

Christine

This podcast is produced on the ancestral homeland of the Nooksack and Lummi people. They have been its' stewards since time immemorial, respecting the land, river and ocean with the understanding that everything is connected, related and alive. We acknowledge the elders and their collective and individual plights and achievements. We consider the legacies of violence, displacement, migration and settlement that bring us together today and we pursue ongoing action to build lasting relationships and grow together so that all may prosper.

Neil

WCLS in Whatcom County presents Library Stories, a podcast to open your eyes to all the ways your local public libraries matter. Join us as we reveal the power of sharing at the library. I'm your host Neil McKay, Online Experience Coordinator for the Whatcom County Library System. And today...

Hello.

Mary

Hi there.

Neil

Hi. So I'm here with Mary Vermillion, my boss.

Mary

Hi, Neil.

Neil

Once again, we're here talking about the podcast.

Mary

Talking about the podcast, but you know it's a special podcast because it's a very special month.

Neil

It is. It's April. Which means it's National Poetry Month.

Mary

Yay. Yeah, seriously, yay. I love celebrating. I know we both do love celebrating poetry month, and you have a really special show this time, don't you?

Neil

I do. We actually have an actual real life poet too.

Mary

A real life poet.

Neil

It's not just...

Mary

and someone and someone with whom we work. One of our team members.

Neil

It's our coworker, Cynthia French, who's a Communications Specialist here at the library. But she also is a poet.

Mary

You know, Cynthia has a really interesting background coming from SLAM poetry, and she's a gifted writer. And so you guys have a really interesting conversation and we're even really fortunate because Cynthia reads one of her poems and I'm excited for people to get to meet her and to hear her talk about not only her work and what she does here for the library system, but also to listen to one of her poems and to hear her talk about what poetry is meant to her and her hopes for people to engage with the poetry in our collection, including the work of young poets who participate in a *Forest of Words*, which is our annual poetry anthology created by WCLS youth services. But you'll hear all about that.

Neil

Yeah. And that's and by young poets, we're talking poets from 13 to 18 years old.

Mary

Yes, really talented young writers. And then there's also another special event this month that you guys talk about, right?

Neil

That's right. Later this month, on Friday the 19th, my friend, our friend, Robert Lashley will be doing a poetry reading at the Deming Library at 7:00.

Mary

Yeah. And I know you know this is coming out kind of right, you know, right before that event. So everyone listening, please take note, look at your calendars. Jot it down. Make plans to head out to Deming on Friday, April 19th at 7:00 PM to celebrate National Poetry Month with us. And we're just very grateful to have local poet, nationally known poet, Robert Lashley, who will be out at the Deming Library to read his work, and that is a perfect setting for it. We know that the Deming community has a lot of talented poets in it and loves to celebrate poetry, so come on out to Deming.

Neil

Yeah, they all. They always turn out for a poetry event in Deming. If you haven't been to the Deming Library, this is a good reason to come out and just, you know, it's one of the beautiful libraries that we have and it's worth going just to visit the library but then throw, you know, the poetry of Robert Lasley on top and a chance to actually, you know hear him, reciting his stuff in person is icing on the cake.

Mary

Absolutely. So, take a nice spring drive out the Mount Baker Highway to the Deming Library and let's celebrate poetry this month.

Neil

Yeah. And meantime, let's meet Cynthia French.

Mary

Great. Thanks Neil.

(Interlude music plays)

Neil

Well, I'm here today with one of my coworkers, Cynthia French. How are you doing, Cynthia?

Cynthia

I am great, Neil, how are you?

Neil

I'm good. Tell us a little, you know, what you do here for the library system.

Cynthia

Sure, my official title is a Communications Specialist which kind of means I do a whole bunch of things around communicating, whether that's writing things like press releases or e-mail newsletter contents, or social media post content, or creating visually communicative things like event posters or graphics for the websites or social media. I manage a lot of the promotions of our library events. That probably takes the biggest chunk of my time and work is just making sure that we do the best job we can of making sure everybody knows about all of the amazing programs that we have going on in our libraries.

Neil

Wow. Yeah. And you do a fine job. So, you do a lot of writing, and you also do graphics. That's a talent that I don't have really, graphic design is something I look up to you and the graphic department.

Cynthia

Yeah, there's basically there's two of us and the other Communications Specialist, Amy Jones, she does a lot of our larger kind of branding items. So, when you see the book mobile go down the street, she's the one that designs the wrap for the bookmobile. When you get Explorations in the mail, she designs the layout for that magazine, so kind of like those larger things, a lot of times when you see the bus go by and you see a WCLS advertisement on the bus. She designs a lot of those larger campaigns that really do the messaging for the whole library system.

And then I do kind of more of the things that are happening day-to-day. That's, I guess, that's the easiest way to kind of differentiate between the two of us. So, like for this week example I am doing posters to promote an upcoming kids program about reading a book about salmon and they'll be doing a, like a story time as well as an art project and so finding the right artwork, putting together the posters. That event's happening in a lot of different branches, so making sure that each branch has all the materials they need to get them out to the schools and then creating Facebook pages and Instagram graphics and all of those things to spread the word. That's a big one coming up. We also have ongoing project in some of the libraries where there is a book artist who is teaching people how to

make their own blank books and so we I think we have one more of those events coming up.

Neil

Yeah. So yeah, just tons of events all year round and if you and the audience have heard about it, you can probably thank Cynthia for that.

Cynthia

It's always fun for me when I get to actually go into the library. We have digital displays up in the library that feature advertisements for some of our library programs and our upcoming events. And so the slides will go through and I'm just sitting there going "I made that. I made that one too. I made that one." So, it's kind of fun to see your work in action as you go through and check things out.

Neil

Yeah. So tell me about the, you do some work with Enewsletters.

Cynthia

Mm-hmm. Yep. I work in a number of ways with that, but primarily with our Read On newsletter, which is a monthly reading recommendations, a newsletter that's put together. The content comes from our collection librarians, Emma and Mary and they, Mary puts together all of the 'what's new list', so 'new fiction', 'new nonfiction', 'new ebooks', 'new audio books', 'new DVD's', all of those kinds of things get put into different reading recommendation lists that you can find on the website as well. And then Emma puts together more kind of thematic book lists or pick lists. They're not always all books. And so, for example, we might have a gardening theme or might have the, I think, last month we had a spring theme, so there was a picks list about bird watching, which you don't, like I wouldn't have thought about that, but some of those books on there made me go "Hey, maybe I am supposed to be a bird, bird watcher. Or maybe I can learn something about reading this bird watcher memoir even if I never go look for a bird." So it really kind of makes you think, or at least me, I think "Wow, that's really interesting."

There was a recent Read On that centered around Whatcom Reads, which we just finished up last month and one of the book lists on there were punk rock memoir books and because our Whatcom Reads book was based, you know, involved a little bit of that and so I think I've read four of the books from that list so far, because a lot of them are kind of that

time period when I was growing up and getting into music. So, you know, Sleater Kinney, Hole. Some of those bands that I, that I still love today, so.

Neil

Sure. And reading their memoirs probably gives you a whole different perspective on the, on your own youth.

Cynthia

Mm-hmm. Right. And I during a lot of time, you know that Sleater Kinney was touring around in the especially in their early days. I was also touring around the country doing poetry slam. Yeah, and well, not quite as glamorous, I think as rock shows, you know, we poetry slam performers tended to feature at open mics where, you know, there might, there might be anywhere from 6 to 100 people there as opposed to a crowd of, you know, 3000 at the club or whatever. But still kind of fun.

There's a lot of crossover I think between spoken word poets and music. Well, I don't think I could ever write song lyrics, I think that there's still a lot of inspiration that comes out of music for people that are writing. And one of, I'm actually working on a book list for our next Read On which will be this month all about poetry and poetry collections that are inspired by or influenced by or have some odes to different types of music.

Neil

Now this is good segue. Thank you for setting that up because it is April right now, which is National Poetry Month and as you kind of alluded to here, you are a poet. And why don't you give us an idea of some of the ways that your poetry career has worked its way into the library system.

Cynthia

Well, one of the one of the really fun ways here at WCLS is that I because of my position I adopted the projects of working with Youth Services to publish their teen poetry and teen art anthologies each year. When I first arrived here, we were doing the teen poetry anthology and publishing it in a very similar way to the art anthology. It had a lot of art in it, and there were poems and, and I worked with our Youth Services department to say "what if we made our teen poetry book look more like a poetry book?" Like look, you know on the shelf. Like, make it match, you know, what you're seeing there.

And so we redesigned it five years ago and it is now it's a, you know, same size and shape as every other poetry book that you'll, you know. I would say the majority of poetry books

you'll see on the shelf and this will be the 6th year that I'm designing a *Forest of Words* and it is getting ready to come out. The publication party is on May 10th.

Neil

May 10th, that is coming up soon. So let's back up a little bit about and talk about *A Forest of Words*. So this is an anthology of poems created by teens in the county, in the community tell me about that.

Cynthia

Yeah. So it's a project that predates me, but they ask for teens to submit poetry that they have written grades 6 through 12, you can submit one or two original poems. So, it needs to be your own work. And you can drop them off at the library, or you can submit them online and we take submissions every year from January 1st through March 15th.

And then there is a kind of an editorial committee or review committee that reads all of the poems and selects the poems to go into our collection and then part of my job then is to take that and design the book. So, take all the poems, do the formatting of the poems make them look nice on the page, figure out the order of the poem. And then I also, we go back to our teen art anthology and take a look at art that was submitted that kind of connects to the poetry in some way, that kind of helps tell the story of the book. And then we, I design a cover for the poetry book from that art that was submitted in the fall. So currently right now we're in the final stages. We send the book to the printer on Monday, so we have the cover design narrowed down to three different designs that we're choosing between and the poems themselves have all gone out to all of the poets to say "congratulations your poem is in the book. Please double check it for any you know, misspellings of your name or any changes that you need to make." And so we're in that final editing stages. So, it's really quite fun to look at it as a whole.

Neil

So and the end product is an actual book of poetry, and every teen that is, that has a poem in there can say I'm a published poet now.

Cynthia

So, every person that is published, all of each poet, will get their own personal copy of the book. But then we also put the book into our library collection. It also, copies get sent to the area schools that have libraries as well, so they can have it in their collection. But yeah, you could go on to the website or into the library right now and check out last year's *A*

Forest of Words or the one three years ago. You can also go on to our website. We have an electronic version.

Neil

It's really an amazing thing that this library system does for the for the kids of the community and not just that, but the Whatcomics publication too.

Cynthia

Well, Whatcomics is the art publication that we do. It's a wonderful collection that we do each year. It's a slightly larger book and it's printed in full color. It's also available. You can check it out. It includes anime, which we love, comic strips, which we love, but we also get, we get digital art, we get paintings, you know, watercolor, acrylic, colored pencil drawings, sketches, basically any kind of art you can think of. We've had collage in the past. Any and all type of art we get.

And again that's also for the teens. So, it's grade 6 through 12. We try to vary the types of work that's represented over the years for the cover. We try to make sure that the artwork as well as the poetry is diverse. It represents the full range of ages and ability of our artists that there's a lot of unique perspective and voices that are coming in. So for me, like with the poetry. I really grab on to like a really good, strong unique image, something that that poet's the only person that could have written that because it's their story, it's their image. And I think I'm attracted to the same kind of artwork too. Like that's the only person that could have drawn that or could have made that picture. You know, a lot of us can draw a rainbow, but drawing, you know, the rainbow in the place that you were at that moment in time, feeling the feelings that you were feeling at that moment. That's what makes it really interesting.

Neil

Sure, it's the right rainbow.

Cynthia

Yeah, it's only yours.

Neil

Yeah, that's great. And what I'm hearing from you is an impressive amount of intentionality in taking the work that these kids have offered to us and packaging it in a way that is the best presentation of it.

Cynthia

Yeah.

Neil

That's really a great thing for the kids themselves.

Cynthia

You know, we want them to be proud of it. Like you want them to be like “Yeah! You know, I'm published in this book” or “my arts in this publication” and yeah, you want them to feel proud about it. We want people to see it in the library and check it out or look at it, we want it to be treated like you know another book on the shelf, we want it. You know, we want it to stand out for its quality. And the young people, you know, young people everywhere have a lot to say. And so giving them these different platforms to say what they need to say, I think is one of the really cool things that our Youth Services Department does with these programs. And I'm just happy to be you know, one of the creative people that gets to help take all of the pieces and make it into something that looks and feels really awesome.

Neil

So, when *A Forest of Words* is published, there's going to be an event, is that you, can tell us about that?

Cynthia

Yep, it will take place at the Ferndale Library. OK, we are doing it after hours at the library in the main library area.

Neil

Right among the stacks. Yeah. OK.

Cynthia

Right among the stacks. And so it'll be at 6:30 on May 10th. And that will be the first opportunity that the students will get to pick up their personal copy of their book. We also print broadsides of all of the poems and have those on display throughout the library. So you can come and get your book and then wander around and read some of the poems. And then if you want to read your poem in front of the group, if you want to be part of the publication party, you can sign up to read your poem. You don't have to. We don't make you do it, but.

Neil

That's for the teens who are in the book.

Cynthia

Yes. Yeah. And you know, and each year, you know, there are poets that that do want to read theirs. They're poets that aren't quite sure. And then they either do or don't sign up. And there are some that are just like, "no, I just want to listen everybody else" and either things fine. But we just want to give them the space and we want to let the rest of the community hear them, you know, hear them say their poems cause when we're editing these and we're putting them together, you know, we are reading their work in our voices and sometimes we, our voices are very similar and sometimes they aren't. So, we can only guess, you know, what somebody's going to sound like until we hear them. So.

Neil

Yeah. Well. So, let's move on to a couple of reading recommendations from you. We like to ask everybody on the show, give us something, give us something to walk away with. So, what would you recommend in terms of poetry books?

Cynthia

Well, I believe that there's so many different kinds of poetry that's out there and a lot of, I think a lot of people are intimidated just by the genre, so I would say one of the poetry books that we just recently added is called *Rock Stars* by Matt Mason, who is the current poet laureate in Nebraska, and it is a collection that's basically a chunk of time in his life, so they're very personal poems, but they connect like each one is like a track on a cassette tape. So some of them relate very much to a song that would, that was playing during the moment that the this thing happened that he writes about or, you know, sometimes he's having a dialogue between him and the musician. But it has kind of a sense of nostalgia, and I think it also using pop culture, it's very accessible for people. So it's not, you know, it's not poetry that you have to, you know, have a dictionary sitting next to you or you have to have, you know, read all of Williams Shakespeare to understand like it's very accessible, it's fun. It goes through things, you know, subjects of, like, fatherhood, marriage, relationships, public speaking, travel, so a lot of things that a lot of people are, you know, familiar with, so very accessible, very fun, a little bit rock rock'n'roll as well.

Neil

What's the name of it again?

Cynthia

Sure. It's called *Rock Stars* by Matt Mason. We do not have the audio version of that and I tell people sometimes like it's sometimes it's fun to get both the physical book and an audio book of poetry. If you're like, not used to reading it. So then you can kind of like, look at the words and hear them at the same time. So, we do have a few books that, where we have like both. One of my favorites in our collection is by Franny Choi. It's called *The World Keeps Ending and The World Goes On*. And we have that both as an audio book on Libby as well as a physical book. And it's I think her 4th book of poetry. Really, really wonderful collection about the state of the world right now and we also have one of my favorites from the last couple of years is by Warsan Shire and it's called *Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head*, bless the daughter raised by a voice in her head. It's also very strong and that one I loved having the audiobook available because there are a number of cultural things, cultural words that I just didn't know how to pronounce, and so you know, I was, I read the book and then when I listened to the audiobook, I was like, "oh, OK, that's how you pronounced that." And so it kind of I don't know, it gave it a different lyricism, a different feel to it.

We also have some really wonderful, if you are, you know, somebody that really enjoys older, less contemporary, less modern poetry, we have some wonderful things in our collection as well, from like Allen Ginsberg and Walt Whitman. And you can look those up as well. It's fun like I said to hear these poets that maybe you grew up with, but hear them reading their work.

I'm really excited. I have not read this book yet, but it sounds amazing. Mentioning how there's different types of books, different types of collections. This one is called *Information Desk* and it's by Robin Schiff and it's a book-length poem. So, it's an epic poem about to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. And so, it's basically Robin Schiff had worked there at the information desk and this whole book of book is 1 poem that takes you in and out of the museum in very intricate ways and I don't, when you when I hear epic you think about like the *Odyssey*.

Neil

Bayo wolf

Cynthia

Yeah, so like having like EPIC applied to like

Neil

The museum.

Cynthia

Museum. Like it sounds really cool. So I'm on the holds list for that one.

Neil

Yeah, yeah, must be popular if you're having to wait for it.

Cynthia

Right.

Neil

OK. Again, you are a poet yourself and you have a few poems. Is there something that you'd like to kind of end this up with?

Cynthia

Sure, yeah.

Neil

This is a rare treat. We don't usually get a poet or any kind of author reading their stuff.

Cynthia

This one is regional. It is called 'The Really Big One'.

The Petrified Forest off the coast of Oregon pokes its treetops out of the water as proof that the shoreline used to be further out. Proof that the water rested west of here, the scientists say that the really big one is coming. It has come before, they say, swallowed a whole island of people who only exist now in an anthropologist notes and stories passed down from neighboring island people. The scientists say that the really big one could come next year or 20 years from now. Most likely in February. Most likely there will be little warning. You might notice a change in the behavior of the animals, they say, but we have no alarms, no way of running. The scientists say that when we do realize it's happening, we'll have about 20 minutes to prepare, 20 minutes to race out onto the highway to try to reach the mountains. Seattle will be crushed, the port washed away, the Space Needle pushed over all those expensive condominiums, like cardboard to a pet bulldog in a Godzilla costume. When I went home to visit my parents, my sister called and asked me if Mom was crazy. "Is mom crazy?" She asked with my mother listening, I replied simply "Yes." My cousin came over with her daughter and we dragged Mom out of the house to dinner. She was convinced we were being followed. Overheard the people in the next booth plotting to do something.

The nervous couple, obviously on a first date eavesdropping on us. She would only speak in whispers. We tried to change the subject. I ordered another beer. In my journal I wrote every conversation with her reads like a goodbye letter. I saved what I could, pulled the blue dress from the garbage sell pile, the one my father had made for her in China. I packed up the hand crocheted blanket, the teal one from Thailand. She gave me an envelope full of copies of the house deed and insurance papers, a list of relatives I think I might have met at one time or another. Here at the park between Bellingham and Fairhaven, I look out at the water. The blue sky opens like a new page and I imagine the wind like Van Gogh's brushstrokes curling around my face. If I concentrate hard enough, I can feel the heat of the sun and can sit here for a minute or two longer, if that. It's that in between season time of year when you want so desperately to be outside, but it's not quite summer, especially on the water. But the water pulls at us invites us to ogle her curves. We plant seeds that get blown inland. We build houses with large windows. We pretend that the scientists are wrong. Ignore all the signs. We've done all we could. The ball is clearly no longer in my court. The blue dress is hanging in the closet of my second floor apartment, surely that will save her from sinking too quickly.

Neil

Wow. Wow. OK, that was powerful.

Cynthia

It's that time of year right now when you know, too like when you just, I don't know about you, but I just every time the sun comes out, I'm like, oh, let's go to the water and then it's like, whoa, it's cold out here.

Neil

Wow.

Cynthia

It's really fun seeing like the themes that have come up in the teen anthology. There's always themes that seem really strong year to year, that change. And this year there's a lot of space. Looking up into the sky, the moon, a lot of kind of that connection with. Yeah, the astronauts. And there's always a lot of nature connection but it is really interesting and I think about that when I look you know when I am at the waterfront.

Neil

Interesting.

Cynthia

And just like that, you know, here in Bellingham, here in Whatcom County, we have that, like, you know, endless horizon. And so it's, I think that that probably does affect a lot of our writing.

(interlude music playing)

Neil

Would you call yourself a slam poet?

Cynthia

It's really, it's really interesting naming ourselves right? I would say that I'm a writer and a performer because I have spent 20 years or so traveling and competing in poetry slams, I actually still do sometimes. I'm headed down to The Bigfoot Regional Poetry Slam for the second year in a row down in Portland, OR.

Neil

Well, that's right. Now, now wait a minute. I realized that we made a fundamental mistake here. We gotta explain what a poetry slam is.

Cynthia

Yeah. Ohh yeah. So, a poetry slam is an event that was created by a construction worker from Chicago named Mark Smith. And if you're part of the poetry slam world. You would yell back at me "So what?" Because that was what you did whenever somebody would say that and basically it was a gimmick. He made-up a gimmick, a parlor game, because he wanted to create a better audience for poetry, you know, going to an open mic and only having, you know, the ten other poets in the room paying attention to what you're saying on stage wasn't good enough, so if you turn it into a competition, if you make it into a game, then people get more interested. They wanna support the winner. They wanna, you know, and it also I think pressures the artist to how you get better? How do you improve? How do you, you know, appeal? How do you, you know, what are you doing with your work? Yeah.

Neil

How do you win? Now these open mics generally, where do they take place?

Cynthia

You know bars, coffee shops, university conference rooms, anywhere that you can have space. So, the poetry slam that was started in Chicago grew til they had the first national Poetry Slam, I think was between Chicago, San Francisco and maybe Ann Arbor. Those were like the three cities that started growing things and it grew into this international

competition, there was an organization called Poetry Slam Incorporated. It ran the tournaments and then at the tournament you competed in brackets like the final four, you know, against other teams and got down to the last four teams out of those 72, the last four on the finals night stage for you know all the guts and glory and probably like a \$500 prize, like it wasn't big money. Right?

Neil

That you had to divide them on your team.

Cynthia

Yes. After you paid for the hotel and the plane tickets, all of that. But yeah, it wasn't necessarily a lucrative thing. But it is still happening even though Poetry Slam Incorporated doesn't exist, there are different communities that are still hosting, there's still a National Women's Poetry Slam that I believe is in Texas. There was an event called the Southern Fried Poetry Slam, which is kind of takes place. It would rotate between like New Orleans and Florida and down there and there is always a competition out on the East Coast, but yeah, so the Bigfoot Regional Poetry Slam.

Teams will sign up and you either have a team that you've put together yourself or you have a venue where you've had a competition through the year and your team has won its spot. So, we don't have a regular poetry slam here in Bellingham. So, I just asked some of my friends to join me and last year it was a birthday, my birthday present, because we couldn't get together for my birthday. So, I reached out to kind of semi-retired poetry slam poets from my heyday and said "will you be on my team?" So jokingly we called ourselves the Biddies and we were the Return of the Biddies. And so this year our team name is the Biddies Strike Back and my team includes two poets from Idaho, Cheryl Magdalena and Tara Brenner, and two poets from currently in Pittsburgh, Adriana S Ramirez and Jesse Welch. And then we have a coach this year who's coming from Iowa, Michael Schaefer. And so we're all get gunna, we've been practicing on the zoom together and we'll meet up in Portland and compete against all of these other amazing poets from all over California. So I don't think I answered your question though. What is a poetry slam?

So generally speaking, there's a time limit in traditional poetry slam rules, it's 3 minutes. You have 3 minutes to perform a poem that you created on stage with no music, no costumes and it can be an individual or group performance at the Poetry Slam competition, and then they pick five random people in the audience, preferably who don't know any of the poets and preferably don't know what's going on even. Like it's their first time there to be judges and they give them all score cards and you go up and you perform your poem and these five random people give you a numerical score from zero to 10. They

drop the high, low score, add the three in the middle, and that's your score. And so in team competition you get to send up four poems, and at the end of the four rounds, whoever whichever team has the highest cumulative score wins that battle. And then it goes on in tournament style where we have two days of prelims and then the top four teams go to finals and that's how Portland is run.

Neil

Yeah. OK. So that's great. So. So what I hear is it's a gimmick. It's a popularity contest. It involves being in a bar.

Cynthia

Hopefully it's not a popularity contest. That's why we want the judges to not know anything.

Neil

Well, yeah, that makes sense. Yeah, you're right. I stand corrected. Am I missing anything else about what we want to talk about poetry month, and there's other events going on, but.

Cynthia

Yeah, I know that we have a really awesome reading coming up in Deming with local poet Robert Lashley.

Neil

Yes.

Cynthia

Do you have the date to that off the top of your head? You might have to.

Neil

That is the 17th, Saturday, 19th, that is the 19th, Saturday. That's a Friday. It's a Friday that is. Thank you.

Cynthia

And it's. So Robert Lashley will be at the Deming Library on Friday, April 19th. At what time?

Neil

I like how you did that. You're kind of giving that back to me after messing that up. I may leave that whole section in. Thank you for that. Oh, it's at 7:00 o'clock to 8:30 in the

evening. And there's a, you know, there's a huge poetry community in Deming, which they've often had poetry events going there and it's always well supported. So, there'll be a lot of people coming down to cheer on, Robert.

Cynthia

Yeah. Yes. Yeah. And I think it's great for Robert to be able to get out into the county as well. He just released a new publication this last year.

Neil

And his first novel.

Cynthia

And yeah, and his first novel. And yeah, his if you haven't, you know, reading his work is really strong and I would encourage people to check out his books in our collection. But hearing him perform, you know, talking about, he also has, music influences his work in a lot of ways, and he just has a really musical way of performing and I always get something unique out of each, you know, each time I'm able to see Robert read his work.

Neil

Yeah, he's very powerful. When he just speaks like he just, you know, bleeds all over the microphone. He's just so open. Yeah, and that's Friday, April 19th, 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the Deming Library. And I know he'll have books for sale. He will be bringing books that he will be able to sell you if you really want to take something, take a piece of Robert home with you.

Cynthia

Have him sign it. Yeah, all that.

Neil

You yeah. Anyway, so it's been a it's gonna be a great poetry month. We're right in the middle of it already right now. Happened quickly.

Cynthia

What I love about poetry is that it is, there are so many kinds of poetry. Most poems are shorter, you know, unless you got, have the epic poem and all of our libraries have a poetry section. So, if you haven't read any poetry since high school, or if you, you know, or in the last year, the next time you're at the library just go down the poetry section and just pick one.

Neil

Look for a cover.

Cynthia

Yeah, pick one. Cover, a title, something. Open up a couple and see if you know if the first line grabs you and just take it home.

Neil

That's a great idea. All right. Well, Cynthia, thank you for coming on the show and giving us all of your poetic wisdom.

Cynthia

Thanks for having me.

Neil

Yeah. Well, that's our show. I want to thank Cynthia French for coming by to chat today and as always, thanks to my boss, Mary Vermillion. And since I always leave Mary a quotation and it is poetry month, here's a stanza that's appropriate on this sunny April day while I'm finishing up my tasks. It's from the poem 'Spring in New Hampshire' By Claude McKay. Too green the springing April grass, too blue the Silver speckled sky for me to linger here. Laughs while happy winds go laughing by wasting the golden hours indoors washing windows and scrubbing floors. Thanks friends.