

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Imtiaz Dharker
Thursday 19 March 2026



1

00:00:00,920--> 00:00:02,428

Welcome, everyone,

2

00:00:02,452--> 00:00:04,228

to today's event:

3

00:00:04,252--> 00:00:08,236

How I write – in conversation
with Imtiaz Dharker.

4

00:00:08,261--> 00:00:09,628

I'm Dean Atta.

5

00:00:09,652--> 00:00:11,868

I'm a BAFTA
award-winning screenwriter

6

00:00:11,892--> 00:00:14,908

and Stonewall Book
Award-winning author from London,

7

00:00:14,932--> 00:00:18,111

best known for my

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young adult novel in verse,

8

00:00:18,135--> 00:00:19,428

The Black Flamingo,

9

00:00:19,452--> 00:00:23,000

and stop motion animation,

Two Black Boys in Paradise.

10

00:00:23,000--> 00:00:28,068

My poetry explores my Greek

Cypriot and Jamaican heritage,

11

00:00:28,092--> 00:00:29,988

as well as my queer identity.

12

00:00:30,012--> 00:00:33,348

I'm a patron of

LGBT+ History Month

13

00:00:33,372--> 00:00:36,468

and the Chair of the Poetry

and Spoken Word Group

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14

00:00:36,492--> 00:00:38,508

of the Society of Authors.

15

00:00:38,532--> 00:00:40,828

I've published three
young adult novels in verse,

16

00:00:40,852--> 00:00:42,338

two poetry collections,

17

00:00:42,363--> 00:00:44,908

two picture books and a memoir,

18

00:00:44,932--> 00:00:47,468

and my debut adult
novel, Big Man,

19

00:00:47,492--> 00:00:49,271

will be published
by Cipher Press

20

00:00:49,295--> 00:00:52,000

in September 2026.

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21

00:00:52,000--> 00:00:54,548

And for my audio description,

22

00:00:54,572--> 00:00:58,365

I would describe myself
as a mixed race man.

23

00:00:58,389--> 00:01:00,028

I have cropped hair,

24

00:01:00,052--> 00:01:02,548

a short beard, and, um,

25

00:01:02,572--> 00:01:04,348

I am wearing glasses.

26

00:01:04,372--> 00:01:06,028

I have a big smile

27

00:01:06,052--> 00:01:08,468

and I'm wearing
a navy blue shirt

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28

00:01:08,492--> 00:01:10,424

and a gold chain.

29

00:01:10,449--> 00:01:13,005

And today's event

30

00:01:13,029--> 00:01:18,108

is part of our #SoAatHome
Spring/Summer 2026 programme

31

00:01:18,132--> 00:01:22,948

in conjunction with the Society of
Authors Poetry and Spoken Word Group.

32

00:01:22,972--> 00:01:24,908

The event is free for all,

33

00:01:24,932--> 00:01:26,628

but if you can afford to,

34

00:01:26,652--> 00:01:30,716

please consider donating to the

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Society of Authors Access Fund

35

00:01:30,741--> 00:01:32,668

which provides grants to authors

36

00:01:32,692--> 00:01:35,908

to travel and subsistence,

37

00:01:35,932--> 00:01:38,228

childcare costs,

and access needs

38

00:01:38,252--> 00:01:40,348

so that they are not barriers

39

00:01:40,372--> 00:01:41,628

for authors taking part

40

00:01:41,652--> 00:01:44,148

in events, residencies,

and retreats.

41

00:01:44,172--> 00:01:47,548

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We suggest a
minimum donation of £5.

42

00:01:47,572--> 00:01:51,508

Sarah will post the
donation link in the chat.

43

00:01:51,532--> 00:01:54,578

You can also help the
Authors Access Fund

44

00:01:54,602--> 00:01:57,388

by making a purchase
on our virtual bookstore

45

00:01:57,412--> 00:01:59,028

on Bookshop.org,

46

00:01:59,052--> 00:02:00,668

where you'll find
books by writers

47

00:02:00,692--> 00:02:03,000

taking part in our

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events programme.

48

00:02:03,000--> 00:02:06,788

Sarah will post a link to
this in the chat as well.

49

00:02:06,812--> 00:02:10,108

Today's session
is 45 minutes long,

50

00:02:10,132--> 00:02:12,668

including a 10-minute Q&A.

51

00:02:12,692--> 00:02:15,708

So please post your questions

52

00:02:15,732--> 00:02:18,000

and I will read
them out to Imtiaz.

53

00:02:18,000--> 00:02:20,828

To turn your captions on,

54

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00:02:20,852--> 00:02:24,028

if you like live subtitles.

55

00:02:24,052--> 00:02:26,788

And then this event

is being recorded

56

00:02:26,812--> 00:02:28,668

and you'll be able

to watch it back

57

00:02:28,692--> 00:02:31,108

on the Society of

Authors Vimeo channel

58

00:02:31,132--> 00:02:34,465

and the resources page

on our members' website.

59

00:02:34,490--> 00:02:37,228

So, again, if you

have any questions,

60

00:02:37,252--> 00:02:39,668

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please do post
them in the Q&A box.

61

00:02:39,692--> 00:02:43,628

You can post them anonymous
anonymously if you prefer,

62

00:02:43,652--> 00:02:46,851

but do post your
general comments

63

00:02:46,875--> 00:02:48,468

in the chat box throughout.

64

00:02:48,492--> 00:02:50,428

If you put questions
in the chat box,

65

00:02:50,452--> 00:02:53,000

Sarah will move them
over to the Q&A for us.

66

00:02:53,000--> 00:02:56,943

So, I would now like to

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introduce you all to today's guest,

67

00:02:56,968--> 00:02:58,378

Imtiaz Dharker.

68

00:02:58,402--> 00:03:02,228

Imtiaz is a poet,
artist, video film-maker,

69

00:03:02,252--> 00:03:06,388

awarded the Queen's Gold
Medal for Poetry in 2014

70

00:03:06,412--> 00:03:09,000

with poems featured
on radio and television,

71

00:03:09,000--> 00:03:11,228

as well as London Underground,

72

00:03:11,252--> 00:03:12,988

uh, Glasgow billboards,

73

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00:03:13,012--> 00:03:14,708

and Mumbai Buses.

74

00:03:14,732--> 00:03:16,708

Her seven collections include

75

00:03:16,732--> 00:03:19,828

Over the Moon and her

latest, The Shadow Reader,

76

00:03:19,852--> 00:03:22,000

from Bloodaxe Books.

77

00:03:22,000--> 00:03:23,471

Hello, Imtiaz!

78

00:03:23,496--> 00:03:25,508

-Hello, Dean. Hi.

79

00:03:25,532--> 00:03:28,538

-Would you please do an

audio description for us?

80

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00:03:28,563--> 00:03:31,148

-Yes. I am South Asian.

81

00:03:31,172--> 00:03:32,628

I have black hair.

82

00:03:32,652--> 00:03:35,628

I'm wearing a kind
of purple-blue dress

83

00:03:35,652--> 00:03:38,708

and I have a smile,
but not as big as Dean's.

84

00:03:38,732--> 00:03:40,000

[laughter]

85

00:03:40,000--> 00:03:42,188

-Oh, it's a lovely smile.

86

00:03:42,212--> 00:03:45,548

And there's a lot of
purple in your room.

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87

00:03:45,572--> 00:03:47,348

Uh... Purple sofa, purple--

88

00:03:47,372--> 00:03:49,118

purple top that

you're wearing as well.

89

00:03:49,143--> 00:03:50,508

-I call it raspberry.

90

00:03:50,532--> 00:03:51,988

-Ah, okay.

91

00:03:52,012--> 00:03:53,668

Yeah, raspberry.

92

00:03:53,692--> 00:03:55,628

Um, so where are you

93

00:03:55,652--> 00:03:57,548

geographically right now?

94

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00:03:57,572--> 00:03:58,931

And if you wouldn't mind,

95

00:03:58,955--> 00:04:01,682

would you show us your space?

96

00:04:01,707--> 00:04:05,148

-Oh, I can't do that

because this isn't mobile, but

97

00:04:05,172--> 00:04:10,000

I'm in London in the Barbican.

98

00:04:10,000--> 00:04:13,988

It's on quite a high

floor in a tower.

99

00:04:14,012--> 00:04:17,308

So I look out over the horizon

100

00:04:17,332--> 00:04:20,956

270 degrees of... of London.

101

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00:04:20,981--> 00:04:24,268

So, on the west,

I can see the...

102

00:04:24,292--> 00:04:26,188

the, uh...

103

00:04:26,212--> 00:04:27,911

What used to be the GPO tower,

104

00:04:27,935--> 00:04:29,988

I can't remember

what it's called now.

105

00:04:30,012--> 00:04:33,411

All the way over

Parliament Hill,

106

00:04:33,436--> 00:04:35,748

um...

107

00:04:35,772--> 00:04:38,228

Alexandra Palace,

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108

00:04:38,252--> 00:04:41,308

the Arsenal [inaudible]

tower in the east,

109

00:04:41,332--> 00:04:44,028

the Gherkin and all of those...

110

00:04:44,052--> 00:04:48,868

those bits of the city that

are quite close... close in.

111

00:04:48,892--> 00:04:52,508

And I see a lot of sky

112

00:04:52,532--> 00:04:55,358

and a lot of

sunrises and sunsets.

113

00:04:55,383--> 00:04:56,588

-Yes.

114

00:04:56,612--> 00:04:58,508

And I mean, the

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city does come up

115

00:04:58,532--> 00:05:00,845

in your writing quite a
lot, and your night walks,

116

00:05:00,869--> 00:05:03,148

and we may get
to that a bit more.

117

00:05:03,172--> 00:05:07,068

But before we kind of go
to the poems themselves,

118

00:05:07,092--> 00:05:11,000

um, which you'll give us a reading
towards the end before the Q&A,

119

00:05:11,000--> 00:05:13,148

can you tell us a bit about,

120

00:05:13,172--> 00:05:17,000

like, what you have
around you when you write?

121

00:05:17,000--> 00:05:19,027

-I try to keep everything...

122

00:05:19,051--> 00:05:21,748

I need to have everything
really uncluttered

123

00:05:21,772--> 00:05:23,388

if I'm going to write.

124

00:05:23,412--> 00:05:26,188

My desk is quite bare.

125

00:05:26,212--> 00:05:29,118

I... I have to have
everything cleared

126

00:05:29,142--> 00:05:33,628

of anything that feels
untidy or out of place to me.

127

00:05:33,652--> 00:05:35,445

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Except for the books.

128

00:05:35,470--> 00:05:36,470

-Yes.

129

00:05:36,494--> 00:05:37,908

-And the books...

130

00:05:37,932--> 00:05:41,908

There are sets and
sets of bookshelves,

131

00:05:41,932--> 00:05:43,358

but they're never enough.

132

00:05:43,382--> 00:05:47,908

I'm sure this is a familiar story
to any of the people listening.

133

00:05:47,932--> 00:05:50,271

The books are kind of...

134

00:05:50,296--> 00:05:52,628

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crawling off the shelves

135

00:05:52,652--> 00:05:55,228

and piled up on the floor

136

00:05:55,252--> 00:05:58,348

because there just are
never enough shelves.

137

00:05:58,372--> 00:06:00,868

Sometimes I get
rid of a novel or two,

138

00:06:00,892--> 00:06:02,868

so that they make space for

139

00:06:02,892--> 00:06:05,000

maybe four books of poetry.

140

00:06:05,000--> 00:06:06,148

[laughter]

141

00:06:06,172--> 00:06:09,271

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So the choice is the
poetry over the novels,

142

00:06:09,296--> 00:06:12,148

because I can
always get those back.

143

00:06:12,172--> 00:06:15,748

-Yes. I just want
to read a little line

144

00:06:15,772--> 00:06:17,548

from a poem, The Welcome,

145

00:06:17,572--> 00:06:19,868

which is in The Shadow Reader.

146

00:06:19,892--> 00:06:21,548

And the line is

147

00:06:21,572--> 00:06:25,068

"when you open the
book, it opens you."

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148

00:06:25,092--> 00:06:27,028

And I really loved that line

149

00:06:27,052--> 00:06:28,268

and I wanted to ask you,

150

00:06:28,292--> 00:06:30,028

since you mentioned the books,

151

00:06:30,052--> 00:06:33,678

what are the books that,
kind of, have opened you?

152

00:06:33,702--> 00:06:35,628

You know, the books
that have inspired you,

153

00:06:35,652--> 00:06:37,468

opened your heart and mind?

154

00:06:37,492--> 00:06:40,428

Would you tell us a bit
about just a few books

155

00:06:40,452--> 00:06:42,000

that have had that kind of

156

00:06:42,000--> 00:06:43,565

impact on you.

157

00:06:43,590--> 00:06:46,588

-Well, I think to go to novels,

158

00:06:46,612--> 00:06:49,268

one of the books

that really changed

159

00:06:49,292--> 00:06:52,308

my whole view of literature

160

00:06:52,332--> 00:06:54,708

and the literature I've

been reading till then

161

00:06:54,732--> 00:06:58,000

was Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea

162

00:06:58,000--> 00:07:01,948

where she sees the journey
story from the side of the...

163

00:07:01,972--> 00:07:04,628

from the viewpoint of

164

00:07:04,652--> 00:07:07,000

the supposedly mad wife.

165

00:07:07,000--> 00:07:08,000

-Mm-hmm.

166

00:07:08,000--> 00:07:11,308

-And that changed
my whole perspective

167

00:07:11,332--> 00:07:13,428

of who tells the story,

168

00:07:13,452--> 00:07:15,468

from what point of view,

169

00:07:15,492--> 00:07:16,991

who owns it.

170

00:07:17,016--> 00:07:19,668

How can it be skewed?

171

00:07:19,692--> 00:07:23,348

Because suddenly it...

172

00:07:23,372--> 00:07:25,948

It turned things around

173

00:07:25,972--> 00:07:28,828

and made me see a
whole different view.

174

00:07:28,852--> 00:07:30,708

And then, of
course, with poetry,

175

00:07:30,732--> 00:07:33,588

it was everything from

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Gerard Manley Hopkins.

176

00:07:33,612--> 00:07:37,468

Suddenly seeing how
he was enjoying language.

177

00:07:37,492--> 00:07:38,492

How he could...

178

00:07:38,516--> 00:07:40,605

How he played with language

179

00:07:40,630--> 00:07:41,828

and had fun with it.

180

00:07:41,852--> 00:07:45,068

I mean, that was
a huge revelation.

181

00:07:45,092--> 00:07:48,148

From there on, I mean, MacNeice,

182

00:07:48,172--> 00:07:51,000

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all kinds of contemporary poets.

183

00:07:51,000--> 00:07:52,925

I think I change...

184

00:07:52,950--> 00:07:56,388

I'm changed every

day by the poems I read

185

00:07:56,412--> 00:07:58,988

by young poets, new poets,

186

00:07:59,012--> 00:08:02,000

emerging poets,

everyone that I read.

187

00:08:02,000--> 00:08:04,468

-Well, I mean, you

have huge exposure

188

00:08:04,492--> 00:08:07,188

to so many different

poets and poetry

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189

00:08:07,212--> 00:08:10,148

from all around the UK
and all around the world,

190

00:08:10,172--> 00:08:14,268

because of all the different things
you do behind the scenes in poetry.

191

00:08:14,292--> 00:08:15,868

You know, so people
may know your books

192

00:08:15,892--> 00:08:18,188

and they may not know
how much you're doing

193

00:08:18,212--> 00:08:20,051

with various organizations.

194

00:08:20,075--> 00:08:23,108

Will you just give us a flavour
of the type of work you do,

195

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00:08:23,132--> 00:08:26,111

like, whether as a
director or on a board, um...

196

00:08:26,136--> 00:08:29,000

Tell us about the different
organizations you work with.

197

00:08:29,000--> 00:08:32,188

-Well, the... the most...

198

00:08:32,212--> 00:08:35,000

consuming one is is Poetry Live

199

00:08:35,000--> 00:08:39,000

that was started by the
wonderful Simon Powell

200

00:08:39,000--> 00:08:43,268

whom I married
after I came to read.

201

00:08:43,292--> 00:08:47,708

And Simon had this

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great and wonderful idea of

202

00:08:47,732--> 00:08:50,028

taking poetry off the page,

203

00:08:50,052--> 00:08:53,868

putting poets in

front of young people

204

00:08:53,892--> 00:08:56,000

with their own hesitation and.

205

00:08:56,000--> 00:08:58,948

breath and accent and

206

00:08:58,972--> 00:09:01,188

the differences of the live poet

207

00:09:01,212--> 00:09:03,238

reading poems

208

00:09:03,262--> 00:09:05,948

that students might

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have seen in books,

209

00:09:05,972--> 00:09:09,908

but bringing them alive
with just the human body.

210

00:09:09,932--> 00:09:12,308

And to see that the poet
is just a human being,

211

00:09:12,332--> 00:09:13,603

just like them.

212

00:09:13,628--> 00:09:18,508

Infallible and quirky and
all of the things that we are.

213

00:09:18,532--> 00:09:20,508

So that was one.
I mean, that was...

214

00:09:20,532--> 00:09:24,508

We read to thousands of
young people around the country

215

00:09:24,532--> 00:09:28,000

on the GCSE syllabus.

216

00:09:28,000--> 00:09:31,788

But then there's also

Poems on the Underground.

217

00:09:31,812--> 00:09:33,784

And that's another...

218

00:09:33,809--> 00:09:38,304

gorgeous thing, which

is... It's in its 40th year now,

219

00:09:38,329--> 00:09:40,628

40 years since it was founded.

220

00:09:40,652--> 00:09:42,388

And again, that's a lovely thing

221

00:09:42,412--> 00:09:45,000

because you choose

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poems that are really short,

222

00:09:45,000--> 00:09:47,188

short enough to go on to

223

00:09:47,212--> 00:09:50,468

this piece of space
in the Underground.

224

00:09:50,492--> 00:09:57,188

And... and it can make people
stop in the middle of their commute

225

00:09:57,212--> 00:09:59,388

and take a breath

226

00:09:59,412--> 00:10:02,228

and see the world a little
differently, and that's another...

227

00:10:02,252--> 00:10:03,948

I often think

228

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00:10:03,972--> 00:10:05,708

that I'd love to see

229

00:10:05,732--> 00:10:08,748

young poets writing

shorter poems,

230

00:10:08,772--> 00:10:10,428

sometimes so we

could put them...

231

00:10:10,452--> 00:10:13,188

I very often find

that I'm looking with

232

00:10:13,212--> 00:10:16,068

some of the, especially

the younger poets,

233

00:10:16,092--> 00:10:19,068

maybe they're used to spoken

word where you want to fill a...

234

00:10:19,092--> 00:10:20,508

a two-minute slot.

235

00:10:20,532--> 00:10:22,508

I'm not sure about why this is.

236

00:10:22,532--> 00:10:24,163

Or a one-minute slot.

237

00:10:24,188--> 00:10:25,948

So they have quite long poems

238

00:10:25,972--> 00:10:28,788

and they very rarely

do the 15-line poem,

239

00:10:28,812--> 00:10:30,988

which would be something that

240

00:10:31,012--> 00:10:34,498

we look for on the Poems

on the Underground.

241

00:10:34,523--> 00:10:36,868

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Um, then, uh...

242

00:10:36,892--> 00:10:39,468

Oh, The Poetry

Archive and that's

243

00:10:39,492--> 00:10:46,000

about keeping the heritage of poetry,
keeping the voices recorded, and...

244

00:10:46,000--> 00:10:48,908

alive and available
to as many people

245

00:10:48,932--> 00:10:50,428

as possible.

246

00:10:50,452--> 00:10:52,148

And also judging things.

247

00:10:52,172--> 00:10:54,268

Dean, you know
as well from judging,

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248

00:10:54,292--> 00:10:58,388

you come across such
incredible, incredible poems.

249

00:10:58,412--> 00:11:01,000

And when I know it's really
working is when I think.

250

00:11:01,000--> 00:11:02,788

"I wish I had written that."

251

00:11:02,812--> 00:11:05,908

And that happens quite
often when you're judging

252

00:11:05,932--> 00:11:08,228

a poem or a pamphlet,

253

00:11:08,252--> 00:11:09,708

or whatever it may be,

254

00:11:09,732--> 00:11:11,828

and that's a lovely moment.

255

00:11:11,852--> 00:11:13,708

So all of it is...

256

00:11:13,732--> 00:11:15,805

is something I love doing.

257

00:11:15,830--> 00:11:19,508

-Incredible. So it sounds like you've
kind of already started saying that

258

00:11:19,532--> 00:11:22,318

this work informs
your own writing.

259

00:11:22,342--> 00:11:25,148

Like, reading so much,
like, seeing all these

260

00:11:25,172--> 00:11:27,788

live performances
and judging poems,

261

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00:11:27,812--> 00:11:30,138

you know, that informs

what you go on to write

262

00:11:30,162--> 00:11:32,455

when you do sit down

to write. Is that right?

263

00:11:32,480--> 00:11:33,908

-Yes, yes, of course.

264

00:11:33,932--> 00:11:36,868

All those new ideas,

everyone you hear.

265

00:11:36,892--> 00:11:39,850

Even the way they

deliver a poem

266

00:11:39,875--> 00:11:43,998

very often can change the

way I think about a poem or

267

00:11:44,022--> 00:11:46,028

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the way I think about poetry.

268

00:11:46,052--> 00:11:49,588

And yes, of course, all of those
things are going to find their way

269

00:11:49,612--> 00:11:52,628

into something that I'm writing.

270

00:11:52,652--> 00:11:54,690

Maybe not even directly,

271

00:11:54,715--> 00:11:58,268

but as much as anything else.

272

00:11:58,292--> 00:12:01,000

Hearing the news changes a poem.

273

00:12:01,000--> 00:12:02,000

-Absolutely.

274

00:12:02,000--> 00:12:04,748

-Being in a rage at

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the news, you know,

275

00:12:04,772--> 00:12:08,428

having to calm yourself

after hearing the news.

276

00:12:08,452--> 00:12:12,000

Calm myself and try and

understand through writing a poem,

277

00:12:12,000--> 00:12:13,868

that can change you. So...

278

00:12:13,892--> 00:12:17,000

Everything affects

the poem in the end.

279

00:12:17,000--> 00:12:18,748

-Does that rage,

280

00:12:18,772--> 00:12:21,228

if there is rage, does

that stay in the poem

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281

00:12:21,252--> 00:12:23,000

or is that just the
impetus to write,

282

00:12:23,000--> 00:12:24,268

in your experience?

283

00:12:24,292--> 00:12:26,656

-That's just the start. It
can't be the whole poem.

284

00:12:26,681--> 00:12:31,468

Something that's rage is not in
itself going to be a workable poem.

285

00:12:31,492--> 00:12:33,000

So, of course,

286

00:12:33,000--> 00:12:34,268

I let it...

287

00:12:34,292--> 00:12:37,028

I have to change it

into something else.

288

00:12:37,052--> 00:12:39,188

I have to change

it into something

289

00:12:39,212--> 00:12:43,000

that I begin to try

and understand.

290

00:12:43,000--> 00:12:44,828

And while I'm understanding it,

291

00:12:44,852--> 00:12:46,788

the poem might take shape.

292

00:12:46,812--> 00:12:48,108

And if it doesn't,

293

00:12:48,132--> 00:12:50,000

gets thrown in the bin.

294

00:12:50,000--> 00:12:51,588

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[laughter]

295

00:12:51,612--> 00:12:54,268

-Not just put to one
side, thrown in the bin.

296

00:12:54,292--> 00:12:58,788

-Well, I used to be really,
really specific about...

297

00:12:58,812--> 00:13:00,908

I mean, I used to
throw everything in the...

298

00:13:00,932--> 00:13:05,348

in the bin that didn't work
100%, that I felt didn't work.

299

00:13:05,372--> 00:13:07,748

And then I was told very sternly

300

00:13:07,772--> 00:13:09,471

that I'm not meant to do that.

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301

00:13:09,495--> 00:13:10,508

[laughter]

302

00:13:10,532--> 00:13:15,118

That you're meant to keep all your...
your pieces of paper and put them...

303

00:13:15,142--> 00:13:18,668

Now I just chuck them in a
tub because I write on A4.

304

00:13:18,692--> 00:13:20,028

I don't do journals.

305

00:13:20,052--> 00:13:24,348

And I keep all my pieces
of paper in a big tub now

306

00:13:24,372--> 00:13:27,000

and I leave it to someone
someday to organize, but...

307

00:13:27,000--> 00:13:28,811

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-Yeah, there'll be the
Imtiaz Dharker archive.

308

00:13:28,836--> 00:13:30,468

-I don't throw them
away any more.

309

00:13:30,492--> 00:13:32,948

-No, I'm glad you're not
throwing things away any more.

310

00:13:32,972--> 00:13:34,670

-Do you keep yours?

311

00:13:34,694--> 00:13:36,308

-I keep a lot, um...

312

00:13:36,332--> 00:13:39,308

Yeah, I keep a lot of it.

And even drafts, I'll save...

313

00:13:39,332--> 00:13:41,428

When I'm redrafting

a poem, I'll save

314

00:13:41,452--> 00:13:45,268

a new draft with a new number so that I
have all the previous versions of the poem,

315

00:13:45,292--> 00:13:46,971

because I think
"you never know."

316

00:13:46,995--> 00:13:49,508

Sometimes you need to
revert back to a previous draft,

317

00:13:49,532--> 00:13:51,188

because actually
you've taken it too far.

318

00:13:51,212--> 00:13:54,396

-Yes. You're right.
Sometimes you can overwork it.

319

00:13:54,421--> 00:13:55,421

-Mmhmm.

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320

00:13:55,445--> 00:13:57,108

-So let's talk about...

321

00:13:57,132--> 00:14:00,228

Who do you show your
poems to in those early stages,

322

00:14:00,252--> 00:14:02,628

part one, and then what's your

323

00:14:02,652--> 00:14:04,668

kind of relationship
like with your editor?

324

00:14:04,692--> 00:14:07,471

And why is an editor
so important for poetry?

325

00:14:08,723--> 00:14:13,948

-Well, very often, first I might
show something to my daughter

326

00:14:13,972--> 00:14:17,385

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because she has a really
good bullshit detector.

327

00:14:17,410--> 00:14:19,239

Am I allowed to say that? Sorry.

328

00:14:19,264--> 00:14:20,264

-I don't think so.

329

00:14:20,288--> 00:14:21,628

[laughter]

330

00:14:21,652--> 00:14:25,000

-But, uh, she's
really quick to see...

331

00:14:25,000--> 00:14:27,468

Okay, you know that...

332

00:14:27,492--> 00:14:30,000

that the tone of that,

333

00:14:30,000--> 00:14:32,318

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maybe don't... don't say that.

334

00:14:32,342--> 00:14:35,348

You know, so even the
expression on her face

335

00:14:35,372--> 00:14:40,000

can tell you, because she's got
an actor's ear for the dialogue.

336

00:14:40,000--> 00:14:44,670

So that's one of my first
ports of call, then other poets.

337

00:14:44,695--> 00:14:47,085

And loved poets, people that I...

338

00:14:47,109--> 00:14:52,588

whose judgment I
trust, and it's just, um...

339

00:14:52,612--> 00:14:57,228

just a kind of very
often a sharing of

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340

00:14:57,252--> 00:14:59,748

just, "I'm working on this" and

341

00:14:59,772--> 00:15:02,468

share a line

342

00:15:02,492--> 00:15:05,431

in the evening

over dinner, and uh...

343

00:15:05,456--> 00:15:10,148

I mean, I don't usually take a whole

manuscript to someone and say,

344

00:15:10,172--> 00:15:11,468

"look at this."

345

00:15:11,492--> 00:15:14,388

It would just be

sharing a poem, or...

346

00:15:14,412--> 00:15:15,788

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Um...

347

00:15:15,812--> 00:15:18,588

And someone just saying,

348

00:15:18,612--> 00:15:21,388

"well, why not
think about that?"

349

00:15:21,412--> 00:15:23,868

Uh, so that would
be other poets.

350

00:15:23,892--> 00:15:25,508

Um...

351

00:15:25,532--> 00:15:29,828

And then, actually, even after the
poem is written and sometimes published,

352

00:15:29,852--> 00:15:33,988

sometimes I feel like tweaking
it and I do it in readings.

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353

00:15:34,012--> 00:15:35,231

[laughter]

354

00:15:35,256--> 00:15:36,748

And my editor is quite...

355

00:15:36,772--> 00:15:40,188

Neil Astley of Bloodaxe is a
wonderful, wonderful editor.

356

00:15:40,212--> 00:15:42,000

First of all, he

357

00:15:42,000--> 00:15:46,000

understood that I needed to
have the drawings with the poems.

358

00:15:46,000--> 00:15:49,268

And has always
published them like that.

359

00:15:49,292--> 00:15:51,148

And, uh...

360

00:15:51,172--> 00:15:53,268

And then...

361

00:15:53,292--> 00:15:55,468

He's never minded.

362

00:15:55,492--> 00:16:00,000

He's very good about letting me

363

00:16:00,000--> 00:16:01,748

keep the poems

364

00:16:01,772--> 00:16:04,000

and keep working on them

365

00:16:04,000--> 00:16:07,628

up to the very last

minute of his deadline.

366

00:16:07,652--> 00:16:11,348

And I don't try not to

change too much after that.

367

00:16:11,372--> 00:16:13,708

But then, even when
he hears me reading,

368

00:16:13,732--> 00:16:15,996

sometimes I've
changed a line or two.

369

00:16:16,020--> 00:16:17,020

[laughter]

370

00:16:17,044--> 00:16:19,188

And he doesn't
get mad about that.

371

00:16:19,212--> 00:16:20,828

[laughs]

372

00:16:20,852--> 00:16:25,000

But he's very
tolerant of me, I think.

373

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00:16:25,000--> 00:16:27,428

-Well, that's a long-standing
relationship now.

374

00:16:27,452--> 00:16:31,000

-It is so... so special to
have a great editor like that.

375

00:16:31,000--> 00:16:33,428

I mean, someone
who is really, I think,

376

00:16:33,452--> 00:16:37,000

a national treasure in
the world of publishing,

377

00:16:37,000--> 00:16:38,000

Neil Astley.

378

00:16:38,000--> 00:16:39,828

-Mhmm.

379

00:16:39,852--> 00:16:41,748

You mentioned

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there your drawings

380

00:16:41,772--> 00:16:44,028

and how important
they are to your work.

381

00:16:44,052--> 00:16:46,748

Do you want to just
tell us a bit more about

382

00:16:46,772--> 00:16:49,348

how those kind of work together,

383

00:16:49,372--> 00:16:53,000

the drawings in the poems? Sometimes the
poems are within the drawings themselves,

384

00:16:53,000--> 00:16:55,000

which is really beautiful,
and sometimes they're...

385

00:16:55,000--> 00:16:57,108

They seem more
like illustrations,

386

00:16:57,132--> 00:16:58,708

but, like, what comes first?

387

00:16:58,732--> 00:17:01,348

Is it a mix of both,

388

00:17:01,372--> 00:17:06,000

poem sometimes, or artwork
sometimes? How does it work?

389

00:17:06,000--> 00:17:09,268

-Well, it's not an organized
thing in a lot of ways,

390

00:17:09,292--> 00:17:11,228

because what I do is I...

391

00:17:11,252--> 00:17:13,828

Before I even write a poem,

392

00:17:13,852--> 00:17:17,108

I go down to the street

and and I walk about,

393

00:17:17,132--> 00:17:22,051

because walking sets up a kind
of a rhythm that releases the poem.

394

00:17:22,075--> 00:17:24,908

And then carrying
around A4 sheets

395

00:17:24,932--> 00:17:27,748

and a pen with waterproof ink.

396

00:17:27,772--> 00:17:30,028

So, um...

397

00:17:30,052--> 00:17:34,000

I might find that I
write a line of a poem.

398

00:17:34,000--> 00:17:35,668

If I'm lucky, I'm
carrying the paper.

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399

00:17:35,692--> 00:17:39,788

Sometimes it's just a
paper napkin, but I write...

400

00:17:39,812--> 00:17:41,628

There's a line of a poem,

401

00:17:41,652--> 00:17:44,428

because you hear
conversations on the street or

402

00:17:44,452--> 00:17:46,708

even just the way
the light changes,

403

00:17:46,732--> 00:17:48,388

or the way a bus passes,

404

00:17:48,412--> 00:17:50,948

and those are things that
cause the poem to be written.

405

00:17:50,972--> 00:17:53,000

But very often, it's not just...

406

00:17:53,000--> 00:17:54,428

Um...

407

00:17:54,452--> 00:17:59,508

The poem, very often it can
be a line of a drawing instead.

408

00:17:59,532--> 00:18:03,831

And then a drawing might
come at the same time

409

00:18:03,855--> 00:18:08,348

as a poem, or maybe it may
be nothing related to the poem,

410

00:18:08,372--> 00:18:09,748

but the drawing comes.

411

00:18:09,772--> 00:18:11,388

And that maybe
won't be in the book,

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412

00:18:11,412--> 00:18:13,588

but it's certainly I'm drawing

413

00:18:13,612--> 00:18:15,325

as much of the time as I'm

414

00:18:15,350--> 00:18:17,091

writing words.

415

00:18:17,115--> 00:18:20,708

So when it comes to

putting the book together,

416

00:18:20,732--> 00:18:23,068

I just look at the images I have

417

00:18:23,092--> 00:18:25,228

and decide which ones

418

00:18:25,252--> 00:18:27,068

I want to have in the book,

419

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00:18:27,092--> 00:18:30,708

and play with them and
put them together and see

420

00:18:30,732--> 00:18:32,148

if they add anything.

421

00:18:32,172--> 00:18:35,000

Someone said a
good word. It was...

422

00:18:35,000--> 00:18:36,548

Uh... Um...

423

00:18:36,572--> 00:18:39,628

It kind of amplifies,
that the drawings

424

00:18:39,652--> 00:18:43,668

amplify the poems and
the other way around, so

425

00:18:43,692--> 00:18:45,388

I like that idea.

426

00:18:45,412--> 00:18:48,000

It's not just aiming
for illustration.

427

00:18:48,000--> 00:18:52,000

It's aiming at doing something
a little more or different.

428

00:18:52,000--> 00:18:54,788

-Wonderful. Well, I think
this feels like a good time

429

00:18:54,812--> 00:18:58,868

to introduce The Shadow
Reader and go into your reading.

430

00:18:58,892--> 00:19:02,668

And if, during your reading, you want
to show any of the drawings, please do.

431

00:19:02,692--> 00:19:04,228

We'd love to see them. So,

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432

00:19:04,252--> 00:19:06,538

will you tell us the backstory
of The Shadow Read,

433

00:19:06,562--> 00:19:08,000

or introduce as you wish?

434

00:19:08,000--> 00:19:10,628

-Well, when I was in my 20s,

435

00:19:10,652--> 00:19:11,698

I was taken to...

436

00:19:11,722--> 00:19:15,588

to see a number of astrologers.

437

00:19:15,612--> 00:19:18,348

One was a shadow reader
who measured my shadow,

438

00:19:18,372--> 00:19:20,708

made some
calculations, and told me

439

00:19:20,732--> 00:19:23,868

all kinds of things

about my future,

440

00:19:23,892--> 00:19:25,758

predicted all kinds of things.

441

00:19:25,783--> 00:19:27,228

But, um...

442

00:19:27,252--> 00:19:29,548

One of the things he told me

443

00:19:29,572--> 00:19:32,708

was that he told me

the year of my death.

444

00:19:32,732--> 00:19:35,868

And that was last year,

a couple of years ago.

445

00:19:35,892--> 00:19:37,000

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I'm still here, of course.

446

00:19:37,000--> 00:19:38,028

[laughter]

447

00:19:38,052--> 00:19:39,588

Um...

448

00:19:39,612--> 00:19:41,348

But...

449

00:19:41,372--> 00:19:43,588

That's set me off on

450

00:19:43,612--> 00:19:45,668

a kind of a journey of

451

00:19:45,692--> 00:19:48,348

thinking about

who tells your story

452

00:19:48,372--> 00:19:52,000

and how to take it back.

453

00:19:52,000--> 00:19:56,228

But the poems in
Shadow Reader...

454

00:19:56,252--> 00:19:58,068

Uh...

455

00:19:58,092--> 00:20:01,068

Well, I'll read this one.

456

00:20:01,092--> 00:20:03,896

I'll read this one and
a tiny one afterwards.

457

00:20:05,000--> 00:20:08,000

"The map of this
country is made of scars.

458

00:20:08,000--> 00:20:11,708

They will put the body
on a slab for examination.

459

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00:20:11,732--> 00:20:12,868

No.

460

00:20:12,892--> 00:20:16,000

Out of respect

for this body, no.

461

00:20:16,000--> 00:20:19,068

There would be an

inquiry to determine.

462

00:20:19,092--> 00:20:20,468

No.

463

00:20:20,492--> 00:20:22,868

It is clear the

missile came from...

464

00:20:22,892--> 00:20:24,348

No.

465

00:20:24,372--> 00:20:27,000

There was some jostling,

two sides clashing.

466

00:20:27,000--> 00:20:28,588

No.

467

00:20:28,612--> 00:20:30,668

There is no clear indication.

468

00:20:30,692--> 00:20:32,000

Both sides were at fault.

469

00:20:32,000--> 00:20:33,548

No.

470

00:20:33,572--> 00:20:38,228

Seen from above, it looks like
grief wrapped in a shroud of dust.

471

00:20:38,252--> 00:20:40,988

But the blood has
seeped so long and deep

472

00:20:41,012--> 00:20:43,000

it could be a rain of rust.

473

00:20:43,000--> 00:20:44,788

Out of respect,

474

00:20:44,812--> 00:20:48,388

the wounds would be
washed, inspected, and sewn up

475

00:20:48,412--> 00:20:52,228

to look like a map of a
country that does not exist.

476

00:20:52,252--> 00:20:56,268

They will carry the body as if
it is a homeland they have lost

477

00:20:56,292--> 00:20:58,498

and brought to
a field of poppies

478

00:20:58,523--> 00:21:00,388

to lay to rest.

479

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00:21:00,412--> 00:21:03,000

On their shoulders

they will carry the coffin.

480

00:21:03,000--> 00:21:04,308

Yes.

481

00:21:04,332--> 00:21:06,428

The mourners

will lift their hands

482

00:21:06,452--> 00:21:08,028

to honour her.

483

00:21:08,052--> 00:21:09,108

Yes.

484

00:21:09,132--> 00:21:10,388

There will be a bullet.

485

00:21:10,412--> 00:21:11,788

There will be jostling.

486

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00:21:11,812--> 00:21:12,828

Yes.

487

00:21:12,852--> 00:21:14,308

This is a wound opening.

488

00:21:14,332--> 00:21:17,788

This is a country being
torn again and again.

489

00:21:17,813--> 00:21:18,836

Yes.

490

00:21:18,861--> 00:21:20,708

A person falling apart.

491

00:21:20,732--> 00:21:21,732

Yes.

492

00:21:21,756--> 00:21:23,068

And everyone watching.

493

00:21:23,092--> 00:21:24,188

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Yes.

494

00:21:24,212--> 00:21:25,708

Did you watch this happening?

495

00:21:25,732--> 00:21:26,788

Yes.

496

00:21:26,812--> 00:21:29,000

Did anyone see?

497

00:21:29,000--> 00:21:30,748

No."

498

00:21:32,372--> 00:21:34,668

And a short one after that,

499

00:21:34,692--> 00:21:36,000

Witness.

500

00:21:36,000--> 00:21:37,788

"Sometimes

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501

00:21:37,812--> 00:21:39,868

the truth is not a beacon,

502

00:21:39,892--> 00:21:42,000

but a small flame

503

00:21:42,000--> 00:21:44,428

or only the light of a phone

504

00:21:44,452--> 00:21:46,458

falling on the face

505

00:21:46,482--> 00:21:48,228

of a witness.

506

00:21:51,029--> 00:21:53,388

-Thank you so much, Imtiaz.

507

00:21:53,412--> 00:21:55,988

That really reminds me of, like,

508

00:21:56,012--> 00:21:58,788

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James Baldwin talks about
the writer being a witness,

509

00:21:58,812--> 00:22:02,908

and I feel like you do
that work as well. Um...

510

00:22:02,932--> 00:22:05,428

What does it mean
to know you have

511

00:22:05,452--> 00:22:08,908

a platform and that
your poetry will be,

512

00:22:08,932--> 00:22:10,748

you know, investigated
for its meaning

513

00:22:10,772--> 00:22:12,708

and it may be speaking
up for people that

514

00:22:12,732--> 00:22:15,468

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don't get the opportunity
to be heard themselves?

515

00:22:15,492--> 00:22:16,988

What does that mean for you?

516

00:22:17,593--> 00:22:20,028

-It's a responsibility.

517

00:22:20,052--> 00:22:22,548

I mean, I don't know if I'm...

518

00:22:22,572--> 00:22:25,668

If I have more of a
platform than anyone else,

519

00:22:25,692--> 00:22:28,605

the thing is that all of us now

520

00:22:28,630--> 00:22:31,108

with access to

521

00:22:31,132--> 00:22:33,132

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media

522

00:22:33,157--> 00:22:34,988

has a platform,

523

00:22:35,012--> 00:22:38,188

but I definitely see

it as a responsibility,

524

00:22:38,212--> 00:22:41,188

but also I see it as a

responsibility to stay

525

00:22:41,212--> 00:22:46,000

silent when my voice is

not going to add anything.

526

00:22:46,000--> 00:22:48,358

I wouldn't want to

add to the noise.

527

00:22:48,383--> 00:22:50,708

But if the noise

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528

00:22:50,732--> 00:22:52,348

will make a difference,

529

00:22:52,372--> 00:22:54,188

then I will raise my voice

530

00:22:54,212--> 00:22:56,028

and then I will write the poem.

531

00:22:56,052--> 00:22:57,985

But... but it is

532

00:22:58,009--> 00:22:59,603

a huge responsibility.

533

00:22:59,628--> 00:23:02,068

-I think this book

534

00:23:02,092--> 00:23:05,388

encourages people to think

when they should speak up as well.

535

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00:23:05,412--> 00:23:07,148

I think there's some
moments within it.

536

00:23:07,172--> 00:23:11,388

Um, there's these lines I'll read
there on page 100 of Shadow Reader.

537

00:23:11,412--> 00:23:13,388

"Take one step forward

538

00:23:13,412--> 00:23:15,148

and the light will
find your face.

539

00:23:15,172--> 00:23:17,108

You are the story."

540

00:23:17,132--> 00:23:19,668

I love that, and um...

541

00:23:19,692--> 00:23:21,748

Yeah, like, it makes
me think about

542

00:23:21,772--> 00:23:23,171

the young people I work with,

543

00:23:23,195--> 00:23:25,308

encouraging them to
write their own stories,

544

00:23:25,332--> 00:23:26,988

and, um, you know, and

545

00:23:27,012--> 00:23:29,708

for everyone who
sees themselves in

546

00:23:29,732--> 00:23:32,718

something I write, or
who writes something

547

00:23:32,743--> 00:23:36,628

for themselves, of
themselves and their lives,

548

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00:23:36,652--> 00:23:38,628

it's such a powerful
thing, isn't it?

549

00:23:38,652--> 00:23:41,465

To claim your story
and tell your own story.

550

00:23:41,489--> 00:23:44,068

-Yes, you especially
know about that

551

00:23:44,092--> 00:23:47,268

because you've done so
much work in the area of making

552

00:23:47,292--> 00:23:51,948

voices acceptable and
giving them platforms as well.

553

00:23:51,972--> 00:23:54,000

But...

554

00:23:54,000--> 00:23:56,188

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I think it is important
to tell people

555

00:23:56,212--> 00:23:58,465

that their voices
need to be heard,

556

00:23:58,489--> 00:24:00,988

and especially if
you're writing poems,

557

00:24:01,012--> 00:24:02,845

that it's your
voice that matters.

558

00:24:02,869--> 00:24:04,000

No one else

559

00:24:04,000--> 00:24:06,468

has the experiences
that you have.

560

00:24:06,492--> 00:24:10,028

No one else can say

the exact things you can,

561

00:24:10,052--> 00:24:11,468

which is why the poem,

562

00:24:11,492--> 00:24:14,548

the more specific, the more...

563

00:24:14,572--> 00:24:17,000

local to the person,

564

00:24:17,000--> 00:24:20,028

the better the poem usually is,

565

00:24:20,052--> 00:24:22,588

because only you can say it

566

00:24:22,612--> 00:24:26,068

in that voice, in that

accent, in those words,

567

00:24:26,092--> 00:24:27,908

with that background

of language,

568

00:24:27,932--> 00:24:30,000

with that history.

569

00:24:30,000--> 00:24:31,931

It's the individual
voice that matters

570

00:24:31,955--> 00:24:34,508

and that's the thing
that's going to help us,

571

00:24:34,532--> 00:24:38,000

going to differentiate
us as poets from AI.

572

00:24:38,000--> 00:24:41,548

Fine, AI is going to
take all our stuff and...

573

00:24:41,572--> 00:24:44,988

and regurgitate it and

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574

00:24:45,012--> 00:24:47,868

make it sound pretty good.

575

00:24:47,892--> 00:24:50,868

But it's the unmistakable voice,

576

00:24:50,892--> 00:24:53,028

the unmistakable heart

577

00:24:53,052--> 00:24:54,605

that's going to be

578

00:24:54,630--> 00:24:57,068

heard in the end and

make a difference.

579

00:24:57,092--> 00:25:00,068

That's going to become

even more important

580

00:25:00,092--> 00:25:03,000

than it always

has been in poetry.

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581

00:25:03,000--> 00:25:04,108

-Yes.

582

00:25:04,132--> 00:25:06,028

I've had... We've had a poem--

583

00:25:06,052--> 00:25:09,108

Not a poem, a question

that's come in in advance,

584

00:25:09,132--> 00:25:10,428

and the question is

585

00:25:10,452--> 00:25:13,788

"do you ever lose

faith in your writing?

586

00:25:13,812--> 00:25:17,000

And if you do, how do you cope?"

587

00:25:17,000--> 00:25:18,000

What do you think?

588

00:25:18,000--> 00:25:19,988

-Wow. Hard question.

589

00:25:20,012--> 00:25:24,000

And I'm not going
to treat that...

590

00:25:24,000--> 00:25:29,000

lightly because I can see it's a
question coming from someone

591

00:25:29,000--> 00:25:31,668

who needs some kind of answer.

592

00:25:31,692--> 00:25:34,348

I find that with

593

00:25:34,372--> 00:25:37,000

every new poem I begin,

594

00:25:37,000--> 00:25:39,668

I have-- I begin

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with the feeling that

595

00:25:39,692--> 00:25:42,788

I'll never be able

to write again.

596

00:25:42,812--> 00:25:47,588

So the faith has to be remade,

597

00:25:47,612--> 00:25:51,308

reimagined, re-found

598

00:25:51,332--> 00:25:54,000

with every single poem.

599

00:25:54,000--> 00:25:56,668

You know, that blank page

600

00:25:56,692--> 00:25:59,000

is a tough thing.

601

00:25:59,000--> 00:26:02,428

I don't going into it thinking

602

00:26:02,452--> 00:26:06,788

"this is something I can
do standing on my head."

603

00:26:06,812--> 00:26:08,268

So...

604

00:26:08,292--> 00:26:10,348

It's not that I lose faith,

605

00:26:10,372--> 00:26:12,148

but that I have to

606

00:26:12,172--> 00:26:13,628

remake the faith

607

00:26:13,652--> 00:26:16,028

every time I'm
faced with that page.

608

00:26:17,000--> 00:26:19,028

-Wonderful. Thank you.

609

00:26:19,052--> 00:26:21,968

So, questions from Sue.

610

00:26:21,992--> 00:26:24,428

The first question from Sue is

611

00:26:24,452--> 00:26:26,148

"in the first poem you read,

612

00:26:26,172--> 00:26:28,908

I love the use
of internal rhyme.

613

00:26:28,932--> 00:26:31,000

Was that a conscious decision?"

614

00:26:31,000--> 00:26:33,068

-Ah, lovely.

615

00:26:33,092--> 00:26:35,868

I think I do that.

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616

00:26:35,892--> 00:26:38,068

I suppose very often

617

00:26:38,092--> 00:26:40,388

my instinct is to

618

00:26:40,412--> 00:26:45,000

find the... the line end rhyme.

619

00:26:45,000--> 00:26:47,268

But then I do try...

620

00:26:47,292--> 00:26:49,258

I do mash it up.

621

00:26:49,283--> 00:26:53,828

And my own music just makes me

622

00:26:53,852--> 00:26:58,748

use the internal

rhymes a lot more.

623

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00:26:58,772--> 00:27:00,351

Um...

624

00:27:00,375--> 00:27:02,948

I mean, when I write a poem,

625

00:27:02,972--> 00:27:05,148

I can't let it out of my hands

626

00:27:05,172--> 00:27:07,268

until I've read it aloud

627

00:27:07,292--> 00:27:10,000

in this space and...

628

00:27:10,000--> 00:27:12,228

if I don't hear the

music, it can't...

629

00:27:12,252--> 00:27:14,268

It can't leave me.

630

00:27:14,292--> 00:27:17,188

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So the rhyming is part of that

631

00:27:17,212--> 00:27:19,508

and it is, you're

right, I have a...

632

00:27:19,532--> 00:27:22,868

a fondness for internal rhymes.

633

00:27:22,892--> 00:27:26,000

But most of the time I don't

actually know I'm doing it.

634

00:27:26,000--> 00:27:29,788

I do like some kind of rhyme

635

00:27:29,812--> 00:27:31,108

very often.

636

00:27:31,132--> 00:27:32,245

Um...

637

00:27:32,270--> 00:27:35,868

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And I do like the
formality of some...

638

00:27:35,892--> 00:27:37,748

of sonnets, for example.

639

00:27:37,772--> 00:27:39,828

But... but...

640

00:27:39,852--> 00:27:44,000

more often it comes
through as a kind of

641

00:27:44,000--> 00:27:46,108

rhyme that can be dropped

642

00:27:46,132--> 00:27:47,708

through the middle of the...

643

00:27:47,732--> 00:27:50,828

middle of the poem
rather than the line ends.

644

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00:27:50,852--> 00:27:56,000

And the white spaces are so
important to the silences, and to me

645

00:27:56,000--> 00:28:00,000

the silences are as
important as the words.

646

00:28:00,000--> 00:28:02,828

-Okay, Sue has also asked

647

00:28:02,852--> 00:28:05,548

about a specific poem, Tissue.

648

00:28:05,572--> 00:28:08,748

"Tissue is a poem that has
stayed with me over the years.

649

00:28:08,772--> 00:28:11,028

Could you give
us a flavour of where

650

00:28:11,052--> 00:28:13,000

the story of this poem began?"

651

00:28:13,000--> 00:28:16,948

-Well, this is a poem that, uh...

652

00:28:16,972--> 00:28:19,308

It was really a
kind of exploration.

653

00:28:19,332--> 00:28:24,000

I was looking at my
father's old books

654

00:28:24,000--> 00:28:26,548

and on the tissue paper
at the back of one of them,

655

00:28:26,572--> 00:28:28,228

the back of the Quran, actually,

656

00:28:28,252--> 00:28:31,000

I found that he'd written
my name and date of birth.

657

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00:28:31,000--> 00:28:33,165

And...

658

00:28:33,189--> 00:28:37,748

I mean, obviously, that's something people
do in Bibles and holy books. They put

659

00:28:37,772--> 00:28:41,028

the family's history and
everything important to the family.

660

00:28:41,052--> 00:28:44,268

But I had argued with my
father, we quarrelled, and

661

00:28:44,292--> 00:28:46,000

I had left home.

662

00:28:46,000--> 00:28:48,068

I'd run away from
home actually, and

663

00:28:48,092--> 00:28:50,828

many years later, I

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came across these books,

664

00:28:50,852--> 00:28:52,508

and I began to wonder about

665

00:28:52,532--> 00:28:55,000

looking at that tissue paper.

666

00:28:55,000--> 00:28:58,908

What is it that really matters?

667

00:28:58,932--> 00:29:03,000

Love and

relationships and family.

668

00:29:03,000--> 00:29:05,988

And how can we get

past the things that

669

00:29:06,012--> 00:29:09,028

cause division

and cause conflict?

670

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00:29:09,052--> 00:29:12,011

And so this poem was
a kind of... Tissue was a

671

00:29:12,035--> 00:29:14,548

kind of exploration
of that idea.

672

00:29:14,572--> 00:29:18,908

So it's kind of going round and
round various ideas and images

673

00:29:18,932--> 00:29:22,338

of the sort of structures
we place against each other

674

00:29:22,363--> 00:29:26,068

to keep each other out of
the walls we build to keep

675

00:29:26,092--> 00:29:29,388

ourselves safe. And
against that, I've set

676

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00:29:29,412--> 00:29:31,908

the idea of see-through tissue,

677

00:29:31,932--> 00:29:35,828

uh, the things that maybe

tell the real story of our lives,

678

00:29:35,852--> 00:29:38,716

that fly our lives

like paper kites.

679

00:29:38,741--> 00:29:40,268

Um...

680

00:29:40,292--> 00:29:43,668

And I wanted to

oppose those two ideas.

681

00:29:43,692--> 00:29:45,188

And of course, with Tissue

682

00:29:45,212--> 00:29:47,188

and the paper tissue, I was

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683

00:29:47,212--> 00:29:49,708

wanting to slide
over to human tissue,

684

00:29:49,732--> 00:29:52,000

the human tissue
that's thrown away.

685

00:29:52,000--> 00:29:53,978

Like my grandfather clock.

686

00:29:54,002--> 00:29:56,168

Thrown away in times of

687

00:29:56,192--> 00:29:58,000

in times of war...

688

00:29:58,000--> 00:30:00,628

Uh, and, you know, that we

689

00:30:00,652--> 00:30:03,628

maybe could value
more. So I want to place

690

00:30:03,652--> 00:30:06,108

a value on something as fragile

691

00:30:06,132--> 00:30:08,228

as tissue. And at

the end of the poem,

692

00:30:08,252--> 00:30:10,788

I say it's turned

into your skin.

693

00:30:10,812--> 00:30:14,000

Because it's not an

abstraction, it's something

694

00:30:14,000--> 00:30:15,988

I want, um...

695

00:30:16,012--> 00:30:19,388

I want you to feel as

696

00:30:19,412--> 00:30:21,668

related to your life,

697

00:30:21,692--> 00:30:25,000

your human...

698

00:30:25,000--> 00:30:26,468

value

699

00:30:26,492--> 00:30:28,748

and the value of each other.

700

00:30:28,772--> 00:30:31,108

The respect we need

to pay to each other.

701

00:30:31,132--> 00:30:33,148

I want it to be very specific

702

00:30:33,172--> 00:30:35,548

about the reader.

703

00:30:37,012--> 00:30:40,148

-How does it feel having

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your work studied in schools?

704

00:30:40,172--> 00:30:43,558

I know for myself, like my poem "I
Come From" is used a lot in schools.

705

00:30:43,582--> 00:30:45,188

My book, The Black Flamingo.

706

00:30:45,212--> 00:30:47,588

And it's... I'm still
getting used to it,

707

00:30:47,612--> 00:30:50,348

but I feel like you may
have gotten used to it?

708

00:30:50,372--> 00:30:52,000

Or how does it feel?

709

00:30:52,000--> 00:30:53,000

[laughter]

710

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00:30:53,024--> 00:30:55,788

-You never really get used to
it, because it does mean that

711

00:30:55,812--> 00:30:57,948

someone along the way is

712

00:30:57,972--> 00:31:01,028

analysing a poem in
a way that you didn't

713

00:31:01,052--> 00:31:03,908

intend it to be
dissected. It's like

714

00:31:03,932--> 00:31:06,508

putting... getting your
poem and putting it on a...

715

00:31:06,532--> 00:31:09,911

in... under forensic examination.

716

00:31:09,935--> 00:31:11,468

But at the same time...

717

00:31:11,492--> 00:31:13,828

I mean, you...

718

00:31:14,932--> 00:31:17,068

That might not be

719

00:31:17,092--> 00:31:20,068

an ideal situation

for a poem to be in,

720

00:31:20,092--> 00:31:23,788

but I'm so privileged

to have that poem

721

00:31:23,812--> 00:31:26,868

or to have any

poem on the syllabus,

722

00:31:26,892--> 00:31:28,268

because whatever it is,

723

00:31:28,292--> 00:31:31,548

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even if students read that poem

724

00:31:31,572--> 00:31:33,868

and say, well, I like

this or I don't like that,

725

00:31:33,892--> 00:31:37,428

it is something that gives

them a doorway into poetry

726

00:31:37,452--> 00:31:40,930

and a doorway even into other

poems that they might like more.

727

00:31:40,954--> 00:31:44,028

or less or in a

different way, or...

728

00:31:44,052--> 00:31:47,988

It's something for them to,

even if they get agitated about it

729

00:31:48,012--> 00:31:49,828

at an exam,

730

00:31:49,852--> 00:31:51,508

it's something that
stays with them.

731

00:31:51,532--> 00:31:54,788

And I hope it doesn't
put them off poetry.

732

00:31:54,812--> 00:31:56,868

The idea would be that

733

00:31:56,892--> 00:31:59,038

it gives them another
way into poetry.

734

00:31:59,063--> 00:32:02,530

And I for one am really, really...

735

00:32:02,555--> 00:32:06,000

I feel honoured that
my poems are there.

736

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00:32:06,000--> 00:32:09,708

-And you get sent student
versions of your poem

737

00:32:09,732--> 00:32:11,000

where they've written... Yeah.

738

00:32:11,000--> 00:32:13,268

-Yes, yes. And actually,
the main thing is,

739

00:32:13,292--> 00:32:15,348

I may say whatever I... I...

740

00:32:15,372--> 00:32:18,228

I say about the poem and
say what I meant when I

741

00:32:18,252--> 00:32:19,468

wrote the poem.

742

00:32:19,492--> 00:32:22,428

But in in the end, in that exam,

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743

00:32:22,452--> 00:32:24,268

nobody wants to
hear what I thought.

744

00:32:24,292--> 00:32:25,750

It's what they think,

745

00:32:25,774--> 00:32:28,028

and using the clues in the poem,

746

00:32:28,052--> 00:32:30,108

using the words in the poem,

747

00:32:30,132--> 00:32:31,603

if they can find

748

00:32:31,628--> 00:32:34,348

good reasons, images,

749

00:32:34,372--> 00:32:36,468

whatever it may be to back up

750

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00:32:36,492--> 00:32:38,268

things that they're saying,

751

00:32:38,292--> 00:32:41,468

it can open up a poem in
a different way, because

752

00:32:41,492--> 00:32:44,348

the poem is different
in every reader's mind.

753

00:32:44,372--> 00:32:46,718

And that's really
what's important.

754

00:32:46,743--> 00:32:49,468

And if a student can
find a different way of

755

00:32:49,492--> 00:32:50,908

seeing a poem or

756

00:32:50,932--> 00:32:54,308

even even the way

I intended, but see it

757

00:32:54,332--> 00:32:57,868

in a wider way or
even understand it,

758

00:32:57,892--> 00:33:00,000

that's a really precious thing.

759

00:33:00,000--> 00:33:01,228

-Brilliant.

760

00:33:01,252--> 00:33:03,834

This next question gives
you a chance to shine

761

00:33:03,858--> 00:33:06,268

a spotlight on a
different poem, perhaps.

762

00:33:06,292--> 00:33:09,348

So, Sophie T asks,

763

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00:33:09,372--> 00:33:12,291

"what is your favourite piece
of writing that you have written?"

764

00:33:12,316--> 00:33:13,376

[laughter]

765

00:33:13,401--> 00:33:14,908

-Ohhh, okay...

766

00:33:14,932--> 00:33:17,828

Um, I think...

767

00:33:17,852--> 00:33:20,388

one of my favourites
is actually a sonnet.

768

00:33:20,412--> 00:33:22,000

It's called The Trick.

769

00:33:22,000--> 00:33:24,988

And it was a
sonnet that I wrote...

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770

00:33:25,012--> 00:33:28,000

It was something I
was struggling with after

771

00:33:28,000--> 00:33:30,228

Simon died,

772

00:33:30,252--> 00:33:32,468

I was struggling with

773

00:33:32,492--> 00:33:34,948

writing a dream

774

00:33:34,972--> 00:33:37,388

that I'd had where he
came back, and that's...

775

00:33:37,412--> 00:33:38,708

I don't know if...

776

00:33:38,732--> 00:33:41,108

how many of you have
felt this kind of grief, but

777

00:33:41,132--> 00:33:42,708

that moment when

778

00:33:42,732--> 00:33:44,988

you've had the dream

where the person comes back

779

00:33:45,012--> 00:33:49,000

and says, "it's all right,

I'm okay, I feel great."

780

00:33:49,000--> 00:33:51,748

And that's what

happened, but I couldn't fit...

781

00:33:51,772--> 00:33:54,748

I couldn't find a way

to write that dream

782

00:33:54,772--> 00:33:58,188

without it sounding

maudlin and odd.

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783

00:33:58,212--> 00:34:02,268

But the minute when I
started writing a sonnet,

784

00:34:02,292--> 00:34:05,028

I found that the dream
dropped into the middle

785

00:34:05,052--> 00:34:08,548

of that sonnet and...

786

00:34:08,572--> 00:34:11,668

because of the
formality of the sonnet,

787

00:34:11,692--> 00:34:13,348

it somehow worked

788

00:34:13,372--> 00:34:15,428

because there was
a kind of discipline

789

00:34:15,452--> 00:34:18,548

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holding this, like muscles

holding it together

790

00:34:18,572--> 00:34:20,388

and holding the dream in place.

791

00:34:20,412--> 00:34:21,948

It somehow worked.

792

00:34:21,972--> 00:34:25,464

And just the

unexpectedness of that

793

00:34:25,489--> 00:34:28,028

makes that one of my

favourites. And of course,

794

00:34:28,052--> 00:34:32,708

because it was about Simon, and because

it said something that I wanted to say.

795

00:34:32,732--> 00:34:34,868

And I felt I said it,

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796

00:34:34,892--> 00:34:39,000

but also it did unexpected
things at the end as well.

797

00:34:39,000--> 00:34:40,988

-Hmm... Thank
you for sharing that.

798

00:34:41,012--> 00:34:43,228

Rashika asks,

799

00:34:43,252--> 00:34:47,028

"do you find form
restrictive or liberating

800

00:34:47,052--> 00:34:50,868

during the acts of drafting,
writing, and editing?

801

00:34:50,892--> 00:34:55,000

And when you read your
old poems, do you feel like

802

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00:34:55,000--> 00:34:56,177

editing them?"

803

00:34:56,202--> 00:34:57,668

[laughter]

804

00:34:57,692--> 00:35:01,000

Well, form... I think I almost
answered that with The Trick.

805

00:35:01,000--> 00:35:04,028

That it can be anything.

806

00:35:04,052--> 00:35:07,000

If it doesn't work,
it's restricting.

807

00:35:07,000--> 00:35:10,388

If it does work by
mistake or by chance,

808

00:35:10,412--> 00:35:13,228

or by luck, or by intention,

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809

00:35:13,252--> 00:35:16,948

it can be a completely
liberating thing,

810

00:35:16,972--> 00:35:19,868

but it has to be something
that's appropriate

811

00:35:19,892--> 00:35:22,000

for the thing that
you're trying to do.

812

00:35:22,000--> 00:35:23,000

-Hmm.

813

00:35:23,000--> 00:35:25,668

-I'm not fond of
villanelles, for example,

814

00:35:25,692--> 00:35:28,068

but there are some
villanelles where, say,

815

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00:35:28,092--> 00:35:30,108

Elizabeth Bishop's One Art,

816

00:35:30,132--> 00:35:33,268

where it's absolutely

brilliantly used

817

00:35:33,292--> 00:35:37,465

to push the idea towards

a kind of inevitable end.

818

00:35:37,490--> 00:35:40,788

So I love that poem

and I love that villanelle,

819

00:35:40,812--> 00:35:46,108

even though I would say

that I really don't like villanelles

820

00:35:46,132--> 00:35:48,948

and I'm suspicious of them.

821

00:35:48,972--> 00:35:54,000

But what was the second

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part of the question was?

822

00:35:54,000--> 00:35:56,936

-Do you ever feel like
editing your old poems?

823

00:35:56,961--> 00:35:58,338

-Do I feel like
editing...? Always.

824

00:35:58,363--> 00:36:00,188

I look at my young poems

825

00:36:00,212--> 00:36:03,203

and I say, how could
I have got away?

826

00:36:03,228--> 00:36:06,000

How could I have thought I
was getting away with that?

827

00:36:06,000--> 00:36:07,908

[laughter]

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828

00:36:07,932--> 00:36:10,748

But then there's a
value in that as well,

829

00:36:10,772--> 00:36:13,348

because then a young
poem has a different energy.

830

00:36:13,372--> 00:36:15,108

And if I started writing it now,

831

00:36:15,132--> 00:36:18,468

it would be a different
poem altogether, so...

832

00:36:18,492--> 00:36:21,588

It did its work at the time.

833

00:36:21,612--> 00:36:25,148

So yes, I feel like editing,

834

00:36:25,172--> 00:36:26,748

but I often don't.

835

00:36:26,772--> 00:36:29,828

And when I do change
words or change lines,

836

00:36:29,852--> 00:36:32,748

it's sometimes to
make an old poem

837

00:36:32,772--> 00:36:36,000

work even-- work better today.

838

00:36:36,000--> 00:36:37,148

Um...

839

00:36:37,172--> 00:36:39,028

Um...

840

00:36:39,052--> 00:36:42,268

And I do that only
in the readings.

841

00:36:42,292--> 00:36:44,988

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-Okay, so kind of
updating it slightly.

842

00:36:45,012--> 00:36:46,012

-Sorry?

843

00:36:46,036--> 00:36:47,683

-Updating it slightly.

844

00:36:47,708--> 00:36:49,000

-Slightly, yeah.

845

00:36:49,000--> 00:36:50,000

-Mm, mm...

846

00:36:50,024--> 00:36:51,348

That makes sense.

847

00:36:51,372--> 00:36:56,348

You said something there where you called
them young poems, which was really lovely.

848

00:36:56,372--> 00:36:59,428

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Like, I hadn't thought about
it that way, they're younger...

849

00:36:59,452--> 00:37:02,763

from your younger years, right? Is that
why you call them young... young poems?

850

00:37:02,788--> 00:37:03,788

-Yes, yes.

851

00:37:03,812--> 00:37:07,078

-Yeah, I like when someone can say
something that reframes something.

852

00:37:07,102--> 00:37:09,268

I remember when I was
talking to someone about

853

00:37:09,292--> 00:37:12,948

submitting poems to, you
know, magazines and stuff,

854

00:37:12,972--> 00:37:16,311

and this person said, "I don't

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think of them as being rejected,

855

00:37:16,335--> 00:37:18,188

I think of them

as being returned."

856

00:37:18,212--> 00:37:21,468

And I was like, oh, I love that.

My poem has returned to me.

857

00:37:21,492--> 00:37:23,348

Um, so it's funny how

858

00:37:23,372--> 00:37:26,388

just this change of word can

change how you feel about things.

859

00:37:26,412--> 00:37:28,588

Because when you call

them young poems, I'm like,

860

00:37:28,612--> 00:37:32,068

I feel more kind of generous

towards my young poems than I...

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861

00:37:32,092--> 00:37:34,348

If I call them my old
poems, it feels different.

862

00:37:34,372--> 00:37:35,856

[laughs]

863

00:37:35,880--> 00:37:37,000

So, I love that.

864

00:37:37,000--> 00:37:38,308

-Yes, yes. You're right.

865

00:37:38,332--> 00:37:40,708

-Okay, Sue has asked also,

866

00:37:40,732--> 00:37:44,264

"can you talk about how you
use punctuation in your work?"

867

00:37:44,289--> 00:37:46,788

Is that something you give

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a lot of consideration to?"

868

00:37:46,812--> 00:37:47,908

-Ahh... Yes.

869

00:37:47,932--> 00:37:48,948

Uh...

870

00:37:51,000--> 00:37:53,028

I... I try... I...

871

00:37:53,052--> 00:37:56,781

I tend not to use semicolons
and colons very much.

872

00:37:56,805--> 00:38:01,000

If I want to space out,
maybe make a space,

873

00:38:01,000--> 00:38:02,348

uh...

874

00:38:02,372--> 00:38:06,028

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I'm even a bit suspicious
of commas sometimes.

875

00:38:06,052--> 00:38:07,268

[laughter]

876

00:38:07,292--> 00:38:11,068

I find sometimes
another way to...

877

00:38:11,092--> 00:38:13,000

to make the space...

878

00:38:13,000--> 00:38:14,468

Um...

879

00:38:14,492--> 00:38:16,548

I mean, I think a line break

880

00:38:16,572--> 00:38:18,244

sometimes works like a comma.

881

00:38:18,269--> 00:38:20,000

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So, um...

882

00:38:20,000--> 00:38:23,508

What else? I believe in...

883

00:38:23,532--> 00:38:27,000

in...

884

00:38:27,000--> 00:38:32,308

letting the upper and lowercase
happen the way it should.

885

00:38:32,332--> 00:38:34,508

I don't know if that's
punctuation or something else.

886

00:38:34,532--> 00:38:36,548

But, um...

887

00:38:36,572--> 00:38:40,348

What else? What are the
punctuations? Exclamations?

888

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00:38:40,372--> 00:38:43,000

If it's... if it's needed

for the poem,

889

00:38:43,000--> 00:38:44,788

I'll do anything.

890

00:38:44,812--> 00:38:47,948

I warp punctuation.

891

00:38:47,972--> 00:38:51,000

I don't use any tool I can,

892

00:38:51,000--> 00:38:55,708

grammatical, ungrammatical,

correct, incorrect,

893

00:38:55,732--> 00:39:00,000

I'll use any tool I can

to make the poem work.

894

00:39:00,000--> 00:39:02,788

-And do you do it on

a poem by poem basis

895

00:39:02,812--> 00:39:04,870

or will you, when you've
put them into a collection,

896

00:39:04,895--> 00:39:07,228

will you think,
okay, this needs to

897

00:39:07,252--> 00:39:09,028

apply across all the poems?

898

00:39:09,052--> 00:39:12,228

Like, there needs to be some
coherent rules, or will you not

899

00:39:12,252--> 00:39:13,908

think about that?

900

00:39:15,212--> 00:39:16,588

-Um...

901

00:39:17,666--> 00:39:20,308

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I suppose I try
and be consistent.

902

00:39:20,332--> 00:39:22,388

But really, when I'm writing,

903

00:39:22,412--> 00:39:23,868

I'm doing it poem by poem.

904

00:39:23,892--> 00:39:27,668

You know, obviously,
when... when I'm writing, it is

905

00:39:27,692--> 00:39:29,588

one poem at a time

906

00:39:29,612--> 00:39:32,458

and I never see it as a
book while I'm writing.

907

00:39:32,482--> 00:39:37,000

But yes, your question is
when I'm putting it together.

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908

00:39:37,000--> 00:39:38,548

Do I standardize

909

00:39:38,572--> 00:39:40,788

punctuation?

910

00:39:40,812--> 00:39:43,185

Not consciously.

911

00:39:43,209--> 00:39:45,468

I mean, I quite like

to be consistent,

912

00:39:45,492--> 00:39:47,388

but then even the

writing of the poem

913

00:39:47,412--> 00:39:50,000

is fairly consistent

because it's mine.

914

00:39:50,000--> 00:39:51,000

-Yes.

915

00:39:51,000--> 00:39:53,348

-It's just my
personal punctuation.

916

00:39:53,372--> 00:39:55,268

So the way I would handle it.

917

00:39:55,292--> 00:39:57,408

I wouldn't, for example, use

918

00:39:57,433--> 00:40:01,028

"and" ampersand, I tend not to.

919

00:40:01,052--> 00:40:04,000

So with just details like that.

920

00:40:04,000--> 00:40:05,708

[laughs]

921

00:40:05,732--> 00:40:09,000

-Well, I think I've covered
everything in the Q&A.

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922

00:40:09,000--> 00:40:10,988

I think.

923

00:40:11,012--> 00:40:13,108

Yes. But I...

924

00:40:13,132--> 00:40:15,868

I wanted to ask

you a bit more about

925

00:40:15,892--> 00:40:18,628

the idea of, like,

politics and activism

926

00:40:18,652--> 00:40:20,468

in your work.

927

00:40:20,492--> 00:40:22,828

Because we talked

about the bearing witness,

928

00:40:22,852--> 00:40:26,000

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but how do you
feel like the poems

929

00:40:26,000--> 00:40:28,832

can kind of be a
tool of activism?

930

00:40:30,614--> 00:40:34,788

-I think everything we do is
a tool of activism. I mean,

931

00:40:34,812--> 00:40:37,828

I think breathing is
political. The air we drink--

932

00:40:37,852--> 00:40:40,908

The air we breathe,
the water we're drinking,

933

00:40:40,932--> 00:40:42,975

intensely political.

934

00:40:43,000--> 00:40:44,908

So in the same way,

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935

00:40:44,932--> 00:40:47,916

every word outright

936

00:40:47,940--> 00:40:49,538

has its...

937

00:40:49,563--> 00:40:50,878

uh...

938

00:40:50,902--> 00:40:54,397

environment in

politics and is going to,

939

00:40:54,421--> 00:40:58,148

to me, be a kind of..

the only kind of activism

940

00:40:58,172--> 00:41:00,000

that I really

941

00:41:00,000--> 00:41:02,228

think I can do

942

00:41:02,252--> 00:41:07,000

in a way that's worthwhile.

943

00:41:07,000--> 00:41:08,000

-Hmm.

944

00:41:08,000--> 00:41:13,068

-Yes, I can go and stand on

945

00:41:13,092--> 00:41:15,828

and... and walk on the
street every Saturday,

946

00:41:15,852--> 00:41:18,000

and I do that, you know.

947

00:41:18,000--> 00:41:20,548

But... but...

948

00:41:20,572--> 00:41:24,628

Uh, that's a choice
that's kind of hidden.

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949

00:41:24,652--> 00:41:27,828

The poems are...

950

00:41:27,852--> 00:41:29,908

um...

951

00:41:31,000--> 00:41:33,258

I think we're all

political beings.

952

00:41:33,283--> 00:41:36,750

I think every poem

is a political act.

953

00:41:37,975--> 00:41:40,975

I can't separate them.

954

00:41:41,000--> 00:41:42,428

So if it's...

955

00:41:42,452--> 00:41:44,148

if it's about activism,

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956

00:41:44,172--> 00:41:46,348

uh...

957

00:41:46,372--> 00:41:49,188

to me, that is the activity.

958

00:41:49,212--> 00:41:50,851

The poem is the activity.

959

00:41:50,875--> 00:41:53,000

-Mmm...

960

00:41:53,000--> 00:41:54,748

-Thank you so much, Imtiaz.

961

00:41:54,772--> 00:41:58,428

I think that is a

lovely place to pause

962

00:41:58,452--> 00:42:01,000

and just thank you

for sharing your time...

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963

00:42:01,000--> 00:42:02,178

-Thank you.

964

00:42:02,202--> 00:42:03,911

-Your insights, your
poems with us today.

965

00:42:03,936--> 00:42:04,988

-Thank you.

966

00:42:05,012--> 00:42:07,028

-Yeah, really grateful
you did that for us

967

00:42:07,052--> 00:42:08,908

and I think this video,

968

00:42:08,932--> 00:42:10,908

as it will become, will
be a great resource

969

00:42:10,932--> 00:42:13,268

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for people as well to return to

970

00:42:13,292--> 00:42:16,000

and hear you talk so

beautifully about your work.

971

00:42:16,000--> 00:42:17,108

-Thank you, Dean.

972

00:42:17,132--> 00:42:19,145

You make the time go so fast.

973

00:42:19,170--> 00:42:20,265

[laughter]

974

00:42:20,289--> 00:42:21,668

-It does, it does.

975

00:42:21,692--> 00:42:24,428

Well, I just have to say a few

976

00:42:24,452--> 00:42:26,468

housekeeping outro bits.

977

00:42:26,492--> 00:42:29,268

So I just want to thank you
again, Imtiaz, for joining us,

978

00:42:29,292--> 00:42:31,868

and to Sarah for moderating.

979

00:42:31,892--> 00:42:34,000

Um, if you watching
have enjoyed,

980

00:42:34,000--> 00:42:37,748

this, um, please consider,

981

00:42:37,772--> 00:42:40,468

if you're not a member,
joining the Society of Authors

982

00:42:40,492--> 00:42:42,908

and you get a 20% discount

983

00:42:42,932--> 00:42:47,508

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off a first year of membership
with the discount code

984

00:42:47,532--> 00:42:50,428

SOAATHOME20.

985

00:42:50,452--> 00:42:53,548

Sarah's going to post
those details in the chat.

986

00:42:53,572--> 00:42:56,205

The next Society of
Authors at Home event

987

00:42:56,229--> 00:42:58,908

is going to be on
Tuesday 24 March,

988

00:42:58,932--> 00:43:05,548

Professional Development focused on
book marketing on TikTok for beginners.

989

00:43:05,572--> 00:43:07,325

I might come to

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that one, I need that.

990

00:43:07,350--> 00:43:10,588

And then, yeah, that

will go in the chat.

991

00:43:10,612--> 00:43:13,028

And please remember, if you can,

992

00:43:13,052--> 00:43:15,348

donate £5 to help

993

00:43:15,372--> 00:43:17,908

the Society of

Authors Access Fund.

994

00:43:17,932--> 00:43:19,865

That would be really great.

995

00:43:19,889--> 00:43:23,000

And do, again, check

out our bookshop

996

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00:43:23,000--> 00:43:25,508

where you'll be able to
buy The Shadow Reader,

997

00:43:25,532--> 00:43:27,548

perhaps some of my
books will be there,

998

00:43:27,572--> 00:43:30,388

and, uh, some of
Imtiaz's other books too.

999

00:43:30,412--> 00:43:35,028

So please do go and
support your poets,

1000

00:43:35,052--> 00:43:37,188

because we love your support.

1001

00:43:37,212--> 00:43:39,000

But thank you for being...

1002

00:43:39,000--> 00:43:42,228

watching this event, whether

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you're here with us live right now

1003

00:43:42,252--> 00:43:43,428

or watching the video.

1004

00:43:43,452--> 00:43:46,468

It is a real pleasure

to get to talk to

1005

00:43:46,492--> 00:43:50,348

one of my poetry

heroes and inspirations.

1006

00:43:50,372--> 00:43:54,068

I love my work with

the Society of Authors,

1007

00:43:54,092--> 00:43:55,238

so thank you.

1008

00:43:55,263--> 00:43:56,668

Um...

1009

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00:43:56,692--> 00:43:58,908

And, um, thanks for watching.

1010

00:43:58,932--> 00:44:01,068

Goodbye, everyone.

1011

00:44:01,092--> 00:44:07,000

Bye, Imtiaz.