiber of our social way of life, our educational system, our political system, forever influencing our rule of law and that we're in a country today which wants to exclude diversity, equity, inclusion, when more than ever the need to understand it has to be accepted and our men reading the doctrine of discovery without anger accepting it and saying my voice is going to be heard, my dream can come true and we are stronger as one, we support one another. Indigenous people, people of color, the diversity of America can create and mature this incredible democratic experiment to the sacredness that we all seek. Well, you know, the book illustrates that in the most basic and the most profound way and in heartfelt way. Again, this is "Wings of an Eagle," and this is "The Gold Metal Dreams of Billy Mills," co-written by Donna Janelle Bowman. I want to give a shout out to Donna Janelle Bowman. She is an alum of Vermont College of Fine Arts, which happens to be my alma mater. Billie Mills, the gold medalist of the 10,000 meters in Tokyo in 1964, which happens to be the year I was born. It's been an honor and a privilege. If you want to get in touch with Billy Mills, again, he did co-found a non-profit organization called Running Strong for American Indian Youth. Again, Running Strong for American Indian Youth at indianyouth.org and again, the co-author of this book, Donna Janelle Boeman. She has written several books for children, and her website is DonaJanelleBoeman.com. That's Dona, D-O-N-N-A, Janelle. That's J-A-N-E-L-L, Boeman, B-O-W-M-A-N. It'll be on our website, Listen and Be Heard website. Again, Billy Mills, thank you so much for being with us on Listen and Be Heard radio. Much appreciation. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Tony Robles, for that interview with Billy Mills, whose children's book is available everywhere. Wings of an Evil, Gold Medal Dreams of Billy Mills. If you do go check out the video, Tony tells the story of how the interview happened, which is a great story too, and they talk a lot more about sports and that championship race. So I encourage you to go and watch and listen to the whole thing at listenandbeheard.net. I told you I was going to dig, and I did, and I have for you now a live recording from the listenandbeheard open mic in Galejo, California, in 2002, when we featured Alejandro Marguilla. So one time, one night, I was sitting in my favorite Mexican restaurant in San Francisco. And I don't know if you're familiar now with the phenomena that has happened recently of the flower sellers. In San Francisco, any night of the week you'll find, um, yajitas, elderly women usually selling flowers, uh, on the streets, you know, uh, restaurants, bars, cafes, they'll come in and sell you flowers. And one night, uh, I saw a young boy about ten years old, Sunday night, it was late Sunday night, and it was a young boy night, it was kind of like surprised, and I started wondering about, well, what is this young boy doing? And as I thought about that the following weeks, I wound up with this little short story. I'll read to you called Rose-Colored Dreams. What is Juanito doing this hour of night selling roses in the streets of La Mission? Wine-colored, blood-colored, colored pink rose buds wrapped in cellophane, stuffed in a plastic bucket half his size. He walks in the restaurant, thin as a churro, ten years looked like thirty, stamped on his forehead. A strong wind could blow him to Daily City, or Ocoingo, the mountainous Chiapas town of his birth. All the waitresses and regular customers, the soft-bellied ones and the lean ones, the hard-faced cab drivers, the Norteño Trios, no Juanito's face,

his faded blue sweater, his Mayan profile, like a clay pendant from Tonina, his cowlick and black mop of hair. Juan Cocom Heredia, Juanito, as his mother calls him should be home asleep you know the place the apartment building on 17th Street through the lobby door with busted lock under the sign that says no loitering past the odor of mildew that curdles your brain up three floors of rickety stairs with broken handrails down the hallway where gas cockroaches lie belly up Below the broken window, sweet home. In bed, actually the mattress on the floor he shares with his older sisters, Juanito would dream of a baseball glove or the perfect tail for a kite. Dream a sandia paleta from Latin Fries on 24th Street with the one seed always frozen near the bottom. But the family needs more than dreams. That's why mama, two sisters, a baby Juanito and Lauela have troubled by truck and bus, pulled by something stronger than destiny to this two -room battleground of survival. Right this minute, as Juanito treads Mission Street, Mama in the apartment, curls over a pedal -driven singer's sewing machine, zig -zagging threads as fine as spider webs, running perfect seams down pants, stitching buttonholes and collars late into the pale yellow hours of her seemingly endless nights. The two sisters, Dulce and Primavera, With fingers delicate as ballerinas, hand -stitched beads, tiny as dew drops, on dresses that will retail in Union Street boutiques for hundreds of dollars, of which they will receive twenty -five. The baby will be crying in a cardboard crib, a cough racking his sleep. In La Lost in dreams, thick as cataracts will be chanting social prayers to Mayan gods before an altar of beeswax candles, pink flower petals, and Pepsi -Cola bottles, the heavy palm incense unraveling in a perfume string towards the water staying on the ceiling that looks like a map of Latin America. This This isn't Mexico City, where Indian families wrapped in newspapers huddle under the monument to the revolution. This isn't Tegucigalpa, either, where worm -drabbage girls peddle chicklets on street corners. No, this is La Mission, San Pancho, Califa, SaSlan. Land of palm trees and skyscrapers where there's dollars enough for cellular phones, sports cars, even mota by the trunk full, where a suitcase of cocaine is as easy to buy as the broken -stand rose from Juanito's white bucket. "Oye chavalo, how much for that handful of rose buds?" Four elf -sized fingers go up, Juanito makes change for a twenty, fast as an abacus, returns his tiny fist clenched with crumpled bills, "Gracias," he says, "like a man." You tip him a couple of dollars, so what? Every love -struck couple staring into each other's eyes, every loner occupied with a half -empty beer, Even the waitress with tired legs waiting for the end of her shift receives a visit from Juanito. Then, with bucket under his arm, he turns one last time to the faces above the steaming plates, before he's out into the neon lit street, leaving a trail of rose petals dark as sacrificial hearts. This is the Listening Be Heard Hour for Readers and Writers. I'm Martha Cinader and we've been listening together here in the audio garden to Alejandro Mergia reading rose -colored dreams from this war -called love. A live recording from listen and be heard open mic in Vallejo California in 2002. I have more from his future and that night which I have spread around the audio garden and Hope Will Flower in future episodes. Next week, I'm looking forward to welcoming Brian Kimmel to the garden, who co -authored with his grandmother a book called Blue Sky's Troubled Waters. Here is a whiff of that conversation for you now. - Yeah, and I was just going through the documents and I discovered some other documents that helped me build the context of the story just just a couple weeks ago and so it's so even more context since I worked on

this published version so the the point of the story as I understand it as she's sharing it it's really her return to the United States that allowed her to share the story because there was so much political turmoil in Indonesia at the time that this story probably wouldn't have been told. It may have been on the band books list. So being in the United States allowed her to share the story and we were sponsored by the Snohomish Methodist Church here in Seattle area just north of Seattle Through an organization of churches that helped find sponsors for refugee families So we were one of the first families to to be here in 1961 from who were Dutch and Indonesian Because we're kind of a is the one of the first waves of Indonesian refugees And people usually don't know that side of the story or that there were refugees from Indonesia. One of the best things to do in a garden is to just sit and read and let the garden be around us as it is. A safe spot to absorb what we're reading. So I thought I would finish this hour with you my friends. Reading a little more poetry like I did last week I was reading from Khalil Shabran. This week I would like to read to you from an anthology called Women in Praise of the Sacred, 43 centuries of spiritual poetry by women, edited by Jane Hirschfield. I fell because of wisdom, but was not destroyed. Through her I dived into the great sea, and in those depths I seized a wealth -bestowing pearl. I descended like the great iron anchor men used to steady their ships in the night on rough seas. And holding up the bright lamp that I there received, I climbed the rope to the boat of understanding, while in the dark sea I slept, and not overwhelmed there, dramped, a star blazed in my womb. I marveled at that light and grasped it, and brought it up to the sun. I laid hold upon it, and will not let it go. Those were the words of Makita, Queen of Sheba, from about 1000 BCE, and I was reading them from a book called "Women in Praise of the Sacred - 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women" edited by Jane Hirschfield. Thank you for walking along with me. It's always my pleasure to be here with you and guide you along the garden paths. Our featured poet today was Blago Vesta Momchedjikova, a lover and writer of cities who teaches expository writing at New York University. She was reading, tree, and dancers. Our featured guest was Billy Mills, Olympic champion and co -author of Wings of an Eagle, The Gold Medal Dreams of Billy Mills. We also heard Alejandro Merdilla reading rose -colored dreams from this war called love. From a live 2002 recording at Listen to Be Heard Open Mic in Falejo, California. I just read to you the poetry of Makita Queen of Sheba from Women in Praise of the Sacred, an anthology by Jane Hirschfeld published in 1994 by Harper Combs. I'm your host, Martha Cinader. My Hello host is Tony Robles, Associate Producers are DJ Jeannie Hopper and J. Rodriguez Sierra. Editing is done by Jeremiah Cotherin, Music Mixing and Mastering by J. Rodriguez Sierra. Thanks, as always, to Davine Dial at WPVM Radio in Asheville, North Carolina, for introducing "Listen and Be Heard" to the broadcast airwaves, and to KCEI in Taos, New Mexico, KEPI in San Antonio, Texas, and KHOI in Ames, Iowa for cultivating the audio garden in your communities, and our own Listen and Be Heard Network, host of WLBH .org, your 24 /7 streaming radio station for all things literary. Please visit us at [listenandbeheard .net](http://listenandbeheard.net) and sign up for our email newsletter. For myself and Tony Robles, I want to thank you for listening Let me ask the opportunity to be heard. Listen and be heard because I have a story to tell. As you have a story to tell, we are individuals, our stories will be different and it's important that all voices be heard. As we are challenged by the differentness in cultures and populations, in class, in financial status, the more voices we can hear, the more the people become accustomed to listen,

even with points of view that they may not agree with. I believe that is a sure path to acceptance. (music) Listen and be heard, even if your voice shakes, without knowing it you may be saving a stranger. (upbeat music) I think those are two of the most powerful words together and it's a really meaningful phrase and when I think of it, I always think of nature. Find the artists you love, take to the street, spread the news, so they can listen and be heard, Listen and be heard, you are beautiful Listen and be heard Listen and be heard, you are beautiful Listen and be heard Listen and be heard, you are beautiful. Listen and be heard, listen and be heard. (upbeat music)