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Listen as the sound enters my inner ear and vibrates through my inner plane,  
my biosphere. Part of me learning to be a better listener of others is learning to listen to  
myself. When we are listened to, truly listened to, you know, you can feel when someone's  
deeply  
listening and we feel heard. We are healed in that moment. Listen and be heard.  
Even if your voice shakes without knowing it, you may be saving a stranger.  
Listen and be heard is, I guess, part of why I want to connect with you. Because as soon as  
you  
said that, it like stuck a chord in my soul. 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.  
Welcome back, my friends. It is so good to be here with you again today in my little urban  
patio  
garden, enjoying a beautiful spring day and looking forward to this show.  
My good friend and co-host, co-producer, Tony Robles.  
has a new book coming out next month.  
It's called Soup for the Storm. Later in the show today,  
we're going to hear from the Mel Slocum Quartet, which appeared recently at the National  
Jazz  
Museum in Harlem. But as always, we'll start with a poem.  
And this one is from Tony, who was in Waialua,  
Hawaii. and experiencing the storm and the aftermath of the storm.  
Island people in this mountain town, they weave through currents and curves,  
navigating every twist of road and thought. Island people from Micronesia,  
creating islands with their hands, islands of generosity in a womb of humility silenced.

sharing roast pig and rice and taro and the gift of their music carved into the mountains.

The island people traveled the twisting path of the mountains, navigating,

as their ancestors did, across seas, leaving behind songs and poetry in the skin of trees and the

hues of ten thousand jagged flowers. songs and poetry that Helene could not silence.

One of the island people is a man with an island smile carved into the mountains of western North

Carolina, a man whose family was in need of water after the hurricane,

a man I had worked with in the passing breath of a season. I went to his home with several jugs of

water. He opened the door. I see his face for the first time again,

whose eyes carry words of water across islands and time zones and barriers into the mountains.

Eyes that carry water I thirst for. That was Tony Robles reading some of his poetry from his recent

visit in Hawaii. And you'll find a post, a couple posts actually,

about his trip to Hawaii at [listenandbeheard.net](http://listenandbeheard.net). He's got pictures and poetry and an update,

reports about the storm. So please visit us at [listeningbeheard.net](http://listeningbeheard.net), and you'll find all of that on our homepage. And here he is now at the Garden Gate.

I met you in the Bay Area in the early 2000s.

I got to meet your Uncle Al, and that was a great night. And so we have this...

You were already established on your own as a poet in the Bay Area.

And I was doing my thing. I moved on. I went south. And I was so surprised to find out that you

were living in Hendersonville, North Carolina. You were like quintessential San Francisco.

And you sung his praises. And so for you to have left and gone to Hendersonville was truly a

surprise. But what I've seen in this progression of poetry that I've seen you publish since then is

that that's really your thing to talk about people and place. And somehow in this space of time

that you've been in Hendersonville, you have published. A couple books.

Thrift Store Metamorphosis and now this new book. Soup for the Storm. Soup for the Storm.

But I just wanted to say they both really bring out the character of where you're living and the

people who are living there. I moved from San Francisco. I was working in housing justice and that

was a constant drag on my spirit because people were getting evicted,

people that... I had known people that were coming to our organization for help,

and some were forced into homelessness. So it became a real strain on my spirit,

on my soul, and my emotions. My mother lives down here in Batcave, North Carolina,

which is a short drive from Hendersonville. Her husband, my stepfather, had seen a Craigslist ad

about a mobile home for sale. I think the asking price was something like \$14,000,

and my stepfather talked the guy down to \$5,000, which was about what I had at saving.

So I didn't take it lightly because I'd lived in San Francisco pretty much all my life. You did

something with the Carl Sandburg house that kind of facilitated some of this,

didn't you? The Carl Sandburg Historic House is in Flat Rock, which isn't that far from my house.

So I was selected as the Carl Sandburg Writer-in-Residence. Unfortunately, that's when COVID

happened. And about a week or so prior to me moving in and doing my residency in the farmhouse,

which had a really nice view of the goat pen, the world famous goats that they raise over there,

we got noticed that Governor Cooper had called a state of emergency and a lot of places were

closing down. I wasn't able to spend the residency at the farmhouse. House, but I was able to do a

number of writing sessions online through the Carl Sandburg House.

And that's something that they continue to do. And then you got your master's. I got it from Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2023. And the reason I did that was I thought that maybe I wanted

to go into teaching because my kind of trajectory has been kind of backwards. Usually you get your

degree and then you start writing. Well, for me, I started writing and I got published in a whole

bunch of places, but I didn't have a degree. In 2017, I was actually shortlisted for Poet Laureate

of San Francisco. And I thought to myself, well, if I got Poet Laureate of San Francisco,

I wouldn't need a damn Duke. It came down to, I think it was Kim Shuck, Neely Cherkovsky, and myself. And Kim Shuck was chosen for that. Red Hawk Publications is where...

two books I was talking about have been published. And you were talking about COVID.

I was reading through some of this poetry, and it was bringing me right back to devastation.

But I was just that little bit further south from you. As bad as it was in Greenville,

it was worse heading up in your direction, and I think even worse up in Asheville.

And you mentioned your mother up in Bat Cave, and she had to be evacuated.

Well, Bat Cave is just a stone's throw away from Chimney Rock. Right. And National News was

covering Chimney Rock, how the deluge just wiped out buildings. That's a tourist destination,

too. It's very, I guess you can call it kind of quaint. Stores along the side of the road,

shops and things like that. And I know people. In fact, I have a co-worker. He's from New Orleans.

He moved out here. Because of Katrina. There's a poem about him in your book.

Oh boy. Bobby has a sunburnt smile and skin that has simmered under the Louisiana sun.

Fled New Orleans after Katrina. Delivers wheelchairs and commodes and hospital beds to those who

cannot flee. Tobacco burns his tongue as he spits a string of brown phlegm out the window.

It hits the ground and sizzles like pieces of regret. Speaks of little league dreams and a father

in the distance. With nothing but grass between them that he cut over and over again.

He can't flee the silence between them. Helene visited and created a wide empty space around his

home. Fallen trees and flooding. wide spaces between he and his neighbors,

which he closes by offering the splintered song of his hands as he spits out another wad of tobacco. So that was about a fellow that I work with, and he told me about kind of this distance

that he had with his father and that he would go to his father's house because they weren't living

together, they weren't living in the same house, and he would mow the grass. And it was kind of

metaphor for me because the relationship was kind of stunted. And the cutting of the grass to me

was almost like the relationship never had a chance to grow. But in the distance when Helene hit,

there were these wide distances caused by the damage, wide distances between Bobby and his

neighbors. What he does with his hands in trying to work and trying to mend bridges.

and closes the distance so that there's, I guess, what you could call redemption for not having

that relationship with his father. That was like a little lesson maybe for how people can think

about poetry a bit. Yeah, thinking in metaphor, thinking in patterns. When I mentioned this to

Bobby, he thought it was kind of weird. He kind of laughed when he was relating the story about

cutting the grass. and him and his father being so distant. I said, the grass is kind of a metaphor, wouldn't you think? I said that your relationship never got a chance to grow.

It's like cutting the grass. It never grew. And you were just going back and forth. But, like, Bukowski hated lawns. He didn't like lawns. He said that people gravitated towards lawns and

wanted a lawn because it didn't bother them. The lawn is just, it just sits there. It doesn't challenge you. It doesn't. Yeah, right. You can walk all over it. I was talking about all your poetry of place and people. And yet there's this one,

well, I guess it is about place. But it's maybe more of one of your esoteric poems that I really

loved called Swan and Noah. Yeah, I work in a warehouse in Hendersonville.

And one of the young ladies that I work with, is from that area, Swannanoa in Bakersville.

And it got totally washed away. I mean, there was a lot of damage. And so I never really spent a

lot of time in Swannanoa. I mean, I just, just in passing. But knowing the people from there and

who've been there just gives me a sense of what the place is. It got heavily damaged.

I mean, I would go there. through Swannanoa, it was just through passing, like going on the way to

somewhere else. But I would stop to get gas, and I saw a guy, I thought he was a Filipino guy,

and I'd say, hey, brother, how you doing? You Filipino? I said, no, I'm Cambodian, man. He kind of

had this vibe, and I talked to him a little bit. He says he'd been in Swannanoa for about 15 years

or so. So, I don't know, it's just not having spent time, I'm just, I try to pick up things from people that have been there. And just maybe the overall feeling that I have, and plus the name of

it's Swannanoa. There's this, it just kind of conjures up this feeling. It's kind of a lyrical name, Swannanoa. It kind of flows like water. So that's what I was trying to get at with the poem.

Swannanoa, the sound of it slides off the tub. The thought leaves a bite mark where the brown water

and mud. Made its way onto skin, sliding into a place quiet with splinters.

It's kindling a sibilance of water's rage in the endless throat of night.

I'm Tony Robles, co-host of Listen and Be Heard. This is Listen and Be Heard Radio.

Bakersville. Remember passing through a small town, a post office,

a few buildings. a restaurant with a few tables, a red and white checked tablecloth,

salt and pepper shakers that could tell by the lift and drop of your wrist if you were from here or

from there. The waitress wiped the tablecloth clean. Granules fell somewhere,

and Helene came, whose hand wiped across roads,

streets, buildings. and into memory. A small town I'd have forgotten if not for a girl,

a co-worker who was born and raised there, whose hands gathered clothes,

blankets, food, and love to send back home on a pallet of scuff marks and splinters,

hieroglyphics of the heart's deep chambers, en route to a place called Bakersville,

a place I'd visited once. whose restaurant had salt and pepper shakers,

and a red and white checked tablecloth.

How is it now around there? I haven't driven by there, but the guy that I did the other poem about

from New Orleans, Oh Boy, I was there with him on a delivery from my job, and we were actually at

that restaurant. I actually took pictures of the restaurant. I don't know if it's still there. I

mean, it was an extremely small town. I don't know if they had any more than six or seven buildings

there. There was a post office. It was very, very small, but I just remember we had, it was a hamburger, and they gave us tater tots. And I remember the white and red checkered

tablecloth. And I remember one of the girls that we worked with, that that's where she was from.

And what kind of gave me an idea of what that place was like was the fact that this young lady that

I worked with, had gotten a pallet of all these clothes and stuff to send back home. Yeah.

A place that had gotten really destroyed. But she was able to get all these donations on this huge

pallet of clothes and food and all these other things, right? Yeah. And so it was to me,

it just said more, it kind of nourished me in that... only thing I knew about the place was that I

had a hamburger there with some tater tots and red and white check with tablecloth. I could say

that she and Bobby probably fed me that poem. It wasn't me because I don't know anything about the

place. Like I said, I'm just passing through. Is that how you feel about most of the poems that you

write about people? Yeah, I'm kind of like my uncle. He would say that he was a traveler,

that you could meet somebody along the way. I'm just a... A stranger that meeting these people

along the way. Meeting and sort of interpreting through a lens of metaphors.

Yeah, like the hen wiping the granules off the checkered tablecloth. It was like, well, that's what

Helene did.

There you go. Yeah. But this small town place, it's like,

I remember it. I'd never been in a small town place like that. I'd never had tater tots with a hamburger before. And that happened, like, A lot of places were, and I mean, it was just total devastation, right?

That art district around Asheville. Oh, the River Arts District.

The River Arts District. I have to check on them, actually, the flood gallery.

I did a reading there. But they had moved to this other temporary spot because that whole...

I mean, again, there's some irony in there that they're actually called the Flood Gallery. And they

were flooded out. That's their actually... That was their... Well, shout out to... There's a couple

of guys that run something there called Poetry and Paint. Uh-huh. They have a thing there that...

Right. I think I heard about that. And a shout out to Ivy Rosen who does the series there that I

was a part of. Yeah, Tony. But so your new... is coming out,

Soup for the Hurricane. How can people get it? Where can they get it? It's on Red Hawk

Publications. It's redhawk, redhawk, H-A-W-K dot com,

redhawkpublications.com. Or if you just search Red Hawk Publications,

they're based in Hickory. And they publish a lot of poetry. They publish short story collections,

novels, the Poet Laureate of Hickory. North Carolina. They do a lot of good work over there.

Patty Thompson is the editor. Yeah, and listeners will actually find some interviews that we both

did, you and I, with quite a few Red Hawk writers. If people look back at the North Carolina, what was that called? The North Carolina writers? North Carolina Writers Network,

I think it was. I don't want to say the conference because they wouldn't even let us report on them

the last time. Yeah, North Carolina Writers. Yeah, I think it was the North Carolina Writers Network. Okay. Yeah, yeah. And how can people keep up with what you're doing, Tony? I have a kind of a blog, which really needs an overhaul, but it's [TonyRobles.wordpress.com](http://TonyRobles.wordpress.com).

This book is going to come out in time for National Poetry Month, so I've contacted some folks in a

couple of the cafes and venues here that are kind of interested.

Whatever money comes from the book, I'm just going to donate it all to organizations that are still

providing relief. Do you want to name some organizations that people might want to look into to

donate to? I'm still looking at that myself. I know United Way does work, but there's some other

organizations. I'm still researching that. There was a book that came out through Red Hawk. It was

called *Had I a Dove?* And it was an anthology of poetry about Helene.

And she... or still donating all the proceeds to whichever organization that's...

So people could look up that book and buy it. Oh, yeah. *Had I a Dove*. *Had I a Dove*.

Hilda Downer is the editor of that. Very nice lady and wonderful poet.

And you're saying that people could do the same with your book. Is it available for pre-order?

Yes, it is. Yeah. At Red Hawk. Yeah, Red Hawk Publications. 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 meanings,

the feelings behind it are taking root in their psyche, and they can't get rid of it.

There was a bookstore on the Spartanburg Highway. They had people in drag doing story time. I saw

they had people with picket signs protesting the drag story time, and I felt kind of bad because I

was there at the time, and I could tell that the proprietor, this young lady,

was pretty shaken. She was like, Like scared. I don't blame her because you never know what'll

happen. So what I try to do through poetry is I try to break through it and try to see what it is

that I can see. Like in this community here, right? You have people from Micronesia,

right? You have island people, you've got Latino people. I try to write about them because nobody

here really writes about them. They're almost like they're kind of invisible. So I'm writing about

going to the panaderia, right? to get a pan de mexicano,

right? Mexican bread, right? And I don't know Spanish, right? So I'm trying to speak in Spanish,

and they can understand a little bit, and they're more than happy to help me make my limited

Spanish better, right? So writing about that and adding to the landscape here,

I think that's my contribution. Well, thank you for that, Tony. And thank you for joining me here

today in the Audio Garden. It's been good to reconnect with you and see that you're thriving down

there in the South. Yeah, exactly. And same thing with you. You be well.

All right. Thank you. I appreciate it. Hey, what's up? This is Jay Rodriguez, Hernan Amido, Rodriguez, for listening to Be Heard. We are relaunching.

bringing Listen and Be Heard and Sound System Culture, my nonprofit, forth to the community to help

and just bring light into the world along with music and all the art. But we need your help.

We need your help big time from our hearts to keep this going. We're doing great work. And I was

speaking to Martha earlier. I was realizing that begging and asking are two very different things.

We ain't begging, but we're asking. And we really need your help. Everything works. If you can't

donate, just tell people about it. Or write to us and be on our show. Because it's your show as

much as it is ours. And we're trying to really be the solution to the things that we see around the

world that are needing in our community in New York City. But hopefully this will be a pilot for a

lot of other artists and free thinkers and writers. We're in Harlem. We're in Brooklyn. I focused

all my career on playing with great artists like Tito Puente and Cruz and Groove Collective, right? Ray Barreto. It's been wonderful. It's been wonderful. And now I'm into tuning up the world

to myself and to the world around me, along with Martha Cinader, who's a great writer and poet. And

we just want to be part of the solution in a time when we need it. We need it now more than ever,

but we always needed it. So we would love for you to help us out. and donate to Sound System

Culture and our Listen and Be Heard. There's so many amazing works that your donations are going to

help. Not only Listen and Be Heard, but our work as artists in New York City and around the world.

And Martha, tell us, tell us more. Tell us about your journey. We've been friends for a long time.

We've been friends since the 90s. That's right. I think we started collaborating at Listen and Be

Heard, the open mic. Oh. At the University of Missouri. I remember this. I just remember,

I remember Mission of Love. Right. Mission of Love came out of Listen and Mirrored. It was a workshop situation where I was learning this, people. Writing new episodes every week and getting people in the audience. I didn't know right. I see this is all new. You get to be here for me to be reminded because I was, you know. Listening and being heard is so basic, Hernan. And if we think about the landscape today, the media landscape. Just to be authentically listened to and heard is almost rare, which is really unfortunate, but that is what we are doing here. And we're good members of the arts community, I do believe. Listen and be heard because you can and must make a difference for the better in this world. Listen and be heard because your voice matters. But it also matters to grow yourself. And that's where listening comes in. You learn a lot from, you learn more from your ears, actually, than you do by talking about something. So definitely listen and be heard at the same time. And that's a really, really powerful name for a show. So thank you so much for, you know, coining that term. That's the world. That's America. That's our country. And it's still our country. And I believe in all of us who really care about the fact that we are together in all of this and this world and the globe itself. And I drink a bottle of fresh water inside. But I'm pretty. And I drink some more water from a plastic cup. Because I'm so thirsty. Mirror. And I need more water. I'm so thirsty. So give it to me. And let's not talk about food sovereignty. Let's look in the mirror. Not see me. Do I have no concern in mind? I don't have time.

Listen and Be Heard is a radio program that's part of the Pacifica Radio Network. We focus on

writers of all genres, poetry, children's, memoir, fiction, creative nonfiction.

And now we're taking on a lot of other elements, addressing concerns of indigenous communities,

music, and it just runs the gamut of everything that nourishes the soul.

In fact, I've been involved as one of the hosts, co-hosts. have some interviews coming up fairly

soon in the next couple of weeks so it's something that i really enjoy it's got a whole lot of pleasure and it's something i'm very passionate about and i'm glad that it's here over

here formerly jay rodriguez killing music all right coming up next uh excerpt from a performance we

did last week with the great bassist mel slocum along with Mike King on piano,

and Dano Peterson on drums from South Africa.

And we played at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem. They have a series, and we were happy to be

funded by the Jazz Foundation. And it was a great gig, man. If you haven't heard Mel Slocum,

you've got to hear. She's one of the great bassists of our times. So it's an honor. Mel Slocum Quartet. Myself on saxophone, Mike King on piano, Dano Peterson on drums.

Enjoy. Thank you very much, Martha Cinader, always keeping this music going,

this art for our community going through South System Culture and listen and be heard. Please

donate. Support us. We're doing this all ourselves. We need your help, okay?

All right, we keep it going. You're going to hear stuff here that you don't hear anywhere else.

This is Mel Slocum's original work, Nemesis. All right,

peace.

you

This is the Listen and Be Heard Hour, brought to you by Listen and Be Heard Network, a project of Sound System Culture.

One last story. My oldest brother says, oh man, Carlos Ortega walked up to the neighborhood to

visit to see how your father was doing. Carlos Ortega was my white grandfather, the Spanish guy,

and my grandmother was living with us. And she was laughing because she goes,

oh, look at him now. Because he was having trouble walking. And my grandmother was a black woman,

strong. She was laughing. I'm just, look at him. Look at your waltz. That's hilarious. He can barely walk. Look at him. And she was strong as an ox. On our most recent episode of Beyond

Borders, Judy and I welcomed Hernan to Auntie's table.

Wow, he told us more stories than we anticipated. And I invite you to join us at Auntie's Table.

You can find the onboarders at [listenandbeheard.net](http://listenandbeheard.net) or on your favorite community radio station.

And coming up next week, you're already familiar with the voice of this woman.

She was a guest of Tony Robles. couple seasons ago. But we hear her every week because she is the

voice of the banned book theme. And I'm so excited to welcome her next week to talk about her.

new children's book I got next now come with me play with me there's beauty all around to touch and

feel soft green grass tickles my feet skin tingles in the cool shade when the sun smiles wide my

toes get hot hot hot grandpa's hands feel rough and tough.

His arms wrap me up so tight and give my heart a cuddle.

I love, love, love his strong, soft hug. The faces on gulligrass dolls resting safe in Mama's room

are scratchy, but their bright cloth dresses feel so,

so soft and smooth. Can you feel that? That was Yvette Murray.

reading from Celebrate We, Gullah Geechee. And she will be my guest next week in the Audio Garden.

And I've been enjoying my little patio space back here off of my kitchen in my new home here in

Harlem, New York City.

And... big dreams for this little patio. It is quite a down size from the six and a half acres that

I was managing. And I sometimes miss my animals. I really do,

especially Bobo, my dog. But what I've been enjoying in the coming of spring is hearing all the

birds, which remind me. that even though I also hear sirens and airplanes and all sorts of city

noises, I have been hearing almost hawk-like sounds,

which I suspect are really blue jays, but I'm not sure. And I have a dove that's been visiting me,

and I see lots of robins as well. And it's just...

Good to remember that even here in the city, we are part of nature and nature is surrounding us and

poking its way through the cracks of concrete. And what I've been doing back here is actually

pulling up some of the bricks that paved this patio and sprinkling seeds where I'm pulling them up.

And so I have some herbs, some flowers,

and some hopes that soon it won't look so drab back here.

And there are some positive signs. I actually planted some garlic bulbs in the middle of winter,

and they're sprouting. And I planted a blueberry bush.

a few months ago and i see some little buds as well as a chokeberry is actually leafing out already

and the people who lived here before must have planted bulbs because i also have some tulips poking

up although they haven't actually blossomed yet so that's my little garden report and i hope that

all of you are doing a little bit of gardening too, and I would love to hear about it if you are.

And there's always a good reason to garden, to know how to grow a little food,

and just be aware of the part that we play in our food supply,

why we grow, why other people grow. what grows around us in our region,

what is still going to be available if our supply chains break down.

I think about all of these things, and so I am trying to grow food back here in my little patio.

I'm going to leave you with a few words of wisdom from Laura Lennick, author of Agricultural

Resilience. And I'll see you next week. The whole food system produces a pretty significant proportion of greenhouse gas emissions. Let's talk about in this country.

Okay. And when we waste food, we are wasting all of the resources that were put into.

creating that food and getting that food to your supermarket. And all of those resources have

associated greenhouse gas emissions. And so if we simply stop wasting food,

purchase what we need to eat, we send a signal back through the food system to reduce production.

In this country, about... between 30 and 40% of all edible food is wasted.

I'm going to say that again. 30 to 40% of what we buy is thrown away.

Thanks, as always, to Davian Dial at WPVM Radio in Asheville,

North Carolina, for introducing Listen and Be Heard to the broadcast airwaves, KCEI in Taos,

New Mexico, KEPJ in San Antonio, Texas, KHOI in Ames,

Iowa, and KFOI in Red Bluff, California, and other stations that are part of the Pacifica Affiliate

Network for cultivating the audio garden in your communities and our own Listen and Be Heard

network, host of WLBH.org. Please visit us at [listenandbeheard.net](http://listenandbeheard.net) and sign up for our email

newsletter and at our Listen and Be Heard YouTube channel, where you will find unedited video

interviews of our featured guests. My name is Martha Cinader, and I want to thank you for listening. And giving me the opportunity to be heard.

Promoting people who are spreading the kind of messages that we need to hear. We're promoting

authors and poets and spoken word artists. Really? Giving them a platform.

And I so believe that what we're doing is so basic to the quality of our lives.

And that's why I feel good asking, as you say, not begging, but asking our listeners to support the

work that we're doing. I feel like we're doing something a bit different, having to do with this kind of freeform understanding of how the arts enables our community. to heal in the sense that

they have a place to be able to be heard. And one of the things that I learned with you is that listening and hearing are two different things, right? We offer a place for authors to come and

actually speak about their book with someone who has actually taken the time to read it, which means they've... time to deeply listen to the message of that book and to bring it forth,

help to bring it forth with the writer by talking about it and not in a superficial way because somebody handed us a press release. Right.