

Industry Insider – Neurodiversity, disability justice,
and writing in Wales
Thursday 17 September 2026



00:00:00.000 --> 00:00:03.228

-So, yeah, I think we're
just gonna get things moving.

00:00:03.252 --> 00:00:07.108

And to say once more, thank you
very much for being here with us.

00:00:07.132 --> 00:00:11.308

I'm going to begin with a brief
audio description of myself.

00:00:11.332 --> 00:00:13.668

So, hi, my name's
Francesca Sobande.

00:00:13.692 --> 00:00:15.988

I'm Nigerian,
Scottish, and Welsh.

00:00:16.012 --> 00:00:18.908

I'm always wearing my
gold chain around my neck.

00:00:18.932 --> 00:00:23.188

Today, I'm wearing my black hair
in a sort of loosely styled Afro puffs

00:00:23.212 --> 00:00:25.308

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and with a bit of
a parted fringe.

00:00:25.332 --> 00:00:27.788

I'm also wearing dark
blue denim dungarees

00:00:27.812 --> 00:00:31.548

and a long sleeved sort of forest
green top with a zip up the front,

00:00:31.572 --> 00:00:34.068

as well as a pair
of two-tone glasses

00:00:34.092 --> 00:00:36.936

which are dark blue and
white with curved edges.

00:00:36.936 --> 00:00:40.948

And it's my pleasure to be able to
get to speak with Sofia Brizio today,

00:00:40.972 --> 00:00:44.868

who will be sharing thoughts and
reflections on different experiences

00:00:44.892 --> 00:00:50.508

related to today's Society of
Authors' Cymru Industry Insider session

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00:00:50.532 --> 00:00:54.936

on Neurodiversity, Disability
Justice and writing in Wales.

00:00:54.936 --> 00:00:57.068

So before I introduce Sofia,

00:00:57.092 --> 00:01:00.308

I'm going to spend a moment
on housekeeping information.

00:01:00.332 --> 00:01:04.188

Not necessarily the most exciting
stuff, but important nonetheless.

00:01:04.212 --> 00:01:08.988

So today's event is going to
run from 7pm to 8:30pm BST,

00:01:09.012 --> 00:01:13.628

and it will be recorded and
made publicly available afterwards.

00:01:13.652 --> 00:01:17.788

Attendees should hopefully have the option
to turn on the live transcript function

00:01:17.812 --> 00:01:19.508

to watch with subtitles.

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00:01:19.532 --> 00:01:21.108

And just as a bit of a reminder,

00:01:21.132 --> 00:01:23.428

or for anybody who's
not already seen,

00:01:23.452 --> 00:01:26.936

the general structure of
what's to come is as follows.

00:01:26.936 --> 00:01:29.988

I'm going to have a discussion
with Sofia for around about an hour,

00:01:30.012 --> 00:01:32.868

although there might be tangents
and I'm always here for them.

00:01:32.892 --> 00:01:36.828

Then we'll have a comfort
break for about five minutes

00:01:36.852 --> 00:01:41.588

and that'll be followed by an
audience Q&A for up to 20 minutes.

00:01:41.612 --> 00:01:43.948

So we're looking

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forward to any questions

00:01:43.972 --> 00:01:46.936

or any reflections that other
people have that they'd like to share.

00:01:46.936 --> 00:01:51.468

We'll finally finish up with some
closing comments and remarks.

00:01:51.492 --> 00:01:54.748

And the event is also being
moderated by Emma Boniwell,

00:01:54.772 --> 00:01:57.348

who is Head of Membership
and Author Communities

00:01:57.372 --> 00:01:58.936

at Society of Authors.

00:01:58.936 --> 00:02:01.588

So to say thank you to Emma
and everybody who's been involved

00:02:01.612 --> 00:02:03.385

in making today possible.

00:02:03.410 --> 00:02:05.188

With all of that covered,

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00:02:05.212 --> 00:02:06.936

I'd now like to
introduce our guest.

00:02:06.936 --> 00:02:12.588

Sofia Brizio is an Italian writer,
translator, and editor based in Wales.

00:02:12.612 --> 00:02:14.148

Living with cerebral palsy,

00:02:14.172 --> 00:02:16.108

Sofia writes about
disability rights,

00:02:16.132 --> 00:02:18.028

LGBTQ+ rights,

00:02:18.052 --> 00:02:20.936

and trans-inclusive
intersectional feminism..

00:02:20.936 --> 00:02:24.428

She's currently a PhD
researcher in Media Diversity

00:02:24.452 --> 00:02:26.348

at Birmingham City University.

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00:02:26.372 --> 00:02:30.068

And Sofia's writing covers a
range of different themes and topics

00:02:30.092 --> 00:02:31.318

and provocations.

00:02:31.343 --> 00:02:36.308

This includes work which has
featured in Beyond/Tu Hwnt,

00:02:36.332 --> 00:02:39.628

an anthology of work by
Welsh deaf and disabled writers,

00:02:39.652 --> 00:02:41.668

edited by Bethany Handley,

00:02:41.692 --> 00:02:43.525

Megan Angharad Hunter,

00:02:43.549 --> 00:02:45.588

and Sioned Erin Hughes,

00:02:45.612 --> 00:02:47.379

published by Lucent Dreaming.

00:02:47.403 --> 00:02:51.428

Such writing by Sofia also
includes work in the anthology

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00:02:51.452 --> 00:02:54.418

The Waters That Raised Us:
Personal Reflections from Wales,

00:02:54.442 --> 00:02:57.708

edited by Taylor Edmonds
and published by Seren Books.

00:02:57.732 --> 00:03:00.268

And I could go on and
on, but I'll just say, Sofia,

00:03:00.292 --> 00:03:01.908

thanks very much for joining us.

00:03:01.932 --> 00:03:03.936

And to sort of

00:03:03.936 --> 00:03:06.908

ask you something
and to open things up,

00:03:06.932 --> 00:03:08.548

I felt that a good
place to start

00:03:08.572 --> 00:03:12.428

was by finding out more about
what led you to becoming a writer,

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00:03:12.452 --> 00:03:15.428

and to just find out
about some of the writing,

00:03:15.452 --> 00:03:17.668

or some of the writers
or different people,

00:03:17.692 --> 00:03:20.508

and places that shape
what you write about

00:03:20.532 --> 00:03:21.936

and why.

00:03:21.936 --> 00:03:25.628

Thank you so much for
this wonderful introduction.

00:03:25.652 --> 00:03:29.948

And thank you so much for
having me and Francesca,

00:03:29.972 --> 00:03:32.748

thank you for
moderating this event. I...

00:03:32.772 --> 00:03:36.148

I'm going to start with a

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brief description of myself.

00:03:36.172 --> 00:03:39.068

I'm a white woman

00:03:39.092 --> 00:03:43.268

with dark hair that is
currently tied up in a bun.

00:03:43.292 --> 00:03:48.348

I'm wearing a white
t-shirt and white--

00:03:48.372 --> 00:03:50.936

Sorry, blue glasses.

00:03:50.936 --> 00:03:54.051

And that is me.

00:03:54.075 --> 00:03:55.188

Um...

00:03:55.212 --> 00:03:57.828

So what led me to
becoming a writer?

00:03:57.852 --> 00:03:59.108

Oh, I always...

00:03:59.132 --> 00:04:02.936

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kind of struggle to answer
this question because I can't...

00:04:02.936 --> 00:04:07.508

I genuinely cannot
remember a time

00:04:07.532 --> 00:04:09.628

where I wasn't writing.

00:04:09.652 --> 00:04:11.668

And I know it
sounds a bit cliché.

00:04:11.692 --> 00:04:13.348

It sounds like, you know, that

00:04:13.372 --> 00:04:15.668

everyone says that--
Every writer I know says

00:04:15.692 --> 00:04:18.148

that it's kind of always

00:04:18.172 --> 00:04:20.936

what they wanted to do.

00:04:20.936 --> 00:04:24.148

And for me, I think
it was I was always

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00:04:24.172 --> 00:04:26.948

fascinated by words.

00:04:26.972 --> 00:04:28.548

I...

00:04:28.572 --> 00:04:30.428

When I was a kid,

00:04:30.452 --> 00:04:32.429

my grandpa taught me to write

00:04:32.454 --> 00:04:35.508

way before I went

to primary school

00:04:35.532 --> 00:04:39.268

because he was worried

that because of my disability,

00:04:39.292 --> 00:04:42.268

I would kind of fall behind

with the fact that it took me

00:04:42.292 --> 00:04:45.148

sometimes longer

to learn new things.

00:04:45.172 --> 00:04:48.508

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And so when I was about 4 or 5,

00:04:48.532 --> 00:04:50.388

he started teaching
me how to write.

00:04:50.412 --> 00:04:54.948

And that's kind of where
my fascination started.

00:04:54.972 --> 00:04:57.428

And then I was encouraged
to pursue it because

00:04:57.452 --> 00:05:01.228

I grew up in a family
of really strong readers,

00:05:01.252 --> 00:05:04.468

and so I was kind of
surrounded by books.

00:05:04.492 --> 00:05:05.508

And...

00:05:05.532 --> 00:05:08.668

Then I think it was
when I was seven

00:05:08.692 --> 00:05:10.348

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that I got my first journal

00:05:10.372 --> 00:05:13.305

because I've always had
kind of really big feelings

00:05:13.329 --> 00:05:15.908

and I didn't really
know where to put them.

00:05:15.932 --> 00:05:19.936

And I think writing
became that for me.

00:05:19.936 --> 00:05:24.388

And it's just been part
of my life ever since.

00:05:24.412 --> 00:05:28.068

And at first it was a way of,

00:05:28.092 --> 00:05:30.148

you know, putting
my feelings into words

00:05:30.172 --> 00:05:32.548

and then as I grew,

00:05:32.572 --> 00:05:35.936

it kind of became a way to

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00:05:35.936 --> 00:05:39.028
invent worlds outside my own

00:05:39.052 --> 00:05:42.988
and kind of come
up with stories.

00:05:43.012 --> 00:05:46.468
But I didn't... I didn't
really think that I would

00:05:46.492 --> 00:05:48.148
become a writer

00:05:48.172 --> 00:05:51.588
when it came to choosing

00:05:51.612 --> 00:05:54.936
what to pursue as
a university course.

00:05:54.936 --> 00:05:56.228
Um...

00:05:56.252 --> 00:05:59.211
My parents encouraged me
to pick something creative,

00:05:59.235 --> 00:06:01.468

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and I wanted to
do creative writing.

00:06:01.492 --> 00:06:03.078

[laughs]

00:06:03.102 --> 00:06:05.868

And they were like,
okay, that's maybe

00:06:05.892 --> 00:06:08.348

not realistic enough.

00:06:08.372 --> 00:06:09.372

Um...

00:06:09.396 --> 00:06:10.908

Maybe pick something

00:06:10.932 --> 00:06:12.908

that is a little bit
more practical,

00:06:12.932 --> 00:06:15.348

but still creative.

00:06:15.372 --> 00:06:16.908

And so I ended up
picking journalism,

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00:06:16.932 --> 00:06:19.468

which is probably not...

00:06:19.492 --> 00:06:21.668

You know, it's

probably as precarious

00:06:21.692 --> 00:06:24.588

as writing in terms

of job prospects.

00:06:24.612 --> 00:06:26.828

But for some reason at that time

00:06:26.852 --> 00:06:29.428

felt like a little bit more

of a practical choice.

00:06:29.452 --> 00:06:31.788

And I think it was a good choice

00:06:31.812 --> 00:06:34.988

in that I don't think I would

have had as much fun

00:06:35.012 --> 00:06:38.936

in a Creative Writing degree as I did in

my Journalism degree, because that's

00:06:38.936 --> 00:06:41.988

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kind of what led me to then

00:06:42.012 --> 00:06:45.668

doing the job that I do now
and the disability activism

00:06:45.692 --> 00:06:48.936

and all of that.

So I think, yeah...

00:06:48.936 --> 00:06:52.788

I think I was just really
lucky and really privileged

00:06:52.812 --> 00:06:54.908

to be able to do
what I do. And I...

00:06:54.932 --> 00:06:56.948

Yeah, if I became a writer,

00:06:56.972 --> 00:07:00.708

it's only because of all the
people that took a chance on me.

00:07:00.732 --> 00:07:03.548

And I've been reflecting on
this just yesterday because

00:07:03.572 --> 00:07:07.515

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I celebrated 10 years
of living in Wales

00:07:07.540 --> 00:07:10.628

So yeah, I think I was just

00:07:10.652 --> 00:07:12.936

really lucky. And as for my...

00:07:12.936 --> 00:07:15.708

Maybe, I guess recent work

00:07:15.732 --> 00:07:18.268

is truly been inspired

00:07:18.292 --> 00:07:21.308

by all the people
that I've met in Wales.

00:07:21.332 --> 00:07:23.308

As you said, the...

00:07:23.332 --> 00:07:25.588

the kind of publications
that you mentioned,

00:07:25.612 --> 00:07:26.936

um...

00:07:26.936 --> 00:07:29.748

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It's... I think

00:07:29.772 --> 00:07:33.268

I felt really valued
in those spaces

00:07:33.292 --> 00:07:36.348

where both books took shape.

00:07:36.372 --> 00:07:39.188

And it's given me
more confidence

00:07:39.212 --> 00:07:42.588

to kind of maybe pursue things
that I've not written about before.

00:07:42.612 --> 00:07:44.748

So after, for example, after

00:07:44.772 --> 00:07:46.948

The Waters That
Raised Us, I've started

00:07:46.972 --> 00:07:49.988

thinking about nature
a lot more, that I...

00:07:50.012 --> 00:07:53.228

It wasn't something that

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was in my writing before.

00:07:53.252 --> 00:07:54.468

Whereas now,

00:07:54.492 --> 00:07:57.268

I'm trying to

00:07:57.292 --> 00:08:00.468

get into that dimension a bit
more, especially writing about water

00:08:00.492 --> 00:08:04.588

which is kind of my
element as a paraswimmer.

00:08:04.612 --> 00:08:07.936

And then, I guess

00:08:07.936 --> 00:08:10.748

I've always liked, um...

00:08:10.772 --> 00:08:12.788

writing about writing

00:08:12.812 --> 00:08:15.708

and writing about language
and writing about translation.

00:08:15.732 --> 00:08:18.388

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So I would say this is
kind of my main focus

00:08:18.412 --> 00:08:20.936
outside of my PhD
thesis at the moment.

00:08:21.652 --> 00:08:24.167
-Thank you. I feel that there's
a lot I want to come back to,

00:08:24.191 --> 00:08:25.748
including big feelings,

00:08:25.772 --> 00:08:28.268
world building,
writing about writing.

00:08:28.292 --> 00:08:32.628
And before we return to some of that,
I wanted to find out a bit more about

00:08:32.652 --> 00:08:34.548
your thoughts and process.

00:08:34.572 --> 00:08:37.268
So I feel like that's
a term that can,

00:08:37.292 --> 00:08:38.868

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depending on how
people feel about it,

00:08:38.892 --> 00:08:41.668

some people like to talk
about, you know, the process.

00:08:41.692 --> 00:08:45.268

Other people feel as though that's
not a word that actually really captures

00:08:45.292 --> 00:08:46.868

what they do or how they do it.

00:08:46.892 --> 00:08:49.268

So, just thinking
a bit about that,

00:08:49.292 --> 00:08:51.268

I was interested in knowing more

00:08:51.292 --> 00:08:52.936

about the way you
approach writing.

00:08:52.936 --> 00:08:55.788

And one of the reasons
why I was interested in this

00:08:55.812 --> 00:08:58.388

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is it feels as though
sometimes there can be

00:08:58.412 --> 00:09:01.988

this sort of perception
of writing and writers

00:09:02.012 --> 00:09:04.908

as always involving
these set routines.

00:09:04.932 --> 00:09:07.936

But the reality is, we know
people's experiences of

00:09:07.936 --> 00:09:10.778

routines, time, space, rituals

00:09:10.802 --> 00:09:12.748

that may or may not
be a part of writing

00:09:12.772 --> 00:09:14.788

can vary for a lot
of different reasons,

00:09:14.812 --> 00:09:16.988

including, but not limited to,

00:09:17.012 --> 00:09:19.188

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the impacts of societal ableism

00:09:19.212 --> 00:09:21.508

and other interconnected
inequalities.

00:09:21.532 --> 00:09:25.171

So, how would you describe
your own experience of writing?

00:09:25.196 --> 00:09:27.508

And how you approach
the process of it,

00:09:27.532 --> 00:09:29.936

if you think of it
as a process at all?

00:09:29.936 --> 00:09:32.936

-Yeah, I think...

00:09:32.936 --> 00:09:34.531

Again...

00:09:34.555 --> 00:09:35.562

[laughs]

00:09:35.587 --> 00:09:38.365

It's always a bit of a struggle for
me to answer this question because

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00:09:38.390 --> 00:09:42.108

I don't really have
a process per se.

00:09:42.132 --> 00:09:45.388

And I've been reflecting
about this a lot and I think...

00:09:45.412 --> 00:09:47.548

I don't know if it's because

00:09:47.572 --> 00:09:50.628

I kind of still
struggle to see myself

00:09:50.652 --> 00:09:52.868

as a writer, per se,

00:09:52.892 --> 00:09:55.068

because it, you know, before

00:09:55.092 --> 00:09:58.936

being published in indie
anthologies that you mentioned,

00:09:58.936 --> 00:10:01.348

I mainly worked in journalism.

00:10:01.372 --> 00:10:04.148

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So I kind of saw myself
as more as a journalist

00:10:04.172 --> 00:10:05.708
and I think to...

00:10:05.732 --> 00:10:08.936
In my experience, I never saw

00:10:08.936 --> 00:10:11.668
any particular process

00:10:11.692 --> 00:10:14.708
in journalism except for

00:10:14.732 --> 00:10:18.308
the processes that were
dictated by the newsroom itself.

00:10:18.332 --> 00:10:20.838
So, like, you know, the way
that you conduct an interview,

00:10:20.862 --> 00:10:22.548
the way that you transcribe it,

00:10:22.572 --> 00:10:25.108
the timings for, you know,

00:10:25.132 --> 00:10:27.668

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the deadline for publication
and everything like that.

00:10:27.692 --> 00:10:30.936

So it was kind of a very

00:10:30.936 --> 00:10:35.031

um... strict process

00:10:35.055 --> 00:10:37.948

where I almost didn't have time
to think about the process itself.

00:10:37.972 --> 00:10:40.148

Whereas with

00:10:40.172 --> 00:10:44.468

writing an essay
for an anthology

00:10:44.492 --> 00:10:46.936

or you know something like that,

00:10:46.936 --> 00:10:50.345

I think it's quite
different, because it's...

00:10:50.370 --> 00:10:52.548

I see it as more creative

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00:10:52.572 --> 00:10:54.936

than journalism, per se.

00:10:54.936 --> 00:10:59.428

So for me, there's a
lot more chaos to that

00:10:59.452 --> 00:11:01.348

than there was to writing

00:11:01.372 --> 00:11:03.748

purely journalistic
articles, so...

00:11:03.772 --> 00:11:04.936

Um...

00:11:04.936 --> 00:11:08.936

I think one of the
things for me is

00:11:08.936 --> 00:11:12.308

I really rely on inspiration,

00:11:12.332 --> 00:11:17.108

which I think is the exact opposite of
what people tell you to do when you start

00:11:17.132 --> 00:11:20.936

learning about the

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kind of the technical

00:11:20.936 --> 00:11:22.468

side of writing.

00:11:22.492 --> 00:11:23.591

Um...

00:11:23.615 --> 00:11:25.711

I really rely on

inspiration to strike.

00:11:25.735 --> 00:11:29.145

Like, if I'm not inspired to write
something, it won't get written.

00:11:29.169 --> 00:11:30.468

Like, it's... [laughs]

00:11:30.492 --> 00:11:33.468

And I think it's, um...

00:11:33.492 --> 00:11:34.998

Especially with my PhD,

00:11:35.022 --> 00:11:37.108

it's being hammered

into us that they...

00:11:37.132 --> 00:11:38.936

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We... we can't rely on

00:11:38.936 --> 00:11:41.668

inspiration, because
we are on a deadline.

00:11:41.692 --> 00:11:44.148

Because, you know,
sometimes you get in a slump

00:11:44.172 --> 00:11:45.936

with your thesis, and
you have to write like

00:11:45.936 --> 00:11:48.758

15,000 words and
they won't get written

00:11:48.782 --> 00:11:51.188

unless you sit
down and write them,

00:11:51.212 --> 00:11:54.028

regardless of whether
you feel inspired or not.

00:11:54.052 --> 00:11:55.988

And I've always really
struggled with that

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00:11:56.012 --> 00:11:58.708

because to me it's...

it's all about inspiration.

00:11:58.732 --> 00:12:00.936

Sometimes I'll

get inspired, like,

00:12:00.936 --> 00:12:02.748

two hours before the deadline,

00:12:02.772 --> 00:12:04.148

and so I'll just

write, you know.

00:12:04.172 --> 00:12:05.388

Um...

00:12:05.412 --> 00:12:07.431

I'll just give myself

two hours to write, and

00:12:07.455 --> 00:12:10.531

it's probably, I think, I don't know

if it's part of being neurodivergent

00:12:10.555 --> 00:12:12.918

or if it's just me being me or,

00:12:12.942 --> 00:12:14.669

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um...

00:12:14.694 --> 00:12:18.468

I think, yeah, I'm very
chaotic in my process

00:12:18.492 --> 00:12:21.748

and I wouldn't necessarily
recommend doing what I do.

00:12:21.772 --> 00:12:24.588

It also really depends
on what I'm writing,

00:12:24.612 --> 00:12:27.936

because if I'm writing about
something that I'm familiar with

00:12:27.936 --> 00:12:30.828

and it's a topic that
I'm familiar with,

00:12:30.852 --> 00:12:34.468

regardless of whether
it's fiction or non-fiction,

00:12:34.492 --> 00:12:38.308

I just go straight
in and I just trust

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00:12:38.332 --> 00:12:41.628

my first draft, mostly.

00:12:41.652 --> 00:12:42.936

Um...

00:12:42.936 --> 00:12:46.068

Whereas, if it's something
that I'm not familiar with,

00:12:46.092 --> 00:12:47.936

for example, the...

00:12:47.936 --> 00:12:49.184

Um...

00:12:49.208 --> 00:12:52.588

When I wrote the essay for
The Waters That Raised Us,

00:12:52.612 --> 00:12:56.028

it was a really interesting process
for me because it was something

00:12:56.052 --> 00:12:58.388

that I'd never
written about before.

00:12:58.412 --> 00:13:00.668

And so I did

00:13:00.692 --> 00:13:03.108

a lot of research beforehand

00:13:03.132 --> 00:13:05.348

to make sure that what I had

00:13:05.372 --> 00:13:06.936

in my head

00:13:06.936 --> 00:13:11.468

matched what was actually
real, if that makes sense.

00:13:11.492 --> 00:13:14.828

And I was putting
facts that were actually,

00:13:14.852 --> 00:13:16.548

kind of,

00:13:16.572 --> 00:13:19.468

matching my lived experience.

00:13:19.492 --> 00:13:20.828

Um...

00:13:20.852 --> 00:13:22.936

And...

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00:13:22.936 --> 00:13:25.108

Yeah, so I think,

00:13:25.132 --> 00:13:29.028

as well, one of the things that
I really pay attention to is, like,

00:13:29.052 --> 00:13:31.708

if I get an idea to
write something,

00:13:31.732 --> 00:13:34.708

I let it sit in my
brain for a little bit.

00:13:34.732 --> 00:13:37.118

And if I forget about
it, it means that it wasn't

00:13:37.142 --> 00:13:39.628

that good of an idea,
but if it comes back

00:13:39.652 --> 00:13:41.588

again and again,

00:13:41.612 --> 00:13:44.238

then it means

00:13:44.263 --> 00:13:47.268

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that it's probably
worth pursuing.

00:13:47.292 --> 00:13:48.548
Um...

00:13:48.572 --> 00:13:49.971
And then, if that happens,

00:13:49.995 --> 00:13:53.388
then I start kind of jotting it
down to just make it stay there.

00:13:53.412 --> 00:13:56.988
And then if I really need
a push to start writing,

00:13:57.012 --> 00:13:59.828
I talk to my friends about it,

00:13:59.852 --> 00:14:02.668
because it's kind
of like verbalizing it.

00:14:02.692 --> 00:14:04.188
It's like, oh, I've said it now,

00:14:04.212 --> 00:14:05.736
so I have to do
it. Like, you know?

00:14:05.760 --> 00:14:06.760

[laughs]

00:14:06.784 --> 00:14:07.828

Um...

00:14:07.852 --> 00:14:09.936

And...

00:14:09.936 --> 00:14:13.468

Yeah, so I think

this kind of process

00:14:13.492 --> 00:14:16.028

makes it so that

then I'm able to

00:14:16.052 --> 00:14:18.936

work on a first

draft that I generally

00:14:18.936 --> 00:14:21.348

kind of trust. And then

00:14:21.372 --> 00:14:24.188

I normally, I don't edit a lot.

00:14:24.212 --> 00:14:25.936

Um...

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00:14:25.936 --> 00:14:27.205

And I think

00:14:27.229 --> 00:14:30.818

it's part of my process in that if I
mull over something for too long,

00:14:30.842 --> 00:14:32.668

then it... it makes it worse

00:14:32.692 --> 00:14:34.108

and I start
questioning everything.

00:14:34.132 --> 00:14:35.936

So, yeah.

00:14:35.936 --> 00:14:38.988

-Thank you. There's
so many things there

00:14:39.012 --> 00:14:40.948

that resonate, including
the discussion of, like,

00:14:40.972 --> 00:14:43.948

the chaoticness that
can be part of writing

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00:14:43.972 --> 00:14:47.468

and sort of like sitting with
different forms of inspiration.

00:14:47.492 --> 00:14:50.108

And I think also something
you've touched on there is how,

00:14:50.132 --> 00:14:51.936

you know, different
experiences of... of

00:14:51.936 --> 00:14:53.508

educational environments,

00:14:53.532 --> 00:14:55.868

where educational
systems can sometimes

00:14:55.892 --> 00:14:58.788

present writing in
more restrictive ways

00:14:58.812 --> 00:15:02.788

and ways that are at odds with sort
of the ebbs and flows of creativity.

00:15:02.812 --> 00:15:05.087

So thinking about some of that

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00:15:05.111 --> 00:15:06.936

and also what you've
shared to do with

00:15:06.936 --> 00:15:09.068

the social nature of writing, so

00:15:09.092 --> 00:15:11.068

the community of
people that's part of it,

00:15:11.092 --> 00:15:13.936

even if writing can involve
sitting in solitude quite a bit,

00:15:13.936 --> 00:15:15.828

I thought it would be good to

00:15:15.852 --> 00:15:19.308

sort of find out more
about your thoughts on

00:15:19.332 --> 00:15:21.468

time in relation to all of this.

00:15:21.492 --> 00:15:25.348

So I often find myself
thinking about different

00:15:25.372 --> 00:15:30.268

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notions of so-called slow versus
speedy approaches to writing,

00:15:30.292 --> 00:15:33.068

or even things like
who might be praised

00:15:33.092 --> 00:15:37.308

for their sort of creatively
inspiring, chaotic approach to writing,

00:15:37.332 --> 00:15:40.108

and who might be written
off as disorganized or messy.

00:15:40.860 --> 00:15:44.468

So... Yeah, just thinking about
again how the interconnected nature

00:15:44.492 --> 00:15:46.068

of different forms of oppression

00:15:46.092 --> 00:15:50.508

via ableism, racism, Islamophobia,
transphobia, homophobia, and more

00:15:50.532 --> 00:15:53.828

can shape who is
supported to write

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00:15:53.852 --> 00:15:56.588

and who gets the
time and space to do it.

00:15:56.612 --> 00:15:57.908

I was wondering

00:15:57.932 --> 00:16:01.308

what your thoughts
are on why it is important

00:16:01.332 --> 00:16:03.668

for the Welsh
literature landscape

00:16:03.692 --> 00:16:06.868

to embrace different
approaches to writing processes

00:16:06.892 --> 00:16:11.936

and sort of including the varying
amounts of time that it can take people

00:16:11.936 --> 00:16:14.708

to flourish with their writing.

00:16:14.732 --> 00:16:20.468

And yeah, that's quite a few different
ways of basically asking your thoughts on

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00:16:20.492 --> 00:16:23.148

why does the Welsh
literature landscape

00:16:23.172 --> 00:16:24.828

need to embrace

00:16:24.852 --> 00:16:28.948

the different types of conditions
under which people can thrive as writers,

00:16:28.972 --> 00:16:31.936

particularly when thinking
about the experiences of

00:16:31.936 --> 00:16:34.316

neurodivergent
and disabled writers.

00:16:35.331 --> 00:16:37.188

-Yeah, I think

00:16:37.212 --> 00:16:41.428

it's interesting, the... the question
about time, because I think

00:16:41.452 --> 00:16:44.611

within the disability and
neurodivergent space,

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00:16:44.635 --> 00:16:46.188

it just varies so much.

00:16:46.212 --> 00:16:48.187

Like, I myself don't have

00:16:48.211 --> 00:16:50.911

a consistent way of working,

00:16:50.936 --> 00:16:52.828

partly because of my body,

00:16:52.852 --> 00:16:56.148

because I have an
energy limiting condition.

00:16:56.172 --> 00:16:58.068

And so, you know,

00:16:58.092 --> 00:17:00.988

if I'm tired, I'm not
able to do much work,

00:17:01.012 --> 00:17:04.108

and sometimes I'm not able
to predict when I'll be tired.

00:17:04.132 --> 00:17:06.348

But also,

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00:17:06.372 --> 00:17:10.122

I think my brain as well has a
very inconsistent way of working.

00:17:10.146 --> 00:17:11.508

I really need to feel,

00:17:11.532 --> 00:17:15.148

again, inspired and
motivated to be able to write,

00:17:15.172 --> 00:17:17.588

um, consistently.

00:17:17.612 --> 00:17:21.268

But then I think about other
neurodivergent writers like

00:17:21.292 --> 00:17:24.936

Elle McNicoll, for
example. Like, she...

00:17:24.936 --> 00:17:27.268

I follow her on social media

00:17:27.292 --> 00:17:30.865

and she often talks about how
she is a really speedy writer.

00:17:30.889 --> 00:17:34.708

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Like, she's, like, you know,
putting out books really quickly.

00:17:34.732 --> 00:17:36.268

But that's not
necessarily negative.

00:17:36.292 --> 00:17:38.508

That's her being,
like, super focused

00:17:38.532 --> 00:17:41.308

on what she needs to do,
and that's part of her process.

00:17:41.332 --> 00:17:43.548

And she always makes
it clear that, you know,

00:17:43.572 --> 00:17:46.205

I wouldn't hold
anyone else to this

00:17:46.229 --> 00:17:48.468

same standard
because that's what just...

00:17:48.492 --> 00:17:50.068

just what works for me.

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00:17:50.092 --> 00:17:52.468

And I think that's a
really important point,

00:17:52.492 --> 00:17:54.028

and I think in terms of

00:17:54.052 --> 00:17:56.936

supporting, um,

00:17:56.936 --> 00:17:59.708

disabled and
neurodivergent writers

00:17:59.732 --> 00:18:01.828

also means being prepared

00:18:01.852 --> 00:18:04.068

and open

00:18:04.092 --> 00:18:06.668

to different ways of
thinking and working.

00:18:06.692 --> 00:18:09.348

That's probably what
real representation

00:18:09.372 --> 00:18:11.588

means to me.

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00:18:11.612 --> 00:18:12.936

Um...

00:18:12.936 --> 00:18:16.588

I think, again, I'm speaking
from my own experience,

00:18:16.612 --> 00:18:18.548

so it's not universal.

00:18:18.572 --> 00:18:20.936

But I think you can't claim to

00:18:20.936 --> 00:18:24.936

want to represent disabled
and neurodivergent writers if

00:18:24.936 --> 00:18:28.028

you're not willing to embrace

00:18:28.052 --> 00:18:33.028

a sort of anti-capitalist
mindset on some level,

00:18:33.052 --> 00:18:34.708

which is...

00:18:34.732 --> 00:18:38.268

I realize that it's kind

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of contradictory to say,

00:18:38.292 --> 00:18:40.308

because, you

know, as a publisher,

00:18:40.332 --> 00:18:41.448

you're trying to sell books

00:18:41.472 --> 00:18:43.778

and as an author, you're

trying to make a living

00:18:43.803 --> 00:18:45.628

through writing, so obviously

00:18:45.652 --> 00:18:49.936

capitalism exists

within that process.

00:18:49.936 --> 00:18:51.948

But again,

00:18:51.972 --> 00:18:53.908

as someone with an

energy limiting condition,

00:18:53.932 --> 00:18:54.936

I try to

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00:18:54.936 --> 00:18:57.868

be very clear about

00:18:57.892 --> 00:19:00.828

asking for more time
and support if I need it,

00:19:00.852 --> 00:19:03.908

when I'm working
with publishers.

00:19:03.932 --> 00:19:06.988

And a lot of them have
been accommodating.

00:19:07.012 --> 00:19:08.948

Others haven't.

00:19:08.972 --> 00:19:10.936

Um...

00:19:10.936 --> 00:19:12.548

But, um...

00:19:12.572 --> 00:19:16.936

I think this speaks volumes
to, like, what you're actually

00:19:16.936 --> 00:19:18.936

willing to do

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00:19:18.936 --> 00:19:21.748

to again represent people.

00:19:21.772 --> 00:19:25.508

And it's not just about
putting out a book by

00:19:25.532 --> 00:19:28.628

a disabled or
neurodivergent author

00:19:28.652 --> 00:19:30.198

and saying that
you've done your job,

00:19:30.222 --> 00:19:32.119

or putting out a book
with a disabled character

00:19:32.143 --> 00:19:33.708

and saying that
you've done your job.

00:19:33.732 --> 00:19:35.588

It goes much deeper than that.

00:19:35.612 --> 00:19:36.936

So yeah.

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00:19:36.936 --> 00:19:38.618

-Thank you.

00:19:38.642 --> 00:19:42.188

It was... What you're saying just
there was also making me think about

00:19:42.212 --> 00:19:45.068

just the different stages
that can be involved in

00:19:45.092 --> 00:19:47.108

writing and different
types of publishing and,

00:19:47.132 --> 00:19:48.948

you know, if there is
a publisher involved,

00:19:48.972 --> 00:19:52.388

depending on how
supportive they are or aren't,

00:19:52.412 --> 00:19:54.936

I'm thinking about times when
maybe someone has spent

00:19:54.936 --> 00:19:56.868

months or years in writing.

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00:19:56.892 --> 00:19:59.828

And let's say it's tens
and thousands of words

00:19:59.852 --> 00:20:02.388

and they're given
proofs to proofread

00:20:02.412 --> 00:20:05.308

with, like, a 24-hour,
48-hour window,

00:20:05.332 --> 00:20:07.708

and I think, you know, that
can be difficult for anybody

00:20:07.732 --> 00:20:09.108

at any point in time. But

00:20:09.132 --> 00:20:11.508

particularly when we're
speaking about the different

00:20:11.532 --> 00:20:13.891

types of inequalities
that people face,

00:20:13.915 --> 00:20:17.188

I'd like to see more publishers

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00:20:17.212 --> 00:20:20.548
and different people
involved in the literature space

00:20:20.572 --> 00:20:22.588
being cognizant of how,

00:20:22.612 --> 00:20:25.936
you know, the turnaround time
for different aspects of writing can

00:20:25.936 --> 00:20:28.468
or cannot

00:20:28.492 --> 00:20:31.828
sort of replicate
the sort of ableism

00:20:31.852 --> 00:20:33.598
that we're saying
needs to be addressed.

00:20:33.623 --> 00:20:35.548
-Yeah, absolutely. And I think for me,

00:20:35.572 --> 00:20:37.668
a huge issue is also

00:20:37.692 --> 00:20:40.188
internalised

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ableism a little bit.

00:20:40.212 --> 00:20:43.508

Like sometimes

I just don't ask for

00:20:43.532 --> 00:20:45.588

extensions or a leeway

00:20:45.612 --> 00:20:48.428

because I think, oh,

I can do this. It's fine.

00:20:48.452 --> 00:20:50.936

Like, I don't always want

to be the one asking for

00:20:50.936 --> 00:20:52.548

adjustments.

00:20:52.572 --> 00:20:55.268

And I realized that

most of the time,

00:20:55.292 --> 00:20:59.548

I just work myself

to extreme tiredness,

00:20:59.572 --> 00:21:02.908

because, I don't want to

00:21:02.932 --> 00:21:05.908

be asking for adjustments, because
sometimes it does still feel like

00:21:05.932 --> 00:21:07.936

I'm being a little bit
of an inconvenience.

00:21:07.936 --> 00:21:10.588

Even though I, you know,
rationally know that's not true

00:21:10.612 --> 00:21:13.428

and I'm just asking for
what I need to to do my job.

00:21:13.452 --> 00:21:15.388

-And this is where also
what you were saying.

00:21:15.412 --> 00:21:17.588

If more places
were more proactive,

00:21:17.612 --> 00:21:20.788

then you wouldn't have to
be faced with that burden of

00:21:20.812 --> 00:21:22.428

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having to ask, right? So,

00:21:22.452 --> 00:21:25.268

yeah, anybody who's
in a position to be

00:21:25.292 --> 00:21:28.308

encouraging and
ensuring that organizations

00:21:28.332 --> 00:21:30.936

address all this
more substantially,

00:21:30.936 --> 00:21:32.868

please pass on these messages.

00:21:32.892 --> 00:21:35.868

So, sort of continuing
that train of thought,

00:21:35.892 --> 00:21:38.548

some of what you were speaking
about there made me think about

00:21:38.572 --> 00:21:41.388

when you, you know, you spoke
about an anti-capitalist position.

00:21:41.412 --> 00:21:45.108

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And I guess also challenging
the comparison culture

00:21:45.132 --> 00:21:47.628
or the competitive culture
that can sometimes be part

00:21:47.652 --> 00:21:49.948
of certain aspects
of writing worlds.

00:21:49.972 --> 00:21:53.148
And it made me think again
about some of what you spoke about

00:21:53.172 --> 00:21:55.828
to do with feeling
supported by people.

00:21:55.852 --> 00:21:57.468
And with that in mind,

00:21:57.492 --> 00:21:59.508
I wanted to ask you
a bit more around

00:21:59.532 --> 00:22:02.936
sort of where or when you
feel in community with other

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00:22:02.936 --> 00:22:05.988

writers, creators, makers,

00:22:06.012 --> 00:22:08.108

and how that helps you to

00:22:08.132 --> 00:22:10.936

share and develop and
deepen your own work.

00:22:10.936 --> 00:22:14.748

Yeah, I think it's interesting
that you... that you

00:22:14.772 --> 00:22:17.148

talked about that kind
of sense of competition

00:22:17.172 --> 00:22:20.388

that sometimes you can feel
when working in a creative industry.

00:22:20.412 --> 00:22:21.628

I think, weirdly enough,

00:22:21.652 --> 00:22:23.028

I've not...

00:22:23.052 --> 00:22:25.936

Like, in Wales

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specifically and in Cardiff,

00:22:25.936 --> 00:22:27.188

I've not felt it.

00:22:27.212 --> 00:22:30.936

I've felt the exact opposite
and I think I... Well...

00:22:30.936 --> 00:22:33.828

On the one hand, I felt really

00:22:33.852 --> 00:22:36.708

understood when I
moved to Wales in general.

00:22:36.732 --> 00:22:40.788

I think because it's
obviously a bilingual nation,

00:22:40.812 --> 00:22:41.936

it kind of...

00:22:41.936 --> 00:22:44.908

I don't know, I felt
more at home in Wales

00:22:44.932 --> 00:22:46.285

than I probably
would in England,

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00:22:46.309 --> 00:22:48.508

because obviously
I'm bilingual myself

00:22:48.532 --> 00:22:49.748

and it helps to be

00:22:49.772 --> 00:22:51.665

surrounded by people who get it,

00:22:51.689 --> 00:22:53.428

if that makes sense. [laughs]

00:22:53.452 --> 00:22:54.788

Um...

00:22:54.812 --> 00:22:57.388

And I think in
terms of community,

00:22:57.412 --> 00:22:59.312

Cardiff has always been

00:22:59.336 --> 00:23:02.868

a great city for me
to find different groups

00:23:02.892 --> 00:23:05.108

that really helped me

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in my writing journey.

00:23:05.132 --> 00:23:08.188

I think I struggled
in the beginning,

00:23:08.212 --> 00:23:10.936

not just because
I wasn't feeling

00:23:10.936 --> 00:23:13.548

too confident about
my English, but also

00:23:13.572 --> 00:23:15.988

because when I
started writing as a child,

00:23:16.012 --> 00:23:19.348

my biggest supporter
was always my grandpa.

00:23:19.372 --> 00:23:22.868

And he was the only person
who ever read my writing,

00:23:22.892 --> 00:23:25.708

any writing before
it was published.

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00:23:25.732 --> 00:23:28.868

And so when he passed away
and he was no longer there,

00:23:28.892 --> 00:23:31.748

I kind of struggled to trust
other people with my writing.

00:23:31.772 --> 00:23:33.188

Um...

00:23:33.212 --> 00:23:35.478

And with that also,
when I moved to Wales,

00:23:35.502 --> 00:23:38.628

I kind of struggled to
make sense of my identity

00:23:38.652 --> 00:23:42.936

as a writer, because I kind of felt that
my English wasn't good enough to write.

00:23:42.936 --> 00:23:44.108

And at the same time,

00:23:44.132 --> 00:23:46.788

my Italian wasn't as
good as it used to be.

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00:23:46.812 --> 00:23:49.268

If that makes sense?

00:23:49.292 --> 00:23:52.348

In this sense, I...

00:23:52.372 --> 00:23:53.372

If I can...

00:23:53.396 --> 00:23:54.908

like, drop names,

00:23:54.932 --> 00:23:58.868

I'm very grateful
to Joshua Jones

00:23:58.892 --> 00:24:02.936

for starting
Dyddiau Du as, like,

00:24:02.936 --> 00:24:06.068

a community space
that was... Well,

00:24:06.092 --> 00:24:08.468

doesn't exist any more
as a physical space,

00:24:08.492 --> 00:24:11.908

but in the beginning it

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was a space that was

00:24:11.932 --> 00:24:14.428

queer and neurodivergent-led,

00:24:14.452 --> 00:24:16.936

and they organized a

lot of writing workshops

00:24:16.936 --> 00:24:19.588

that I still think

00:24:19.612 --> 00:24:22.108

kind of shape the

writer that I am today

00:24:22.132 --> 00:24:24.188

and kind of gave

me the confidence

00:24:24.212 --> 00:24:27.238

to explore the different

00:24:27.262 --> 00:24:30.308

intersections of my

identity, I suppose.

00:24:30.332 --> 00:24:31.936

Um...

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00:24:31.936 --> 00:24:34.131

And I think the biggest step

00:24:34.155 --> 00:24:36.228

was that I went into that space

00:24:36.252 --> 00:24:37.936

and I felt like

00:24:37.936 --> 00:24:39.468

nobody was judging

00:24:39.492 --> 00:24:42.628

and I was free to experiment,
which I think wasn't

00:24:42.652 --> 00:24:45.068

really anything that I felt

00:24:45.092 --> 00:24:46.508

before.

00:24:46.532 --> 00:24:47.868

Um...

00:24:48.936 --> 00:24:54.708

So I think now that Dyddiau Du doesn't
really exist as a physical space any more,

00:24:54.732 --> 00:24:59.388

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I'm really grateful to the
Cardiff Poetry Group at Chapter.

00:24:59.412 --> 00:25:01.936

As you know, it's like...

00:25:01.936 --> 00:25:05.468

Always a source of, like,
friendship and community,

00:25:05.492 --> 00:25:08.936

and I don't
necessarily, like, um...

00:25:08.936 --> 00:25:11.228

share my work that much.

00:25:11.252 --> 00:25:13.628

I go there just
to, like, listen and

00:25:13.652 --> 00:25:15.388

get inspiration.

00:25:15.412 --> 00:25:16.412

Um...

00:25:16.436 --> 00:25:18.268

But I think in general, yeah,

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00:25:18.292 --> 00:25:21.828

having community
has been huge just for,

00:25:21.852 --> 00:25:24.268

you know, just to
have a sounding board

00:25:24.292 --> 00:25:25.948

or just to, again,

00:25:25.972 --> 00:25:28.725

steal a few ideas from...

00:25:28.749 --> 00:25:31.338

from others and be inspired.

00:25:31.362 --> 00:25:32.838

So, yeah.

00:25:33.936 --> 00:25:37.748

-Thanks. What you were talking
about to do with sometimes

00:25:37.772 --> 00:25:39.628

like being in a space and,

00:25:39.652 --> 00:25:41.748

you know, I think you
said like just listening,

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00:25:41.772 --> 00:25:43.799

it also made me
reflect on conversations

00:25:43.823 --> 00:25:46.308

I've had with people over
the years where we say,

00:25:46.332 --> 00:25:48.748

you know, writing
isn't just writing,

00:25:48.772 --> 00:25:50.936

it's the listening, it's the...

00:25:50.936 --> 00:25:53.348

Like those days
where you don't actually

00:25:53.372 --> 00:25:54.588

put pen to paper,

00:25:54.612 --> 00:25:58.148

but you're just being and
living, and all that's part of it too.

00:25:58.172 --> 00:26:00.228

So, yeah, I think, um...

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00:26:00.252 --> 00:26:01.748

I feel as though
what you were sharing

00:26:01.772 --> 00:26:03.868

just was making me consider

00:26:03.892 --> 00:26:06.668

how writing is so
much more than just

00:26:06.692 --> 00:26:08.548

what might be
viewed as an outcome.

00:26:08.572 --> 00:26:11.388

And I think to bring it back to
some of what you said earlier on,

00:26:11.412 --> 00:26:15.228

I know that for different people, sort
of describing themselves as a writer

00:26:15.252 --> 00:26:17.988

can feel thorny
for lots of reasons

00:26:18.012 --> 00:26:20.868

and there can be questions around
when did you last write something

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00:26:20.892 --> 00:26:22.708

or when did you last
publish something, but...

00:26:22.732 --> 00:26:25.828

Like, you're sort of getting at
writing is so much more than

00:26:25.852 --> 00:26:27.228

just what is written.

00:26:27.252 --> 00:26:29.320

It's all these moments
along the way.

00:26:29.345 --> 00:26:32.068

So thinking about that

00:26:32.092 --> 00:26:36.108

and also some of what you
spoke about earlier on to do with,

00:26:36.132 --> 00:26:40.788

I guess, the different pace at which
people might write or the perceived speed.

00:26:40.812 --> 00:26:42.748

And here, I'm just reminded of

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00:26:42.772 --> 00:26:45.908

again distinct differences
between who might be praised as

00:26:45.932 --> 00:26:47.708

prolific

00:26:47.732 --> 00:26:52.788

and who might be
sort of disregarded as

00:26:52.812 --> 00:26:55.068

supposedly sort of
churning out material.

00:26:55.092 --> 00:26:58.988

Just thinking about those sorts of
examples that have been discussed

00:26:59.012 --> 00:27:00.990

and also just the experiences of

00:27:01.014 --> 00:27:04.548

different people from
under-represented groups as writers,

00:27:04.572 --> 00:27:06.531

including stuff
we've spoken about.

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00:27:06.556 --> 00:27:09.228

I wanted to find
out a little bit more

00:27:09.252 --> 00:27:11.868

about your thoughts on just

00:27:11.892 --> 00:27:14.708

other challenges
that writers can face.

00:27:14.732 --> 00:27:16.788

So thinking
specifically again about

00:27:16.812 --> 00:27:19.588

disabled and neurodivergent
writers in Wales,

00:27:19.612 --> 00:27:22.548

and also the forms
sort of pigeonholing

00:27:22.572 --> 00:27:24.228

that can come up. So,

00:27:24.252 --> 00:27:27.388

even well-meaning
individuals and organisations

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00:27:27.412 --> 00:27:30.068

can end up sort of
framing someone as

00:27:30.092 --> 00:27:33.908

the race writer, the gender
writer, the disability writer,

00:27:33.932 --> 00:27:36.948

and in ways that typically
really sort of erase

00:27:36.972 --> 00:27:40.548

the reality of living a life at the
intersections of different types of

00:27:40.572 --> 00:27:42.268

inequality and identity.

00:27:42.292 --> 00:27:44.348

With all that in mind,

00:27:44.372 --> 00:27:46.068

what are some of the
different challenges

00:27:46.092 --> 00:27:47.268

that you feel

00:27:47.292 --> 00:27:50.628

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and writing in Wales
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disabled and neurodivergent
writers in Wales face,

00:27:50.652 --> 00:27:52.708
with the caveat, again, of

00:27:52.732 --> 00:27:54.868
where everyone's
experiences are different,

00:27:54.892 --> 00:27:56.588
so we're drawing
from some of our own

00:27:56.612 --> 00:27:57.936
and just reflecting on

00:27:57.936 --> 00:28:01.936
also the research and
writing that you've done too.

00:28:01.936 --> 00:28:04.068
Yeah, I think,

00:28:04.092 --> 00:28:06.468
as you said,
probably pigeonholing

00:28:06.492 --> 00:28:08.188
is... is the...

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00:28:08.212 --> 00:28:11.868

the most kind of persistent
challenge at the moment,

00:28:11.892 --> 00:28:15.548

at least like speaking
on a personal level.

00:28:15.572 --> 00:28:17.708

I think I've always found,

00:28:17.732 --> 00:28:19.028

but...

00:28:19.052 --> 00:28:21.588

I don't know if I'm, like,

00:28:21.612 --> 00:28:25.029

the best person to talk about this,
because obviously I grew up in Italy,

00:28:25.053 --> 00:28:26.936

which is very, like,

00:28:26.936 --> 00:28:29.828

I would say, like,
conservative about disability

00:28:29.852 --> 00:28:33.148

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and very, like, exclusionary
compared to the UK in general, but

00:28:33.172 --> 00:28:35.936

especially Wales,
I've found to be

00:28:35.936 --> 00:28:38.028

very inclusive.

00:28:38.052 --> 00:28:39.428

Um...

00:28:39.452 --> 00:28:42.348

So all my experiences
in Wales have been

00:28:42.372 --> 00:28:44.761

quite positive, and
that is not to say

00:28:44.785 --> 00:28:47.868

that obviously structural
barriers are not there.

00:28:47.892 --> 00:28:48.936

Um...

00:28:48.936 --> 00:28:52.068

But I think, yeah, I would

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say I would talk about

00:28:52.092 --> 00:28:54.948

mainly the pigeonholing,

00:28:54.972 --> 00:28:57.628

because it's...

it's the thing that I

00:28:57.652 --> 00:29:00.308

perceive as kind of

the most prominent

00:29:00.332 --> 00:29:02.068

right now in my career as well.

00:29:02.092 --> 00:29:04.668

I remember seeing, a while ago,

00:29:04.692 --> 00:29:07.348

a quote from Frances Ryan,

00:29:07.372 --> 00:29:10.308

the journalist from

The Guardian, who is

00:29:10.332 --> 00:29:13.588

one of the biggest

inspirations behind my work.

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00:29:13.612 --> 00:29:17.428

She posted on Instagram
saying something like,

00:29:17.452 --> 00:29:19.268

"Oh, you know,
you're a real journalist

00:29:19.292 --> 00:29:21.388

when someone asks you to write

00:29:21.412 --> 00:29:23.936

something that
isn't about disability."

00:29:23.936 --> 00:29:26.188

And for me,

00:29:26.212 --> 00:29:29.988

that kind of encapsulates
the whole issue

00:29:30.012 --> 00:29:31.936

because I think

00:29:31.936 --> 00:29:33.508

it's... I think it's

00:29:33.532 --> 00:29:36.748

an industry slash

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organizational issue

00:29:36.772 --> 00:29:38.936

to the extent

00:29:38.936 --> 00:29:43.268

that it's the organization
or industry that gives you

00:29:43.292 --> 00:29:45.588

legitimacy as a writer

00:29:45.612 --> 00:29:47.936

in the public realm. So,

00:29:47.936 --> 00:29:50.348

like you...

00:29:50.372 --> 00:29:51.936

you kind of

00:29:51.936 --> 00:29:53.936

take that as, like, yes.

00:29:53.936 --> 00:29:56.308

I'm writing about disability,

00:29:56.332 --> 00:29:58.148

but I'm, like, I'm a writer,

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00:29:58.172 --> 00:30:01.936

so it's, like, I'll
keep writing what

00:30:01.936 --> 00:30:04.628

kind of legitimates
me in certain spaces.

00:30:04.652 --> 00:30:07.428

But also, again,

00:30:07.452 --> 00:30:10.565

when something asks you to write
something that isn't about disability,

00:30:10.589 --> 00:30:12.548

then you feel even
more legitimated,

00:30:12.572 --> 00:30:13.668

and you feel like...

00:30:13.692 --> 00:30:15.668

you feel like, oh yeah,
now I'm a real writer

00:30:15.692 --> 00:30:17.298

because I can write
about something else.

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00:30:17.323 --> 00:30:20.228

Although for myself, I think

00:30:20.252 --> 00:30:22.788

it's tricky, because

I tend to encourage

00:30:22.812 --> 00:30:24.788

being pigeonholed a little bit,

00:30:24.812 --> 00:30:26.108

I think.

00:30:26.132 --> 00:30:30.308

As, like, a disability

writer, so to speak, because

00:30:30.332 --> 00:30:34.188

that was kind of

my original brand,

00:30:34.212 --> 00:30:37.548

even though I hate

defining it as a brand,

00:30:37.572 --> 00:30:40.148

because I saw that

there was a need for it.

00:30:40.172 --> 00:30:42.948

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There was a need for
that kind of activism,

00:30:42.972 --> 00:30:47.708
especially the kind of UK
versus Italy comparison

00:30:47.732 --> 00:30:49.748
that kind of
started it all for me.

00:30:49.772 --> 00:30:50.936
Um...

00:30:50.936 --> 00:30:52.588
And...

00:30:52.612 --> 00:30:55.908
sometimes I tend to
stay in that kind of niche

00:30:55.932 --> 00:30:58.348
because it... simply
because it feels safe.

00:30:58.372 --> 00:31:01.348
You know, they say
write about what you know

00:31:01.372 --> 00:31:03.268

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and all of that.

00:31:03.292 --> 00:31:06.468

But equally, I think
in the case of disability

00:31:06.492 --> 00:31:11.108

is tricky because there's a general
assumption from organizations

00:31:11.132 --> 00:31:14.708

that just because someone has
a lived experience of disability,

00:31:14.732 --> 00:31:17.428

then they are qualified
to write about disability.

00:31:17.452 --> 00:31:19.508

And it's kind of controversial,

00:31:19.532 --> 00:31:21.388

but I don't think
that's always the case.

00:31:21.412 --> 00:31:22.668

[laughs]

00:31:22.692 --> 00:31:25.170

And yeah,

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00:31:25.194 --> 00:31:29.828

being disabled doesn't automatically
make you an expert on disability,

00:31:29.852 --> 00:31:32.936

but on the flip side,
I think there's a...

00:31:32.936 --> 00:31:34.548

Um...

00:31:34.572 --> 00:31:38.868

A real struggle to be legitimized
as a writer outside of your identity.

00:31:38.892 --> 00:31:40.068

Um...

00:31:40.092 --> 00:31:41.788

And to kind of say,

00:31:41.812 --> 00:31:44.108

I want to write about
something different

00:31:44.132 --> 00:31:45.828

and I don't even
want to be identified

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00:31:45.852 --> 00:31:48.628

as disabled in
relation to this work.

00:31:48.652 --> 00:31:49.936

Um...

00:31:49.936 --> 00:31:53.228

And I think, yeah,
I think that adds

00:31:53.252 --> 00:31:55.748

like a layer of
complexity to the

00:31:55.772 --> 00:31:57.388

kind of standard

00:31:57.412 --> 00:31:58.936

fighting for access.

00:31:58.936 --> 00:32:00.348

And maybe

00:32:00.372 --> 00:32:03.308

it becomes even more
complex if you're dealing with

00:32:03.332 --> 00:32:07.348

a kind of intersectionally

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marginalized identity.

00:32:08.936 --> 00:32:10.308

-Thanks.

00:32:10.332 --> 00:32:13.468

Yeah, I think when
you're talking about that

00:32:13.492 --> 00:32:15.828

and also just some of
what you said before,

00:32:15.852 --> 00:32:18.788

it was making me think
about the difference between,

00:32:18.812 --> 00:32:19.936

um...

00:32:19.936 --> 00:32:21.948

describing your own
work and sort of, you know,

00:32:21.972 --> 00:32:25.936

staking claims
yourself versus having

00:32:25.936 --> 00:32:30.508

a... an idea of who

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you and your work

00:32:30.532 --> 00:32:33.468

are being sort of
projected onto you.

00:32:33.492 --> 00:32:36.548

So this sort of tension between...
You know, there might be times when

00:32:36.572 --> 00:32:39.108

it's very clear that you're
wanting to pitch a piece

00:32:39.132 --> 00:32:41.908

or you've been commissioned
to do a piece focusing on

00:32:41.932 --> 00:32:43.748

disability justice

00:32:43.772 --> 00:32:46.508

and different forms of
activism surrounding that,

00:32:46.532 --> 00:32:50.188

versus perhaps you want to
contribute something somewhere

00:32:50.212 --> 00:32:51.651

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and you've got various ideas,

00:32:51.675 --> 00:32:56.687

but you feel as though someone's putting
this very narrow frame of what they think

00:32:56.711 --> 00:32:59.028

you can write about
or should write about

00:32:59.052 --> 00:33:00.936

sort of on you.

00:33:00.936 --> 00:33:02.468

And sort of with...

00:33:02.492 --> 00:33:03.936

with all of that,

00:33:03.936 --> 00:33:06.028

sort of taking that
into consideration,

00:33:06.052 --> 00:33:08.268

and also just I'm
aware, of course,

00:33:08.292 --> 00:33:11.868

of your research around the
creative and cultural industries,

00:33:11.892 --> 00:33:14.785

I was wanting to find
out a bit more about

00:33:14.809 --> 00:33:18.148

some of what you saw from
the work you've done on that

00:33:18.172 --> 00:33:22.868

around matters to do
with access, in-access,

00:33:22.892 --> 00:33:25.188

events and
opportunities for writers.

00:33:25.212 --> 00:33:27.468

So whether that is
how people might be

00:33:27.492 --> 00:33:29.936

pigeonholed in terms of

00:33:29.936 --> 00:33:32.188

this limited space
to experiment,

00:33:32.212 --> 00:33:35.548

to play, and to have

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a portfolio of work

00:33:35.572 --> 00:33:37.308

that cuts across
different topics,

00:33:37.332 --> 00:33:39.588

or thinking more
practically in terms of

00:33:39.612 --> 00:33:43.268

events and how they're
organized and who they are or aren't

00:33:43.292 --> 00:33:46.936

seemingly put together for.

00:33:46.936 --> 00:33:48.948

-Yeah, I think

00:33:48.972 --> 00:33:51.948

adding to that, as
you were saying,

00:33:51.972 --> 00:33:53.428

like sometimes...

00:33:53.452 --> 00:33:54.936

Um...

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00:33:54.936 --> 00:33:57.868

I sometimes got quite a lot of

00:33:57.892 --> 00:34:01.548

backlash for insisting

on writing about disability

00:34:01.572 --> 00:34:03.388

because people

were kind of saying...

00:34:03.412 --> 00:34:06.936

Some people were kind of

saying, oh, you're just doing it for...

00:34:06.936 --> 00:34:12.207

Like to kind of

express your trauma

00:34:12.231 --> 00:34:14.148

and your traumatic

experiences in a way.

00:34:14.172 --> 00:34:15.908

And that...

00:34:15.932 --> 00:34:17.908

Like, the... the first

time I heard that,

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00:34:17.932 --> 00:34:20.668

it kind of gave me
an existential crisis

00:34:20.692 --> 00:34:23.308

because I thought,
oh, is this like

00:34:23.332 --> 00:34:24.828

what I am?

00:34:24.852 --> 00:34:27.188

Like, is this, like,
all there is to me?

00:34:27.212 --> 00:34:30.708

And then, obviously, the
answer is no, but it can be...

00:34:30.732 --> 00:34:34.188

Yeah, it can be tempting
to just think that you're...

00:34:34.212 --> 00:34:36.588

you're doing what you're
doing, especially if it's, like,

00:34:36.612 --> 00:34:38.468

identity-focused

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00:34:38.492 --> 00:34:41.936

just because you
want to like, you know,

00:34:41.936 --> 00:34:44.891

process your trauma
through writing.

00:34:44.915 --> 00:34:48.388

And again, even if you did, like,
there's nothing wrong with doing that, but

00:34:48.412 --> 00:34:50.628

yeah, it's really...

00:34:50.652 --> 00:34:54.148

It's been really strange dealing
with the public perception

00:34:54.172 --> 00:34:56.068

of the kind of
writing that I do.

00:34:56.092 --> 00:34:59.936

But yeah, coming to
my research, I think...

00:34:59.936 --> 00:35:03.468

Well, it's a bit dated
now, as you know,

00:35:03.492 --> 00:35:06.068

because you were the supervisor.

00:35:06.092 --> 00:35:07.628

[laughs]

00:35:07.652 --> 00:35:08.948

But, um...

00:35:08.972 --> 00:35:11.708

Yeah, so I... I guess it...

00:35:11.732 --> 00:35:14.936

It kind of started... So I
did this research in 2020,

00:35:14.936 --> 00:35:17.668

during COVID, and
I wanted to reflect

00:35:17.692 --> 00:35:20.508

on how the

00:35:20.532 --> 00:35:23.748

remote working
measures implemented,

00:35:23.772 --> 00:35:26.988

especially during the

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first stage of the pandemic,

00:35:27.012 --> 00:35:29.748

affected the inclusion
of disabled people

00:35:29.772 --> 00:35:31.588

and people from working
class backgrounds,

00:35:31.612 --> 00:35:34.588

specifically in the
publishing industry.

00:35:34.612 --> 00:35:36.748

So not just writers, but any

00:35:36.772 --> 00:35:39.708

person working in
the publishing industry.

00:35:39.732 --> 00:35:43.551

The idea kind of came from my
own experience of the pandemic,

00:35:43.575 --> 00:35:46.108

where I was studying
for my Master's,

00:35:46.132 --> 00:35:47.936

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and I finally got to do

00:35:47.936 --> 00:35:51.788

an internship with a publisher,

00:35:51.812 --> 00:35:54.148

remotely, of course.

00:35:54.172 --> 00:35:56.748

And it kind of made me laugh,

00:35:56.772 --> 00:35:58.348

because I was previously told,

00:35:58.372 --> 00:36:01.548

you know, I was consistently
rejected because I was told

00:36:01.572 --> 00:36:03.788

that the offices were not
wheelchair accessible,

00:36:03.812 --> 00:36:06.388

that it wasn't possible,
or that, you know,

00:36:06.412 --> 00:36:09.108

if I was applying for
publishers that were only,

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00:36:09.132 --> 00:36:13.268

you know, based in London, as
is for the majority of big publishers,

00:36:13.292 --> 00:36:17.068

they only wanted,
like, in-person work

00:36:17.092 --> 00:36:18.828

and stuff like that. So,

00:36:18.852 --> 00:36:21.588

I found it interesting
how with COVID,

00:36:21.612 --> 00:36:23.788

it just completely changed that

00:36:23.812 --> 00:36:27.668

because a non-disabled
majority needed adjustments,

00:36:27.692 --> 00:36:29.524

then they were
implemented overnight.

00:36:29.549 --> 00:36:33.148

And they became possible where,

00:36:33.172 --> 00:36:36.936

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previously, we were
being told that they weren't.

00:36:36.936 --> 00:36:39.628

So it was just a reflection of

00:36:39.652 --> 00:36:43.268

how, like, if COVID hadn't
happened, I think I wouldn't have...

00:36:43.292 --> 00:36:49.228

Like, I would have had to work a lot
harder for my career than... than I did.

00:36:49.252 --> 00:36:51.508

And in my research,

00:36:51.532 --> 00:36:53.388

I sent a survey to

00:36:53.412 --> 00:36:55.668

publishing industry workers

00:36:55.692 --> 00:36:57.948

who were disabled.

00:36:57.972 --> 00:36:59.028

Um...

00:36:59.052 --> 00:37:02.508

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Well, yeah, disabled
and or working class

00:37:02.532 --> 00:37:04.668
or marginalized
in every other way,

00:37:04.692 --> 00:37:08.108
to see how they'd been affected.

00:37:08.132 --> 00:37:11.468
And a lot of their responses
confirmed my experience.

00:37:11.492 --> 00:37:13.378
So for a lot of disabled people

00:37:13.403 --> 00:37:15.628
that they just got
jobs in publishing

00:37:15.652 --> 00:37:17.708
that they hadn't been
able to get for years,

00:37:17.732 --> 00:37:20.428
because of the
COVID adjustments.

00:37:20.452 --> 00:37:22.708

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At the same time,

00:37:22.732 --> 00:37:25.628

participants from working
class backgrounds,

00:37:25.652 --> 00:37:27.936

some of them
actually told me that

00:37:27.936 --> 00:37:32.228

working remotely during COVID was
a nightmare because they didn't have...

00:37:32.252 --> 00:37:33.748

You know, they had to stay home

00:37:33.772 --> 00:37:37.908

and maybe they were sharing their
home with family members or whatever,

00:37:37.932 --> 00:37:40.428

and they didn't have their
own space to be able to work.

00:37:40.452 --> 00:37:43.028

They didn't have a good
internet connection, so...

00:37:43.052 --> 00:37:45.668

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It's... I think it made me realize

00:37:45.692 --> 00:37:48.068
that we, you know,

00:37:48.092 --> 00:37:53.388
tended to think of COVID,
at least in the first stage

00:37:53.412 --> 00:37:55.548
as like the great equalizer.

00:37:55.572 --> 00:37:57.936
But I think there's...

00:37:57.936 --> 00:38:02.068
It left us with a lot to think
about on both sides, like, it's...

00:38:02.092 --> 00:38:05.108
it's been good for some
disabled people, it's been

00:38:05.132 --> 00:38:07.548
horrendous for other people.

00:38:07.572 --> 00:38:10.388
And I think I really wanted to

00:38:10.412 --> 00:38:13.228

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kind of communicate
this with my research,

00:38:13.252 --> 00:38:15.988
precisely within the
publishing context.

00:38:16.012 --> 00:38:18.188
And I think I...

00:38:18.212 --> 00:38:20.936
I also... Um...

00:38:20.936 --> 00:38:24.588
I think about it a lot still
today, because I looked at...

00:38:24.612 --> 00:38:27.588
I also looked at how

00:38:27.612 --> 00:38:31.948
major publishing houses in the UK behaved
on social media in relation to COVID,

00:38:31.972 --> 00:38:35.936
and there was this big
push towards online events.

00:38:35.936 --> 00:38:37.936
And...

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00:38:37.936 --> 00:38:41.908

kind of the sense that it
would change publishing forever

00:38:41.932 --> 00:38:44.348

and it would be
this big revolution,

00:38:44.372 --> 00:38:46.748

but actually now
it seems that, um...

00:38:46.772 --> 00:38:48.188

now in 2026,

00:38:48.212 --> 00:38:51.668

lots of jobs and events have
gone back to in-person only

00:38:51.692 --> 00:38:55.188

and every time I see an event or a
job being advertised as in-person only,

00:38:55.212 --> 00:38:56.231

I'm just, like,

00:38:56.256 --> 00:38:57.828

did we just forget

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00:38:57.852 --> 00:39:00.268
everything from the pandemic?

00:39:00.292 --> 00:39:01.348
Um...

00:39:01.372 --> 00:39:03.988
And I know that there's

00:39:04.012 --> 00:39:08.108
a lot more awareness of
inclusivity and diversity now,

00:39:08.132 --> 00:39:09.936
and some publishers are

00:39:09.936 --> 00:39:11.683
trying to make a conscious

00:39:11.708 --> 00:39:12.708
effort,

00:39:12.732 --> 00:39:15.148
but I don't think there's
been that radical shift

00:39:15.172 --> 00:39:18.788
that we were
initially hoping for,

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00:39:18.812 --> 00:39:21.268

and just too many
people are still...

00:39:21.292 --> 00:39:24.228

I think publishing, especially

00:39:24.252 --> 00:39:28.308

in the creative industries, remains
one of the most exclusionary

00:39:28.332 --> 00:39:31.588

sectors in any occupation,

00:39:31.612 --> 00:39:34.428

whether that be a writer
or an editor, because,

00:39:34.452 --> 00:39:36.222

yeah, I think it's
important to clarify

00:39:36.246 --> 00:39:38.428

that I didn't necessarily
start out as a writer.

00:39:38.452 --> 00:39:40.988

My experience in
publishing before

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00:39:41.012 --> 00:39:42.931
becoming a writer was more in

00:39:42.955 --> 00:39:45.508
translation and editing, so...

00:39:45.532 --> 00:39:48.148
I got to see that
part first, and then

00:39:48.172 --> 00:39:50.988
move on, moved on
to writing sort of thing.

00:39:52.936 --> 00:39:55.628
-Yeah, whilst you were
talking about all of that,

00:39:55.652 --> 00:39:57.388
I was also thinking a bit about

00:39:57.412 --> 00:39:59.936
sort of regional diversity

00:39:59.936 --> 00:40:01.825
in the mix too.

00:40:01.849 --> 00:40:04.468
And yeah, just the different
ways that your research,

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00:40:04.492 --> 00:40:06.988

and I know your
research is ongoing,

00:40:07.012 --> 00:40:10.191

you've researched lots of different things,
but the different ways your research

00:40:10.215 --> 00:40:12.948

has really tackled
these issues around

00:40:12.972 --> 00:40:15.936

different issues to do
with inequality and also...

00:40:15.936 --> 00:40:18.108

Yeah, thinking
about in some cases,

00:40:18.132 --> 00:40:22.108

perhaps the capital city
centric nature of activities

00:40:22.132 --> 00:40:24.708

surrounding writing and
publishing and different elements

00:40:24.732 --> 00:40:26.508

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of the creative and
cultural industries.

00:40:26.532 --> 00:40:28.936

So sort of really

00:40:28.936 --> 00:40:33.308

deep diving a bit more on
the digital culture side of stuff

00:40:33.332 --> 00:40:38.348

without falling into the sort
of it's all great and it's all bad.

00:40:38.372 --> 00:40:40.668

I've got lots of thoughts
on social media.

00:40:40.692 --> 00:40:42.708

Many of them are
critical, but also,

00:40:42.732 --> 00:40:46.228

you know, the internet has played a
big part in my own experience of life,

00:40:46.252 --> 00:40:47.508

and certainly, sort of,

00:40:47.532 --> 00:40:50.428

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figuring out or finding my
way as a writer, as a person,

00:40:50.452 --> 00:40:52.948
especially blogs, online forums,

00:40:52.972 --> 00:40:54.788
and social media
is in there too.

00:40:54.812 --> 00:40:57.868
So I was wondering
how you feel about

00:40:57.892 --> 00:40:59.908
sort of social media today,

00:40:59.932 --> 00:41:02.388
and the current
digital landscape,

00:41:02.412 --> 00:41:04.988
and the way that it's impacting

00:41:05.012 --> 00:41:07.498
the experiences

00:41:07.522 --> 00:41:10.548
of neurodivergent
and disabled writers,

00:41:10.572 --> 00:41:12.548

people, and you know

00:41:12.572 --> 00:41:15.936

just how that is shaping life.

00:41:15.936 --> 00:41:17.936

-Yeah, I think...

00:41:17.936 --> 00:41:19.424

It's a good question,

00:41:19.448 --> 00:41:22.188

because I'm going through
a period where I feel very

00:41:22.212 --> 00:41:24.228

like ambivalent about

00:41:24.252 --> 00:41:26.228

social media. Like one day,

00:41:26.252 --> 00:41:28.468

I think it's the greatest
thing in the world

00:41:28.492 --> 00:41:30.748

and the next I want to throw
my phone out the window

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00:41:30.772 --> 00:41:32.788

and not think about
anything any more.

00:41:32.812 --> 00:41:33.812

Um...

00:41:33.836 --> 00:41:35.388

I think on the one hand,

00:41:35.412 --> 00:41:37.028

if it weren't for social media,

00:41:37.052 --> 00:41:39.588

I wouldn't have the
career that I have, because

00:41:39.612 --> 00:41:42.028

my activism and my journalism

00:41:42.052 --> 00:41:43.936

started literally with

00:41:43.936 --> 00:41:47.588

an Instagram account,
a Twitter account, and I

00:41:47.612 --> 00:41:49.708

kind of started writing about

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00:41:49.732 --> 00:41:54.308

disability and how, like, the
barriers that I was facing to...

00:41:54.332 --> 00:41:56.428

to get where I wanted to get.

00:41:56.452 --> 00:41:57.936

Um...

00:41:57.936 --> 00:42:00.508

And people started
noticing my work

00:42:00.532 --> 00:42:02.228

through social media when I did

00:42:02.252 --> 00:42:05.748

my research about publishing
that we were talking about earlier.

00:42:05.772 --> 00:42:09.548

I recruited participants
basically through social media.

00:42:09.572 --> 00:42:12.748

And everyone was telling me, oh my
god, this is, like, this is my experience.

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00:42:12.772 --> 00:42:15.936

This needs to be, like, published
research, whatever, and...

00:42:15.936 --> 00:42:17.268

Um...

00:42:17.292 --> 00:42:19.748

And I think that that's the part

00:42:19.772 --> 00:42:21.508

that I like that
feels very validating

00:42:21.532 --> 00:42:24.468

and that allowed me not just
to experiment with my work,

00:42:24.492 --> 00:42:25.936

but also to...

00:42:25.936 --> 00:42:29.308

I guess become more comfortable

00:42:29.332 --> 00:42:32.148

with part of my identity. Like,
even the term neurodivergent,

00:42:32.172 --> 00:42:35.268

I wasn't really comfortable

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00:42:35.292 --> 00:42:37.508
using it to describe myself

00:42:37.532 --> 00:42:38.988
until, like, a couple
of years ago.

00:42:39.012 --> 00:42:42.588
And that's all because
I've, you know, it...

00:42:42.612 --> 00:42:47.508
It's very easy to kind
of maybe confine it to

00:42:47.532 --> 00:42:50.468
things like autism or ADHD,

00:42:50.492 --> 00:42:52.385
whereas actually it's kind of

00:42:52.409 --> 00:42:55.028
an umbrella term
for all the identities

00:42:55.052 --> 00:42:58.936
where your brain

00:42:58.936 --> 00:43:01.188

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works a little
bit different from

00:43:01.212 --> 00:43:03.668

what is supposed to
be the norm, I suppose.

00:43:03.692 --> 00:43:04.988

And the reason

00:43:05.012 --> 00:43:08.228

I started to identify as is
because I've, you know,

00:43:08.252 --> 00:43:10.308

I've been thinking
about it, like,

00:43:10.332 --> 00:43:12.936

kind of by myself, but

00:43:12.936 --> 00:43:15.348

too scared to
actually verbalize that.

00:43:15.372 --> 00:43:19.068

And then Lucy Webster,
who is a brilliant journalist,

00:43:19.092 --> 00:43:22.188

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who also has cerebral palsy,

00:43:22.212 --> 00:43:24.068

she wrote a Substack about

00:43:24.092 --> 00:43:27.228

how cerebral palsy is a
form of neurodivergence,

00:43:27.252 --> 00:43:29.988

and she was, like,
literally verbalizing

00:43:30.012 --> 00:43:32.148

everything that I was...
I'd been thinking about.

00:43:32.172 --> 00:43:34.188

And I was like, thank
you, like, this is the

00:43:34.212 --> 00:43:36.508

kind of confirmation
that I was looking for.

00:43:36.532 --> 00:43:37.908

Um...

00:43:37.932 --> 00:43:40.068

So I think in that sense,

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00:43:40.092 --> 00:43:42.508

um, it's...

00:43:42.532 --> 00:43:44.908

it's been,

00:43:44.932 --> 00:43:46.948

I would say, life-saving for me

00:43:46.972 --> 00:43:49.936

because I think as a neurodivergent
person, it's very easy to feel like

00:43:49.936 --> 00:43:53.588

your brain and your body are not

00:43:53.612 --> 00:43:56.468

meant for this world in a sense.

00:43:56.492 --> 00:43:58.748

And when you find that
space where you think,

00:43:58.772 --> 00:44:00.508

oh, actually, yes, I do...

00:44:00.532 --> 00:44:03.468

Like, there are other people going
through the same thing that I am.

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00:44:03.492 --> 00:44:04.936

Um...

00:44:04.936 --> 00:44:06.148

You know, it's...

00:44:06.172 --> 00:44:09.388

Yeah, it's a good kind
of sense of belonging,

00:44:09.412 --> 00:44:11.936

and even professionally,
like, I've met

00:44:11.936 --> 00:44:13.748

and I've interacted with

00:44:13.772 --> 00:44:17.105

most of the people that I admire
professionally on social media.

00:44:17.129 --> 00:44:20.708

So that's been a huge

00:44:20.732 --> 00:44:22.788

kind of tool for
me to be able to

00:44:22.812 --> 00:44:25.748

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make connections and
advance in my career.

00:44:25.772 --> 00:44:27.588

But I...

00:44:27.612 --> 00:44:29.936

I think on the other hand

00:44:29.936 --> 00:44:32.936

is, like...

00:44:32.936 --> 00:44:35.268

I think at the moment
is an extremely...

00:44:35.292 --> 00:44:39.188

It can be an extremely dangerous
space for neurodivergent people,

00:44:39.212 --> 00:44:41.748

precisely because, you know,

00:44:41.772 --> 00:44:43.788

as a neurodivergent
and disabled woman,

00:44:43.812 --> 00:44:44.868

as I was saying,

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00:44:44.892 --> 00:44:48.271

sometimes you feel like
you're... you just don't...

00:44:48.296 --> 00:44:50.828

The way that you function,
the way that you work,

00:44:50.852 --> 00:44:54.228

the way that you think just
doesn't belong in this world.

00:44:54.252 --> 00:44:57.028

And social media
can exacerbate that,

00:44:57.052 --> 00:45:01.548

because everything is always kind
of so extreme and sensationalized,

00:45:01.572 --> 00:45:03.425

and kind of all doom and gloom.

00:45:03.450 --> 00:45:06.868

And it can... it can make you
feel like the world is falling apart

00:45:06.892 --> 00:45:08.936

and there's no way out.

00:45:08.936 --> 00:45:11.388

And I think, yeah,

00:45:11.412 --> 00:45:13.108

I think that's a huge issue and

00:45:13.132 --> 00:45:17.308

kind of one of the reasons why I'm trying
to distance myself a little bit when I can,

00:45:17.332 --> 00:45:20.108

even though it's a huge part of,

00:45:20.132 --> 00:45:22.268

again, my... my job.

00:45:22.292 --> 00:45:24.748

And so I feel
like I can't really

00:45:24.772 --> 00:45:26.108

do without.

00:45:26.132 --> 00:45:27.228

Um...

00:45:27.252 --> 00:45:28.936

I also think, like,

00:45:28.936 --> 00:45:30.908

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if you're making content,

00:45:30.932 --> 00:45:35.028

it can be easy to fall into the trap
of like becoming dependent on a

00:45:35.052 --> 00:45:36.948

platform like
Instagram, for example.

00:45:36.972 --> 00:45:38.978

So, like, host your content and

00:45:39.002 --> 00:45:40.936

have the impression that

00:45:40.936 --> 00:45:43.936

the content is, like, fully
yours when actually you're, like,

00:45:43.936 --> 00:45:47.425

often we're not aware that
the moment that we're posting it,

00:45:47.449 --> 00:45:49.108

we're giving it to
a platform. And it...

00:45:49.132 --> 00:45:50.936

And especially, I think with

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00:45:50.936 --> 00:45:54.548

AI, the question of ownership

00:45:54.572 --> 00:45:57.068

now is like more
important than ever.

00:45:57.092 --> 00:45:58.492

Um...

00:45:58.516 --> 00:46:00.628

And yeah,

00:46:00.652 --> 00:46:03.428

I just, as you know,
I hate generative AI

00:46:03.452 --> 00:46:05.828

and I'm very vocal about it.

00:46:05.852 --> 00:46:09.605

And I think it will eventually
become the reason

00:46:09.629 --> 00:46:11.936

I delete social media.

00:46:11.936 --> 00:46:14.908

But it's difficult for me

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as well, because I have...

00:46:14.932 --> 00:46:16.668

It's not just work,

00:46:16.692 --> 00:46:19.188

it's also kind of a mutual aid

00:46:19.212 --> 00:46:21.308

sort of community

00:46:21.332 --> 00:46:23.708

that I've built with

other disabled people.

00:46:23.732 --> 00:46:26.108

And also an international
community, because,

00:46:26.132 --> 00:46:28.068

obviously I'm from Italy,

00:46:28.092 --> 00:46:30.468

my entire family is in

Italy, my friends are in Italy.

00:46:30.492 --> 00:46:34.308

And I've got friends, you

know, friends in Cardiff as well

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00:46:34.332 --> 00:46:37.988

that have now become family because
we've known each other for a decade, but

00:46:38.012 --> 00:46:41.936

it's this kind of trying to

00:46:41.936 --> 00:46:45.468

stay in touch with
different sides of my world.

00:46:45.492 --> 00:46:48.268

That wouldn't be possible
without social media.

00:46:48.292 --> 00:46:50.268

So I think I have a very kind of

00:46:50.292 --> 00:46:52.268

love-hate relationship

00:46:52.292 --> 00:46:54.068

to it.

00:46:54.092 --> 00:46:56.868

Also in relation to, like,
platform capitalism and

00:46:56.892 --> 00:46:58.936

all of this stuff.

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00:46:58.936 --> 00:47:03.388

-I feel that that is a nice
segue into the big feelings

00:47:03.412 --> 00:47:05.948

in the world building and

00:47:05.972 --> 00:47:09.108

just as a brief update for
everybody, we'll spend probably about

00:47:09.132 --> 00:47:12.188

10, maybe 15 minutes max or so

00:47:12.212 --> 00:47:15.628

of us continuing this discussion before
we take our five minute comfort break.

00:47:15.652 --> 00:47:16.652

So it is coming.

00:47:16.676 --> 00:47:19.148

But also, hopefully people
feel as comfortable as possible

00:47:19.172 --> 00:47:20.668

whilst we're speaking as well.

00:47:20.692 --> 00:47:23.268

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So yeah, big, big
feelings of world building

00:47:23.292 --> 00:47:25.828
and just thinking again about

00:47:25.852 --> 00:47:28.468
the, yeah, the effects of

00:47:28.492 --> 00:47:29.828
different inequalities.

00:47:29.852 --> 00:47:32.936
So whether that's
classism, colourism, ableism,

00:47:32.936 --> 00:47:38.428
whose big feelings tend to be
engaged with and acknowledged,

00:47:38.452 --> 00:47:42.988
as opposed to sort of like
suppressed and ignored.

00:47:43.012 --> 00:47:47.936
And just to find it a bit more
about your own experience of

00:47:47.936 --> 00:47:51.348
learning about other

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people's big feelings

00:47:51.372 --> 00:47:54.971

and their worlds within writing

00:47:54.995 --> 00:47:56.588

that you have turned to

00:47:56.612 --> 00:47:58.588

and how you have

00:47:58.612 --> 00:48:01.988

thought through your

own as part of what you do.

00:48:02.936 --> 00:48:04.948

-Um... [laughs]

00:48:04.972 --> 00:48:06.936

Interesting.

00:48:06.936 --> 00:48:08.957

I don't really know.

00:48:08.981 --> 00:48:10.936

Like, I...

00:48:10.936 --> 00:48:15.936

I think it's been really

difficult for me for, like...

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00:48:15.936 --> 00:48:18.388

I've tended to,

00:48:18.412 --> 00:48:20.268

especially when I was younger,

00:48:20.292 --> 00:48:22.388

I've tended to just

express my feelings

00:48:22.412 --> 00:48:24.936

by journaling and

00:48:24.936 --> 00:48:28.908

when I was kind of doing

more public-facing things,

00:48:28.932 --> 00:48:31.508

I would tend to,

like, rein myself in.

00:48:31.532 --> 00:48:34.348

And now I think I'm

getting to that age

00:48:34.372 --> 00:48:37.428

where I just don't really

care that much any more.

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00:48:37.452 --> 00:48:38.828

Um...

00:48:38.852 --> 00:48:41.788

And it's, like, it's
difficult because,

00:48:41.812 --> 00:48:42.936

um...

00:48:42.936 --> 00:48:45.468

A lot of the time,

00:48:45.492 --> 00:48:47.988

I still feel like

00:48:48.012 --> 00:48:51.148

when I complain about something

00:48:51.172 --> 00:48:55.708

or when I express that
I'm feeling discriminated,

00:48:55.732 --> 00:48:58.988

or even when I stand up for

00:48:59.012 --> 00:49:02.348

marginalized groups
that I'm not part of myself,

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00:49:02.372 --> 00:49:03.936

um...

00:49:03.936 --> 00:49:06.291

I get labelled as like having

00:49:06.315 --> 00:49:09.936

big feelings that I...

I'm not managing.

00:49:09.936 --> 00:49:13.936

And it's like, it's just so...

00:49:13.936 --> 00:49:17.936

It feels like such

a reflection on

00:49:17.936 --> 00:49:22.936

what our society has

become in terms of like

00:49:22.936 --> 00:49:25.068

repressing what we're feeling

00:49:25.092 --> 00:49:27.468

and labelling everything

as, like, exaggerate

00:49:27.492 --> 00:49:31.468

or, you know, that

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sort of stuff. And I think,

00:49:31.492 --> 00:49:33.268

yeah, I'm learning slowly

00:49:33.292 --> 00:49:36.628

that it's okay to

express my big feelings

00:49:36.652 --> 00:49:39.936

in... in my writing.

00:49:39.936 --> 00:49:44.268

But I think one of the biggest

barriers that is still is there for me

00:49:44.292 --> 00:49:48.936

is like sometimes I feel like I'm

the only one feeling something.

00:49:48.936 --> 00:49:52.508

And the reason I like

connecting with other writers

00:49:52.532 --> 00:49:55.936

and reading as much

as I can is just, like,

00:49:55.936 --> 00:49:58.028

being able to

00:49:58.052 --> 00:49:59.908
get into other people's heads.

00:49:59.932 --> 00:50:03.844
Because sometimes in a
lot of my favourite writers,

00:50:03.868 --> 00:50:07.708
I found feelings that I wasn't
able to verbalize myself,

00:50:07.732 --> 00:50:10.338
and that I haven't...
hadn't even felt before.

00:50:10.362 --> 00:50:13.025
And I was like, oh, okay,
I don't live this personally,

00:50:13.049 --> 00:50:14.936
but I understand
it, like, you know.

00:50:14.936 --> 00:50:17.188
So I think,

00:50:17.212 --> 00:50:20.028
yeah, I don't know... I don't
know if I answered the question,

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00:50:20.052 --> 00:50:21.748

but... [laughs]

00:50:21.772 --> 00:50:24.936

I guess, yeah, it's...

00:50:24.936 --> 00:50:28.228

I tried to make a point

00:50:28.252 --> 00:50:31.428

of like addressing

my big feelings

00:50:31.452 --> 00:50:33.028

in my writing,

00:50:33.052 --> 00:50:34.948

even if

00:50:34.972 --> 00:50:36.936

in the moment they feel like

00:50:36.936 --> 00:50:38.708

they're too much. And then,

00:50:38.732 --> 00:50:41.936

I also try not to

00:50:41.936 --> 00:50:43.936

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make

00:50:43.936 --> 00:50:46.188

everything about that

00:50:46.212 --> 00:50:50.936

because I'm aware that, like,

00:50:50.936 --> 00:50:54.228

I'm learning that

anger is a good

00:50:54.252 --> 00:50:58.748

emotion to have, but it

also needs to be healthy.

00:50:58.772 --> 00:51:02.708

Like it can't become just

about anger, otherwise it will just

00:51:02.732 --> 00:51:05.936

swallow you and you won't be

able to think about anything else.

00:51:05.936 --> 00:51:08.988

Again, I don't know if I

answered the question.

00:51:09.012 --> 00:51:10.628

But yeah, that's

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kind of my take.

00:51:10.652 --> 00:51:13.908

-Yeah, I feel like you're saying like
love and rage together, you know?

00:51:13.932 --> 00:51:15.348

[laughter]

00:51:15.372 --> 00:51:16.588

Um...

00:51:16.612 --> 00:51:18.828

So I'm just going to ask
two more questions for now.

00:51:18.852 --> 00:51:21.508

One of them is to sort of...

00:51:21.532 --> 00:51:24.868

We've spoken a bit about
education in this and being aware of

00:51:24.892 --> 00:51:27.668

huge differences between
people's experiences of

00:51:27.692 --> 00:51:29.468

educational environments and

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00:51:29.492 --> 00:51:31.628

how they can both,

00:51:31.652 --> 00:51:32.856

you know, help and hinder

00:51:32.880 --> 00:51:36.028

and actually can be incredibly
harmful for many different people.

00:51:36.052 --> 00:51:39.868

So just sort of focusing on
education a bit in all of this

00:51:39.892 --> 00:51:42.668

and curriculum
development in Wales,

00:51:42.692 --> 00:51:43.736

um...

00:51:43.760 --> 00:51:46.428

What sort of changes
would you like to see

00:51:46.452 --> 00:51:48.548

around curriculum development

00:51:48.572 --> 00:51:52.228

to account for the sorts of

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things we've been speaking about

00:51:52.252 --> 00:51:55.388

and to really result
in a truly diverse

00:51:55.412 --> 00:51:58.428

curriculum that supports,

00:51:58.452 --> 00:52:01.468

you know, anybody who's
interested in writing and reading,

00:52:01.492 --> 00:52:03.868

but certainly doesn't
treat those who are

00:52:03.892 --> 00:52:05.628

structurally marginalised

00:52:05.652 --> 00:52:07.228

as an afterthought?

00:52:08.372 --> 00:52:11.936

Yeah, I think I...

00:52:11.936 --> 00:52:13.948

Ahh...

00:52:13.972 --> 00:52:17.788

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Oh, again, it's such a difficult
question to articulate for me,

00:52:17.812 --> 00:52:20.936
because my first instinct
would be to just say

00:52:20.936 --> 00:52:22.468
add more

00:52:22.492 --> 00:52:27.468
literature by disabled
neurodivergent, trans, black.

00:52:27.492 --> 00:52:29.936
You know, all the...

00:52:29.936 --> 00:52:35.308
all the kind of marginalized
communities to the curriculum,

00:52:35.332 --> 00:52:37.148
because I think...

00:52:37.172 --> 00:52:40.508
I think of myself growing
up, and yes, I grew up in Italy.

00:52:40.532 --> 00:52:43.228
All my education

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up to university level

00:52:43.252 --> 00:52:45.508

was in in Italy.

00:52:45.532 --> 00:52:47.708

And I think, you know,

00:52:47.732 --> 00:52:49.628

there wasn't a single

00:52:49.652 --> 00:52:52.668

thing about disability

on our curriculum

00:52:52.692 --> 00:52:57.148

and... But I had my big

breakthrough when I came to the UK

00:52:57.172 --> 00:52:59.948

and in my second

year of university,

00:52:59.972 --> 00:53:02.049

someone gave me a book

about Disability Studies,

00:53:02.074 --> 00:53:04.088

and I realized that

Disability Studies was a thing.

00:53:04.112 --> 00:53:06.588

And I was like, that... that
changed my life forever.

00:53:06.612 --> 00:53:08.308

I want

00:53:08.332 --> 00:53:11.936

people to be able to
experience that feeling of like

00:53:11.936 --> 00:53:15.428

belonging at a much younger age

00:53:15.452 --> 00:53:18.228

and seeing
themselves represented,

00:53:18.252 --> 00:53:19.548

because I think I...

00:53:19.572 --> 00:53:20.936

Um...

00:53:20.936 --> 00:53:22.588

[laughs]

00:53:22.612 --> 00:53:25.388

There's an example

that comes to mind.

00:53:25.412 --> 00:53:28.936

Like, it's not... it's
not necessarily...

00:53:28.936 --> 00:53:30.468

Not all of it is book related,

00:53:30.492 --> 00:53:32.628

but like Heartstopper,
I'm thinking.

00:53:32.652 --> 00:53:34.104

Like, I've...

00:53:34.128 --> 00:53:37.468

I've seen the series and the
film before I read the book.

00:53:37.492 --> 00:53:39.468

Well, no, I kind of
went back and forth

00:53:39.492 --> 00:53:41.936

between series and books, but

00:53:41.936 --> 00:53:44.398

I think the first thing I had...

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00:53:44.422 --> 00:53:47.451

The first thought I
had when watching that

00:53:47.475 --> 00:53:49.936

was, like, I wish I'd had

00:53:49.936 --> 00:53:52.028

something like this growing up.

00:53:52.052 --> 00:53:54.428

Like, people

00:53:54.452 --> 00:53:56.388

watching this series,

00:53:56.412 --> 00:54:00.588

these films as young adults
are so lucky to have that.

00:54:00.612 --> 00:54:03.936

And I think in
terms of literature,

00:54:03.936 --> 00:54:06.936

I... Yeah, I wish,

00:54:06.936 --> 00:54:09.936

you know, people

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00:54:09.936 --> 00:54:13.708

can have... Like, they
have a much wider world

00:54:13.732 --> 00:54:17.348

at their fingertips than we did
when we were growing up, I think.

00:54:17.372 --> 00:54:19.936

And so I really want

00:54:19.936 --> 00:54:22.268

teachers and,

00:54:22.292 --> 00:54:27.348

you know, anyone involved
in the education sector

00:54:27.372 --> 00:54:29.708

to be aware of that,

00:54:29.732 --> 00:54:31.988

and how much responsibility

00:54:32.012 --> 00:54:35.936

they have to
address these things.

00:54:35.936 --> 00:54:39.465

And I think, again, as I

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said, the UK for me was like...

00:54:39.489 --> 00:54:41.468

Moving to the UK for
me was transformative

00:54:41.492 --> 00:54:44.588

because in terms of education,
like I didn't grow up around

00:54:44.612 --> 00:54:46.588

black people. Like, I...

00:54:46.612 --> 00:54:48.428

My town is

00:54:48.452 --> 00:54:50.936

basically just white
middle class people.

00:54:50.936 --> 00:54:55.588

And I saw very little
diversity in my lifetime there.

00:54:55.612 --> 00:54:59.671

And then when I moved to the UK,
especially Cardiff is a very diverse city

00:54:59.695 --> 00:55:02.628

and it was such a learning

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curve for me in that sense.

00:55:02.652 --> 00:55:03.668

And I think...

00:55:03.692 --> 00:55:05.308

Yeah, I wish...

00:55:05.332 --> 00:55:07.188

[laughs]

00:55:07.212 --> 00:55:08.988

I don't know, in another life,

00:55:09.012 --> 00:55:11.148

if I were to probably, you know,

00:55:11.172 --> 00:55:13.508

grow up in Wales or

in the UK, I would say

00:55:13.532 --> 00:55:18.108

include as many marginalized
authors as possible

00:55:18.132 --> 00:55:20.388

in the curriculum, because that,

00:55:20.412 --> 00:55:22.908

I think it would have

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changed my life if I got

00:55:22.932 --> 00:55:26.936

a kind of a primary
education like that.

00:55:26.936 --> 00:55:30.058

-Thanks, and I know you're
seeing in another another life,

00:55:30.082 --> 00:55:34.268

but you're also saying it now and people
can be making these changes today for...

00:55:34.292 --> 00:55:38.148

not just next generations, for
anybody who wants to be able to

00:55:38.172 --> 00:55:40.243

read and engage with
this stuff. So thank you.

00:55:40.268 --> 00:55:41.996

-Yeah, and I think
it's so easy today to do

00:55:42.020 --> 00:55:43.790

because you've got...
You know, you've got...

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00:55:43.814 --> 00:55:46.148

I don't know, like
Disability History Month,

00:55:46.172 --> 00:55:47.628

Black History Month.

00:55:47.652 --> 00:55:49.936

And I'm not saying
you have to like

00:55:49.936 --> 00:55:53.188

dive in just on those occasions,

00:55:53.212 --> 00:55:55.268

but you've got, like,

00:55:55.292 --> 00:55:58.188

plenty of space
to be able to justify

00:55:58.212 --> 00:56:00.188

putting it in the
curriculum because we...

00:56:00.212 --> 00:56:01.988

At the end of the
day, we like dreaming,

00:56:02.012 --> 00:56:04.468

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but we know that there
are a lot of bureaucratic,

00:56:04.492 --> 00:56:07.148
you know, processes and things

00:56:07.172 --> 00:56:10.908
where you have to justify putting
something in a curriculum. And I think

00:56:10.932 --> 00:56:13.548
with everything
that we have today,

00:56:13.572 --> 00:56:14.628
there's no excuse

00:56:14.652 --> 00:56:16.936
for it not to happen.

00:56:16.936 --> 00:56:20.868
-And shout out to libraries
and librarians in all this as well.

00:56:20.892 --> 00:56:23.468
So one more question
and then our comfort break.

00:56:23.492 --> 00:56:25.828
What are you hopeful about

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00:56:25.852 --> 00:56:27.908

or what excites you about

00:56:27.932 --> 00:56:32.028

the writing, literature
landscape in Wales?

00:56:33.995 --> 00:56:35.308

-Um...

00:56:35.332 --> 00:56:37.936

-More questions
today, you know, just...

00:56:39.692 --> 00:56:42.548

-I think... I don't
know, like, in general,

00:56:42.572 --> 00:56:44.988

I'm just excited for the future.

00:56:45.012 --> 00:56:47.936

Like, I... Um...

00:56:47.936 --> 00:56:52.308

Beyond Tu Hwnt was shortlisted

00:56:52.332 --> 00:56:56.268

at the British Book

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Awards this year.

00:56:56.292 --> 00:56:58.508

And that for me was like a huge

00:56:58.532 --> 00:57:03.468

thing to see not only a

bilingual English and Welsh book

00:57:03.492 --> 00:57:07.348

being shortlisted at something

like the British Book Awards,

00:57:07.372 --> 00:57:09.548

but also it gave me

00:57:09.572 --> 00:57:12.068

so much hope for the future.

00:57:12.092 --> 00:57:13.936

And to see that, you know,

00:57:13.936 --> 00:57:16.508

maybe people are waking up to

00:57:16.532 --> 00:57:19.936

the fact that we

need to represent

00:57:19.936 --> 00:57:23.068

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the population as it actually is

00:57:23.092 --> 00:57:27.548

in literature and in media and in
journalism and whatever, and I think...

00:57:27.572 --> 00:57:28.936

Um...

00:57:28.936 --> 00:57:33.268

You know, seeing an increasing
number of disabled, LGBT+,

00:57:33.292 --> 00:57:36.908

especially, you know, trans
authors being successful.

00:57:36.932 --> 00:57:39.936

Like I'm thinking
about, you know...

00:57:39.936 --> 00:57:42.028

Ah... What's her name now?

00:57:42.052 --> 00:57:43.828

Can't remember.

00:57:43.852 --> 00:57:46.068

The author of
Detransition, Baby.

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00:57:46.092 --> 00:57:47.911

[laughs]

00:57:47.935 --> 00:57:49.428

Can't remember
her name, but, like,

00:57:49.452 --> 00:57:51.468

seeing her succeed

00:57:51.492 --> 00:57:54.548

as a trans author and

00:57:54.572 --> 00:57:57.868

kind of seeing, you know,

00:57:57.892 --> 00:58:01.958

that there's a lot of anti-trans,
anti-immigrant and ableist sentiments

00:58:01.982 --> 00:58:04.068

going around right
now, and I think

00:58:04.092 --> 00:58:07.988

we have these glimmers
of hope that we should take.

00:58:08.012 --> 00:58:11.188

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And that's what makes me excited

00:58:11.212 --> 00:58:12.651
for the future.

00:58:12.676 --> 00:58:15.388
Again, personally
seeing Beyond/Tu Hwnt

00:58:15.412 --> 00:58:18.308
being shortlisted at
the British Book Awards

00:58:18.332 --> 00:58:19.748
was like the... Yeah,

00:58:19.772 --> 00:58:22.958
the highlight of
my year, probably.

00:58:23.560 --> 00:58:26.468
-Thanks. And that brings us to--

00:58:26.492 --> 00:58:27.908
-Yes! Torrey Peters, thank you.

00:58:27.932 --> 00:58:31.748
-And yes, I can see at the
corner of my eye there's

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00:58:31.772 --> 00:58:35.148

been different and great
activity in the chat space.

00:58:35.172 --> 00:58:37.508

So thank you to everybody
who's been using that.

00:58:37.532 --> 00:58:39.188

And yeah, I think we're gonna

00:58:39.212 --> 00:58:42.148

take our five minute
comfort break now

00:58:42.172 --> 00:58:44.348

and then when we
come back from that,

00:58:44.372 --> 00:58:48.548

there'll be up to about 20 minutes
or so for audience questions.

00:58:48.572 --> 00:58:49.748

So we'll check in to see

00:58:49.772 --> 00:58:51.391

what people have
maybe asked and shared,

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00:58:51.416 --> 00:58:53.228

but I just want to say
thank you again, Sofia,

00:58:53.252 --> 00:58:54.608

and thanks to
everybody who's here

00:58:54.632 --> 00:58:57.628

and for the different things
that you've been commenting,

00:58:57.652 --> 00:58:59.388

which we'll catch up on shortly.

00:58:59.413 --> 00:59:00.868

So we'll take a break now

00:59:00.892 --> 00:59:02.708

and see you in
about five minutes.

00:59:02.732 --> 00:59:04.476

-Thank you so much.

00:59:14.642 --> 00:59:15.642

-Hi, everyone.

00:59:15.666 --> 00:59:19.148

I am just reading through the

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00:59:19.172 --> 00:59:21.708

Q&A and the chat space.

00:59:21.732 --> 00:59:24.722

So I'm gonna maybe sort of like

00:59:24.747 --> 00:59:26.548

tack back and forth

between some of that,

00:59:26.572 --> 00:59:29.548

but thank you for the

questions you've asked

00:59:29.572 --> 00:59:31.228

and the different

things you've shared.

00:59:31.252 --> 00:59:33.588

And also, in case

it's useful to mention,

00:59:33.612 --> 00:59:36.068

what we'll do at some point is

00:59:36.092 --> 00:59:40.628

send some more links to some of the

writing and works that have been discussed.

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00:59:40.652 --> 00:59:43.588

So if anybody isn't
already familiar with them

00:59:43.612 --> 00:59:45.936

and they want to look
them up, they can do that.

00:59:45.936 --> 00:59:49.708

But to begin to go
through the questions

00:59:49.732 --> 00:59:51.548

and also just reflections,

00:59:51.572 --> 00:59:53.428

I'm going to read things out

00:59:53.452 --> 00:59:56.868

and sort of put
questions to Sofia

00:59:56.892 --> 00:59:59.828

but also if anybody wants to
share anything or add anything,

00:59:59.852 --> 01:00:01.936

please feel free to
do that at any point.

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01:00:01.936 --> 01:00:04.708

So we've got someone has shared,

01:00:04.732 --> 01:00:06.508

"I was diagnosed

late with autism,

01:00:06.532 --> 01:00:10.108

"so I'm relearning how to do everything
without stressing myself beyond reason.

01:00:10.132 --> 01:00:13.948

"I'm at a point with my manuscript
where I want to be querying,

01:00:13.972 --> 01:00:17.936

"but I find it very hard to
actually commit emailing agents.

01:00:17.936 --> 01:00:20.628

"Do you have any advice
for raising confidence

01:00:20.652 --> 01:00:25.148

"or any tips for dealing with the
sometimes inscrutable process of querying?

01:00:25.172 --> 01:00:26.936

"Thank you."

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01:00:26.936 --> 01:00:28.948

So, Sofia, do you have any

01:00:28.972 --> 01:00:33.708

thoughts or tips or just words
of encouragement as well around

01:00:33.732 --> 01:00:35.588

this question of

01:00:35.612 --> 01:00:37.908

trying to build your confidence

01:00:37.932 --> 01:00:41.936

when querying and essentially
putting yourself out there as a writer?

01:00:41.936 --> 01:00:44.936

-Yeah, I...

01:00:44.936 --> 01:00:45.948

Good question.

01:00:45.972 --> 01:00:47.588

So I, full disclosure,

01:00:47.612 --> 01:00:50.828

I don't have any experience
in querying per se,

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01:00:50.852 --> 01:00:52.936

because I don't, like...

01:00:52.936 --> 01:00:55.148

I don't have a
manuscript in progress.

01:00:55.172 --> 01:00:57.028

I've never had
a full manuscript.

01:00:57.052 --> 01:01:02.428

The kind of publications that I worked
on have been really a kind of short form

01:01:02.452 --> 01:01:05.268

where I was either
commissioned to write

01:01:05.292 --> 01:01:06.988

or I just submitted

01:01:07.012 --> 01:01:09.936

following a call and...

01:01:09.936 --> 01:01:13.308

and I was accepted. So I...

01:01:13.332 --> 01:01:16.411

I don't have any direct

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experience with querying.

01:01:16.435 --> 01:01:18.108

I don't know if

Francesca maybe does,

01:01:18.132 --> 01:01:20.468

but I don't know.

01:01:20.492 --> 01:01:23.308

I'm gonna relate it with

my experience of, like,

01:01:23.332 --> 01:01:24.908

you know, job applications

01:01:24.932 --> 01:01:26.936

and things like that in the

01:01:26.936 --> 01:01:29.378

publishing sector.

01:01:29.402 --> 01:01:31.228

I think it can be a

really gruelling process,

01:01:31.252 --> 01:01:33.936

especially when it's...

01:01:33.936 --> 01:01:36.508

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I think it's made to suit, like,

01:01:36.532 --> 01:01:39.918

neurotypical brains,
mostly, and so it's...

01:01:39.942 --> 01:01:42.348

it's always something
that's felt very foreign to me,

01:01:42.372 --> 01:01:43.936

because I've never...

01:01:43.936 --> 01:01:47.188

I've never really saw the
point in like cover letters

01:01:47.212 --> 01:01:49.348

or like trying to sell
yourself or whatever,

01:01:49.372 --> 01:01:51.816

and it's always been
really, really exhausting

01:01:51.840 --> 01:01:54.087

because it's like... it's like
you're putting on a mask

01:01:54.111 --> 01:01:56.428

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for someone to

01:01:56.452 --> 01:02:00.828

then not really consider
even what you're saying.

01:02:01.936 --> 01:02:05.428

I will say I empathize with the
fact that it's a gruelling process,

01:02:05.452 --> 01:02:07.708

again, especially if
you're, in all of this,

01:02:07.732 --> 01:02:11.068

you're also kind of coming
to terms with your diagnosis

01:02:11.092 --> 01:02:14.948

and your way of doing things
as a result of your diagnosis.

01:02:14.972 --> 01:02:16.468

Um...

01:02:16.492 --> 01:02:18.228

I will say

01:02:18.252 --> 01:02:20.936

all you need is one yes.

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01:02:20.936 --> 01:02:21.988

Um...

01:02:22.012 --> 01:02:23.012

[laughs]

01:02:23.036 --> 01:02:24.936

So, um...

01:02:24.936 --> 01:02:27.558

I would say that
that's what I tell myself

01:02:27.582 --> 01:02:30.748

when I'm like pitching stuff
and I keep getting, you know,

01:02:30.772 --> 01:02:32.908

no after no after
no, and I was like,

01:02:32.932 --> 01:02:34.468

all you need is one yes.

01:02:34.492 --> 01:02:36.788

And eventually that will come.

01:02:36.812 --> 01:02:40.148

But I'll probably just

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leave it to Francesca to...

01:02:40.172 --> 01:02:42.348

if you have some
experience with this,

01:02:42.372 --> 01:02:44.628

because I don't have
experience with direct querying.

01:02:44.652 --> 01:02:46.548

So, yeah.

01:02:46.572 --> 01:02:49.788

-So, I've never had
an agent, I'll say that.

01:02:49.812 --> 01:02:51.988

But I guess I've had experience,

01:02:52.012 --> 01:02:53.708

various experiences with

01:02:53.732 --> 01:02:58.588

publishers and either, like, pitching
or querying or responding to a query.

01:02:58.612 --> 01:03:00.762

And I guess, actually,
I thought a bit about

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01:03:00.786 --> 01:03:02.936

what you were saying
earlier on, Sofia, around

01:03:02.936 --> 01:03:05.825

like when you find people that
you can share your writing with.

01:03:05.849 --> 01:03:07.988

So I know you spoke
about your grandfather

01:03:08.012 --> 01:03:10.208

and I was just thinking
about like the intimacy

01:03:10.232 --> 01:03:12.428

that can be sharing
your writing. Like, I think

01:03:12.452 --> 01:03:14.828

who you choose to
share your writing with,

01:03:14.852 --> 01:03:16.902

depending on that writing
and how you feel about it,

01:03:16.926 --> 01:03:18.228

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it can be an act of love.

01:03:18.252 --> 01:03:21.668

You can feel very vulnerable, so I
guess maybe my advice as someone

01:03:21.692 --> 01:03:24.228

who's not got experience
of querying agents,

01:03:24.252 --> 01:03:25.908

my advice would be

01:03:25.932 --> 01:03:29.508

if there are people in your life
who you feel comfortable to share

01:03:29.532 --> 01:03:31.668

some of what you're
planning to send

01:03:31.692 --> 01:03:33.668

or even maybe, like,
the wording of the query,

01:03:33.692 --> 01:03:35.511

it can sometimes,

01:03:35.535 --> 01:03:39.588

for me anyway, like being able to talk

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through or share something with someone who

01:03:39.612 --> 01:03:41.948

I trust to be able to,
like, hold that with care,

01:03:41.972 --> 01:03:45.628

even if they offer me, like,
constructive feedback and critique,

01:03:45.652 --> 01:03:47.748

it just helps me to
then maybe navigate

01:03:47.772 --> 01:03:50.548

when I hear back from the
place that I'm sending it out to

01:03:50.572 --> 01:03:51.936

someone who I don't know.

01:03:51.936 --> 01:03:54.028

So yeah, if you're
maybe sending something

01:03:54.052 --> 01:03:57.188

like "cold", to use
that sort of expression

01:03:57.212 --> 01:04:00.748

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to an agent or publisher or
editor who you don't know,

01:04:00.772 --> 01:04:04.068

if there are people in your life
who are comfortable to speak about

01:04:04.092 --> 01:04:07.148

that with or share your
writing with in some way,

01:04:07.172 --> 01:04:11.548

I just find that can make it feel maybe
less of a solitary and isolating process.

01:04:11.572 --> 01:04:14.052

And yeah, I don't know if it's
useful or it makes a difference,

01:04:14.076 --> 01:04:16.943

but I would just always stress
there is so much rejection

01:04:16.967 --> 01:04:18.548

happening so much of the time.

01:04:18.572 --> 01:04:22.028

A very small amount
of that is made visible,

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01:04:22.052 --> 01:04:23.588

whether it's online or offline,

01:04:23.612 --> 01:04:25.388

so just knowing that if you...

01:04:25.412 --> 01:04:28.188

you don't receive a
response you're hoping for,

01:04:28.212 --> 01:04:29.988

you're not in that on your own,

01:04:30.012 --> 01:04:32.828

even if that can feel
lonely in the moment.

01:04:33.569 --> 01:04:36.708

So to try and get
through as many of

01:04:36.732 --> 01:04:40.508

the great questions and
comments that people have shared,

01:04:40.532 --> 01:04:41.832

I'm going to pick
up another one.

01:04:41.856 --> 01:04:45.948

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And I think this is from
Marinella Mezzanotte.

01:04:45.972 --> 01:04:48.068

My apologies if I've
mispronounced your name.

01:04:48.092 --> 01:04:50.748

So this statement is,

01:04:50.772 --> 01:04:53.828

"I started to write long before
I acknowledged my ADHD

01:04:53.852 --> 01:04:57.936

"and I'm only just beginning to
reconnect with writing after becoming..."

01:04:57.936 --> 01:05:00.148

Sorry, the chat moved

01:05:00.172 --> 01:05:02.588

and my own ADHD is
like all over the place.

01:05:02.612 --> 01:05:03.628

Um...

01:05:03.652 --> 01:05:05.653

"Just beginning to

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reconnect with writing

01:05:05.677 --> 01:05:08.268

"after becoming alienated
from it during the pandemic.

01:05:08.292 --> 01:05:10.788

"As happy as I am
to be writing again,

01:05:10.812 --> 01:05:13.936

"I feel kind of lost. Most neurotypical
writing advice never worked for me

01:05:13.936 --> 01:05:16.868

"and it's a relief not to
feel that I should follow it.

01:05:16.892 --> 01:05:19.028

"But my process is
very stop and start,

01:05:19.052 --> 01:05:21.068

"in a way that doesn't
feel productive.

01:05:21.092 --> 01:05:24.268

"Grateful for any advice and thank
you for sharing your experience."

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01:05:24.292 --> 01:05:26.171

So I'll... Over to you, Sofia.

01:05:26.195 --> 01:05:29.548

But I'll also say, as a
stop and starter, solidarity.

01:05:29.572 --> 01:05:32.356

Like, there are lots of
stop and starters out there.

01:05:32.380 --> 01:05:34.788

When it comes, it comes
when it doesn't, it doesn't.

01:05:34.812 --> 01:05:37.348

And in the time
in between, like,

01:05:37.372 --> 01:05:40.348

try and be as gentle and
patient with yourself as possible

01:05:40.372 --> 01:05:43.468

and find people that you
can either, like, have fun with

01:05:43.492 --> 01:05:46.936

or if you can, like, sit with you in that
place where you're not feeling so great.

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01:05:47.892 --> 01:05:51.028

-Yeah, I... I agree.

01:05:51.052 --> 01:05:53.788

I'm also a stop and starter.

01:05:53.812 --> 01:05:55.908

I... Yes, um...

01:05:55.932 --> 01:05:58.628

I'm realizing as well with my

01:05:58.652 --> 01:06:01.468

PhD thesis, like, how

01:06:01.492 --> 01:06:03.948

much of a daunting
process it can be to, like,

01:06:03.972 --> 01:06:06.708

feel like you've got good going
and then suddenly you stop,

01:06:06.732 --> 01:06:08.868

and you're like, oh
my god, what do I do?

01:06:08.892 --> 01:06:12.936

For me, the thing that changed

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01:06:12.936 --> 01:06:14.364

things is, like, I...

01:06:14.388 --> 01:06:16.588

So I don't have ADHD, so I don't

01:06:16.612 --> 01:06:20.828

struggle with some of the things
that people with ADHD I know

01:06:20.852 --> 01:06:24.668

struggle with, but for
me, accountability is what

01:06:24.692 --> 01:06:26.828

changes the game. So I've got

01:06:26.852 --> 01:06:31.548

an online group of fellow PhDs

01:06:31.572 --> 01:06:34.308

who are in the
same boat as I am.

01:06:34.332 --> 01:06:36.348

We're mostly, at the moment,

01:06:36.372 --> 01:06:38.388

we're all neurodivergent.

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01:06:38.412 --> 01:06:41.668

Like, it didn't start as a
neurodivergent-only thing,

01:06:41.692 --> 01:06:44.828

but it turns out that the people
who attend the most and need

01:06:44.852 --> 01:06:47.588

that kind of
accountability the most

01:06:47.612 --> 01:06:50.588

is neurodivergent people.

01:06:50.612 --> 01:06:55.428

And so basically we
just like write together

01:06:55.452 --> 01:06:58.628

and we kind of decide on
time blocks that we're gonna

01:06:58.652 --> 01:07:01.948

write for or do whatever
task we need to do.

01:07:01.972 --> 01:07:03.628

And it's kind of

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like, you know, it's...

01:07:03.652 --> 01:07:06.036

I don't know if you've ever
heard of the term body doubling?

01:07:06.060 --> 01:07:09.388

So the the idea of doing
something with someone

01:07:09.412 --> 01:07:10.708

because the...

01:07:10.732 --> 01:07:12.788

just the fact of being

01:07:12.812 --> 01:07:15.831

in the same room with someone
potentially mirroring what you're doing,

01:07:15.855 --> 01:07:17.108

or just someone being

01:07:17.132 --> 01:07:20.936

in the room with you
makes you want to

01:07:20.936 --> 01:07:23.508

actually work.

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01:07:23.532 --> 01:07:25.228

And I know it's not...

01:07:25.252 --> 01:07:28.588

It doesn't always work like this
for the creative process, because,

01:07:28.612 --> 01:07:31.188

as Francesca said, we're all

01:07:31.212 --> 01:07:34.428

stop and starters, and I think
there's nothing wrong with that.

01:07:34.452 --> 01:07:37.348

But when it feels
like it's getting to you,

01:07:37.372 --> 01:07:39.468

when it feels like
you can't really...

01:07:39.492 --> 01:07:42.525

You're really stuck and you
can't really achieve anything,

01:07:42.549 --> 01:07:44.668

I think this is
what works for me.

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01:07:44.692 --> 01:07:48.148

Like, having someone who's
struggling with the same things that I am

01:07:48.172 --> 01:07:51.828

and maybe, you know,
setting up an online

01:07:51.852 --> 01:07:54.548

sort of little group,
very relaxed,

01:07:54.572 --> 01:07:56.388

where we can just, um...

01:07:56.412 --> 01:07:58.465

keep each other accountable.

01:07:58.489 --> 01:07:59.748

[laughs]

01:07:59.772 --> 01:08:02.948

So yeah, I would say
that... that's my advice.

01:08:02.972 --> 01:08:08.468

And if you don't have
something like this,

01:08:08.492 --> 01:08:11.508

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maybe we should
start something like that.

01:08:13.172 --> 01:08:16.348

-So a quick question before we
move back to some longer ones,

01:08:16.372 --> 01:08:19.388

and also before I
share various links.

01:08:19.412 --> 01:08:22.948

So one of the books you mentioned
earlier on, if I'm remembering correctly,

01:08:22.972 --> 01:08:26.268

was Detransition, Baby,
which is by Torrey Peters.

01:08:26.292 --> 01:08:28.628

Someone's also asked if

01:08:28.652 --> 01:08:31.588

you could just remind us
of the name of the journalist

01:08:31.612 --> 01:08:35.068

whose work you read on cerebral
palsy and neurodivergence,

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01:08:35.092 --> 01:08:36.948

and if you could
maybe tell us a bit more

01:08:36.972 --> 01:08:38.936

about the connections
between them for you.

01:08:38.936 --> 01:08:43.948

-Yeah, so the journalist I
mentioned earlier is Lucy Webster.

01:08:43.972 --> 01:08:47.428

She writes for a
variety of publications,

01:08:47.452 --> 01:08:52.148

including The Guardian,
the... I think the...

01:08:52.172 --> 01:08:54.108

Potentially The Times.

01:08:54.132 --> 01:08:57.268

But I've read her work
mainly on The Guardian.

01:08:57.292 --> 01:09:01.308

And she also wrote a wonderful book
which is called My View from Down Here,

01:09:01.332 --> 01:09:04.028

which is about her experience

01:09:04.052 --> 01:09:06.668

with being a disabled woman

01:09:06.692 --> 01:09:09.936

and so kind of experiences
of disability and feminism.

01:09:09.936 --> 01:09:12.068

And kind of
navigating that space.

01:09:12.092 --> 01:09:14.828

I would really recommend.
It's an excellent book.

01:09:14.852 --> 01:09:19.268

I found myself in a lot
of what she was saying.

01:09:19.292 --> 01:09:23.428

And she has a Substack
newsletter that I really recommend,

01:09:23.452 --> 01:09:26.936

which I believe is also called

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01:09:26.936 --> 01:09:28.788

The View from Down Here.

01:09:28.812 --> 01:09:29.868

[chuckles]

01:09:29.892 --> 01:09:32.388

If I'm not mistaken,

01:09:32.412 --> 01:09:35.068

but if you just look

for on Substack,

01:09:35.092 --> 01:09:39.188

she should come up and

she just does an excellent work

01:09:39.212 --> 01:09:42.936

in sharing her love with a

disability and all the different

01:09:42.936 --> 01:09:45.148

aspects of being

01:09:45.172 --> 01:09:48.508

disabled and

neurodivergent and queer.

01:09:48.532 --> 01:09:52.228

And that specific piece

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about cerebral palsy being

01:09:52.252 --> 01:09:55.188

a form of neurodivergent
and kind of

01:09:55.212 --> 01:09:59.348

how difficult it is
to start navigating it

01:09:59.372 --> 01:10:02.228

as that kind of an entity after
years and years of being told

01:10:02.252 --> 01:10:03.628

that it's just a physical thing.

01:10:03.652 --> 01:10:06.788

That, you know, that it's just
a kind of physical disability.

01:10:06.812 --> 01:10:07.908

I think for me,

01:10:07.932 --> 01:10:10.936

it was transformative because
I was always taught that

01:10:10.936 --> 01:10:13.708

things like my...

01:10:13.732 --> 01:10:16.936

sensitivity to
sounds were just like

01:10:16.936 --> 01:10:19.308

due to, um...

01:10:19.332 --> 01:10:23.068

the moro reflex that in cerebral
palsy doesn't really go away.

01:10:23.092 --> 01:10:24.748

So for anyone who doesn't know,

01:10:24.772 --> 01:10:26.948

that reflex is like the...

01:10:26.972 --> 01:10:29.068

the reflex that you
get in newborn babies

01:10:29.092 --> 01:10:32.308

where they get, like,
startled at everything.

01:10:32.332 --> 01:10:33.628

For most people,

01:10:33.652 --> 01:10:37.588

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it goes away within the first,
like, six months to a year of life,

01:10:37.612 --> 01:10:41.148
and for people... for a lot of
people with CP, not everyone,

01:10:41.172 --> 01:10:44.028
but a lot of people with
CP still have it in adulthood.

01:10:44.052 --> 01:10:45.348
Um...

01:10:45.372 --> 01:10:47.708
And I think I was...

01:10:47.732 --> 01:10:50.108
Yes, it's part of
CP, but that's not...

01:10:50.132 --> 01:10:51.668
it doesn't feel like
a physical thing.

01:10:51.692 --> 01:10:52.936
It feels like a...

01:10:52.936 --> 01:10:55.828
a way that my brain

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has of processing

01:10:55.852 --> 01:10:59.936

sounds and things

that is different from

01:10:59.936 --> 01:11:02.348

the, supposedly, the norm.

01:11:02.372 --> 01:11:04.428

So it...

01:11:04.452 --> 01:11:07.936

I guess the term

neurodivergent for me felt

01:11:07.936 --> 01:11:10.628

appropriate in describing

01:11:10.652 --> 01:11:13.428

that thing, but I

think it's weird that

01:11:13.452 --> 01:11:16.588

I had to wait for

01:11:16.612 --> 01:11:19.588

someone's confirmation

for me to be saying,

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01:11:19.612 --> 01:11:22.936

okay, so I'm not
the only one, it's fine.

01:11:22.936 --> 01:11:26.068

So yeah, it was Lucy
Webster, just to recap.

01:11:26.092 --> 01:11:27.428

-Thanks.

01:11:27.452 --> 01:11:29.108

So we've got about
12 minutes left

01:11:29.132 --> 01:11:31.628

and I'm going to try to get
through quite a few questions.

01:11:31.652 --> 01:11:36.268

So we're going to keep this like our
sort of like whistle stop tour approach.

01:11:36.292 --> 01:11:38.971

And some of these are
anonymous, some of them aren't.

01:11:38.995 --> 01:11:42.148

So again, I'll do my best to
pronounce people's names correctly.

01:11:42.172 --> 01:11:45.936

So let's see. There's a
question here from Sana Ali.

01:11:45.936 --> 01:11:49.948

"Considering the word inspiration
was mentioned quite a few times,

01:11:49.972 --> 01:11:52.388

"what do you think
it is as a factor?

01:11:52.412 --> 01:11:56.348

"In other words, do you think
that it is an enabling factor

01:11:56.372 --> 01:11:58.308

"or a barrier to your writing?"

01:11:59.936 --> 01:12:01.748

-Interesting question. Hi, Sana.

01:12:01.772 --> 01:12:02.788

[laughs]

01:12:02.812 --> 01:12:04.348

Um... Let's...

01:12:04.372 --> 01:12:06.188

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I think it's both.

01:12:06.212 --> 01:12:07.668

Um...

01:12:07.692 --> 01:12:08.692

I think--

01:12:08.700 --> 01:12:10.348

-But that's a theme
to a lot today, right?

01:12:10.372 --> 01:12:11.936

The gold band of it.

01:12:11.936 --> 01:12:13.308

-I think it's both.

01:12:13.332 --> 01:12:14.468

I think it's...

01:12:14.492 --> 01:12:16.388

If we're talking about, like,

01:12:16.412 --> 01:12:19.308

more creative writing,

01:12:19.332 --> 01:12:22.908

it's for the kind of writing
that I've been doing now,

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01:12:22.932 --> 01:12:25.628

which is mostly,
like, short stories,

01:12:25.652 --> 01:12:26.988

short-form writing,

01:12:27.012 --> 01:12:29.948

is definitely an advantage,

01:12:29.972 --> 01:12:31.908

because it gives
me time to, like,

01:12:31.932 --> 01:12:33.329

think about an idea and then

01:12:33.353 --> 01:12:37.348

as soon as I get the inspiration, I just
write it in, like, one day or whatever.

01:12:37.372 --> 01:12:40.548

And that's what feels
comfortable to me.

01:12:40.572 --> 01:12:44.936

It's a barrier for,
like, longer term

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01:12:44.936 --> 01:12:46.868

projects like a PhD

01:12:46.892 --> 01:12:49.548

because I'm aware

that I can't write

01:12:49.572 --> 01:12:52.428

80,000 words in a day.

01:12:52.452 --> 01:12:54.108

Um...

01:12:54.132 --> 01:12:56.988

So in that sense, it

is definitely a barrier.

01:12:57.012 --> 01:12:59.271

And I've had,

begudgingly, had to

01:12:59.296 --> 01:13:02.828

kind of learn the more, like,

01:13:02.852 --> 01:13:06.268

standard methods

of, like, PhD writing,

01:13:06.292 --> 01:13:09.188

which is, like, write even

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if you don't want to write.

01:13:09.212 --> 01:13:13.548

And, like, write X

words every day,

01:13:13.572 --> 01:13:16.596

and, like, you know, kind of
practice your writing journal.

01:13:16.621 --> 01:13:17.621

Blah, blah blah.

01:13:17.645 --> 01:13:19.027

So I would say it's both, but it

01:13:19.051 --> 01:13:21.748

varies on the kind of...

01:13:21.772 --> 01:13:24.468

writing that I'm doing,
because if it's creative writing,

01:13:24.492 --> 01:13:27.748

then I'll just... I'll just literally just
wait for the inspiration to strike.

01:13:27.772 --> 01:13:30.308

If it's academic writing,

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01:13:30.332 --> 01:13:32.708

obviously it's a bit different.

01:13:32.732 --> 01:13:34.348

I have to like force myself.

01:13:34.372 --> 01:13:36.558

And it's not

necessarily negative.

01:13:36.582 --> 01:13:39.918

Like forcing myself is not

necessarily negative or painful or bad.

01:13:39.943 --> 01:13:42.868

It's just kind of going

01:13:42.892 --> 01:13:46.828

against what my brain would

like to do a lot of the time.

01:13:46.852 --> 01:13:49.428

But sometimes it's just about

01:13:49.452 --> 01:13:51.508

a little bit of

discipline, I guess.

01:13:51.533 --> 01:13:53.068

-Thank you.

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01:13:53.092 --> 01:13:54.828

I think we've got
time for two questions

01:13:54.852 --> 01:13:59.068

if we approach them
with like panache.

01:13:59.092 --> 01:14:00.828

So great questions.

01:14:00.852 --> 01:14:02.788

There's a question
here from Antonia.

01:14:02.812 --> 01:14:04.988

"You mentioned
anti-capitalist approaches

01:14:05.012 --> 01:14:08.132

"and your pigeonholing comments
had me thinking about my experiences

01:14:08.132 --> 01:14:11.188

"and also how I imagine
having to present myself.

01:14:11.212 --> 01:14:13.948

"It makes me wonder

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about how we break into

01:14:13.972 --> 01:14:16.068

"just presenting

ourselves as we wish,

01:14:16.092 --> 01:14:18.132

"or is it inescapable

that we must fit?

01:14:18.132 --> 01:14:20.588

"What I start to then wonder is

01:14:20.612 --> 01:14:22.628

"if we must fit templates,

01:14:22.652 --> 01:14:25.148

"that we present ourselves

through both to the public

01:14:25.172 --> 01:14:29.108

"and in many ways in seeking

publishing opportunities, etcetera,

01:14:29.132 --> 01:14:33.908

"and do we then sort of have to make

ourselves relevant and then just sort of...

01:14:33.932 --> 01:14:35.463

"A sort of generous mention.

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01:14:35.488 --> 01:14:36.971

"Hope this isn't an unfair question."

01:14:36.995 --> 01:14:38.955

Doesn't seem like that.

Seems like an interesting,

01:14:38.979 --> 01:14:40.708

like, just provocation

to put out there.

01:14:40.732 --> 01:14:42.868

And thanks for prompting

me along those lines.

01:14:42.892 --> 01:14:46.108

So yeah, maybe a couple

minutes of your thoughts on,

01:14:46.132 --> 01:14:49.132

yeah, anti-capitalist

approaches.

01:14:49.132 --> 01:14:51.028

And how much

space there is for us

01:14:51.052 --> 01:14:52.708

to present ourselves as we wish

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01:14:52.732 --> 01:14:56.132

as writers, as people,
as everything in between.

01:14:56.132 --> 01:14:57.828

-Um...

01:14:57.852 --> 01:14:59.980

Yeah, I think it's an
excellent question

01:15:00.004 --> 01:15:02.668

and I don't think I'll be
able to answer it fully,

01:15:02.692 --> 01:15:06.108

but I'm going to start from
my experience, I guess.

01:15:06.132 --> 01:15:09.565

I think the way
that I approach it

01:15:09.589 --> 01:15:13.132

is, like, in terms of writing
and publishing is like

01:15:13.132 --> 01:15:17.668

if I know that the organization

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that I'm working with is, like,

01:15:17.692 --> 01:15:19.525

Disability Confident or like

01:15:19.549 --> 01:15:22.068

gives me

01:15:22.092 --> 01:15:25.308

trust in thinking that they
will treat me fairly and that

01:15:25.332 --> 01:15:27.548

they will consider
every part of my identity,

01:15:27.572 --> 01:15:29.708

then I don't tend to

01:15:29.732 --> 01:15:34.348

present myself in a certain way
that's deemed more like acceptable.

01:15:34.372 --> 01:15:36.628

If I'm

01:15:36.652 --> 01:15:39.668

doing something that's
more like mainstream,

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01:15:39.692 --> 01:15:43.132

I do tend to, um...

01:15:43.132 --> 01:15:46.988

present myself in a
different way. Like,

01:15:47.012 --> 01:15:51.132

some of the publishers
that I worked with on

01:15:51.132 --> 01:15:53.447

translations, for example,

01:15:53.471 --> 01:15:55.908

don't even know
that I have a disability.

01:15:55.932 --> 01:15:58.188

And they don't really need to.

01:15:58.212 --> 01:16:02.228

But the reason they don't know is because
I did feel like if I said,

01:16:02.252 --> 01:16:03.791

then it would

01:16:03.815 --> 01:16:08.031

be a problem for the work that I

was trying to carry out for them.

01:16:08.055 --> 01:16:09.132

Um...

01:16:09.132 --> 01:16:11.388

I think it's up to you as well

01:16:11.412 --> 01:16:14.132

and it's often up to

01:16:14.132 --> 01:16:16.908

the kind of privilege

that you have.

01:16:16.932 --> 01:16:20.588

I think also in

terms of financial,

01:16:20.612 --> 01:16:21.988

um...

01:16:22.012 --> 01:16:24.388

Kind of, you know, if you...

01:16:24.412 --> 01:16:27.161

Of course, the world

is still fundamentally

01:16:27.185 --> 01:16:30.191

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capitalist and ableist
and all of those things.

01:16:30.215 --> 01:16:34.828

And so if you're able with
your current financial means

01:16:34.852 --> 01:16:38.348

to live in a way that
feels coherent to you

01:16:38.372 --> 01:16:41.148

so that you're
able to, you know,

01:16:41.172 --> 01:16:45.148

turn down jobs that don't align
with what you want to pursue

01:16:45.172 --> 01:16:49.548

or, like, be fully honest
about your disability,

01:16:49.572 --> 01:16:51.588

regardless of the
consequences, then,

01:16:51.612 --> 01:16:53.032

yeah, by all means do it.

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01:16:53.056 --> 01:16:57.468

I think this is ideally
what we should all aim for,

01:16:57.492 --> 01:16:59.196

but then realistically, I know

01:16:59.221 --> 01:17:00.908

that there are a lot
of financial barriers

01:17:00.932 --> 01:17:03.188

that prevent people from
showing up authentically

01:17:03.212 --> 01:17:05.228

because it means losing jobs.

01:17:05.252 --> 01:17:07.668

It means losing security.

01:17:07.692 --> 01:17:09.705

Um... And it's...

01:17:09.730 --> 01:17:11.628

Yeah, it's much more complex

01:17:11.652 --> 01:17:14.628

than what I'm able to
say at the moment, I think.

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01:17:15.903 --> 01:17:17.948

-Thank you, because
I know we could have

01:17:17.972 --> 01:17:20.428

a whole hour and a half
more on this, but I feel

01:17:20.452 --> 01:17:24.428

that with the time that we have
left, what you've spoken about

01:17:24.452 --> 01:17:26.628

is really important for
people to think through.

01:17:26.652 --> 01:17:28.948

Both, as you said,
the point around

01:17:28.972 --> 01:17:32.132

it depends on people's like material
conditions. And again, here's the impact

01:17:32.132 --> 01:17:34.908

of capitalism, classism,

01:17:34.932 --> 01:17:37.428

and the space that

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isn't afforded to people

01:17:37.452 --> 01:17:38.988

to push back in certain ways

01:17:39.012 --> 01:17:45.148

or how that will impact who's
facing what repercussions as well. So,

01:17:45.172 --> 01:17:48.132

this is where I think sort of
like solidarity is key in all this.

01:17:48.132 --> 01:17:51.988

And trade unions and different
forms of organising as well.

01:17:52.012 --> 01:17:56.628

So one more sharing
here in the Q&A space

01:17:56.652 --> 01:17:58.508

before a couple of
minutes just to wrap up.

01:17:58.532 --> 01:18:00.588

So this is from Joshua Jones.

01:18:00.612 --> 01:18:02.428

"Instagram took down my accounts

01:18:02.452 --> 01:18:05.148

"which were my professional
networks and portfolios,

01:18:05.172 --> 01:18:06.908

"and also my personal Facebook.

01:18:06.932 --> 01:18:08.788

"I thought I'd be
more upset than I am,

01:18:08.812 --> 01:18:10.362

"But it's really
made me think about

01:18:10.386 --> 01:18:12.588

"alternative online spaces
outside of social media."

01:18:12.612 --> 01:18:13.612

Yay!

01:18:13.636 --> 01:18:15.028

"Especially blogging.

01:18:15.052 --> 01:18:18.308

"And also was wondering if
you have any thoughts on that?"

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01:18:18.332 --> 01:18:20.308

So what are your
thoughts on that?

01:18:20.332 --> 01:18:23.268

And then we will wish everybody

01:18:23.292 --> 01:18:25.308

a wonderful rest of their

01:18:25.332 --> 01:18:28.228

morning, afternoon,
evening, night,

01:18:28.252 --> 01:18:31.868

whatever dimensional plane
people are on at this point in time.

01:18:31.892 --> 01:18:35.228

-Yeah, I think,
excellent question.

01:18:35.252 --> 01:18:38.308

I think if Instagram were
to take down my accounts,

01:18:38.332 --> 01:18:42.428

I would have the same
reaction as you, probably.

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01:18:42.452 --> 01:18:47.005

Like, maybe I would be worried
about it for, like, just initially,

01:18:47.029 --> 01:18:49.188

and then I would just
not care, because...

01:18:49.212 --> 01:18:50.628

At the end of the day,

01:18:50.652 --> 01:18:53.068

it's just social media and...

01:18:53.092 --> 01:18:54.727

and we love it and we hate it.

01:18:54.751 --> 01:18:57.868

And I think the hate right
now is stronger than the love.

01:18:57.892 --> 01:19:03.318

And I agree on alternative
platforms as well.

01:19:03.342 --> 01:19:05.148

Like I... Before...

01:19:05.172 --> 01:19:09.628

Before Facebook, before Instagram,

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whenever I was a Tumblr girly.

01:19:09.652 --> 01:19:14.788

So I'm very much, like,
nostalgic for that blog feel,

01:19:14.812 --> 01:19:17.828

that very kind of slower

01:19:17.852 --> 01:19:21.098

pace of things and
the ability to choose

01:19:21.122 --> 01:19:24.588

what's being, kind of...

01:19:24.612 --> 01:19:26.245

Um...

01:19:26.269 --> 01:19:31.548

What you're forced to watch and
what you can skip, if that makes sense.

01:19:31.572 --> 01:19:32.868

Um...

01:19:32.892 --> 01:19:35.051

I think, yeah, I've been
thinking about this a lot,

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01:19:35.075 --> 01:19:38.308

especially since Substack
became more popular.

01:19:38.332 --> 01:19:41.148

I remember last year,
I opened my Substack

01:19:41.172 --> 01:19:45.388

and I was convinced that I would move
away from Instagram by the end of the year.

01:19:45.412 --> 01:19:48.548

And then I haven't posted
a single thing on Substack

01:19:48.572 --> 01:19:51.548

because I kind of felt like it
was becoming more popular

01:19:51.572 --> 01:19:53.268

and it became just

01:19:53.292 --> 01:19:56.988

a space where everyone was posting
their Substack on Instagram anyway

01:19:57.012 --> 01:20:00.268

and then everyone had
something to say about whatever.

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01:20:00.292 --> 01:20:02.388

And it just became overwhelming

01:20:02.412 --> 01:20:05.798

as every other social
media platform does.

01:20:05.822 --> 01:20:08.461

And so, I don't know, I think...

01:20:08.486 --> 01:20:10.388

I... Yes, I agree.

01:20:10.412 --> 01:20:13.388

Maybe Substack or
like blogging platforms

01:20:13.412 --> 01:20:15.268

or whatever are the way forward,

01:20:15.292 --> 01:20:20.028

but right now it feels like they're
being inserted into the same kind of

01:20:20.052 --> 01:20:22.388

platform capitalism economy

01:20:22.412 --> 01:20:25.958

that makes it so that they

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wouldn't really work anywhere.

01:20:25.982 --> 01:20:28.978

I think we just should all
just go back to WordPress

01:20:29.002 --> 01:20:33.748

and not advertise any of our
work on social media. I don't know.

01:20:33.772 --> 01:20:35.668

Maybe that's the solution.

01:20:35.692 --> 01:20:38.665

But yeah, interesting question.

01:20:38.690 --> 01:20:41.588

-Thank you. It sounds also
like what you're saying is,

01:20:41.612 --> 01:20:42.868

like,

01:20:42.892 --> 01:20:46.348

there's all this scope
for people, for us,

01:20:46.372 --> 01:20:50.428

for everybody to be
making the places, platforms,

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01:20:50.452 --> 01:20:52.148

worlds that we want to.

01:20:52.172 --> 01:20:54.792

And again, I know you've spoken
about the importance of different

01:20:54.816 --> 01:20:57.218

in-person physical
places and spaces,

01:20:57.242 --> 01:21:00.148

but also seeing, like, the
importance of the digital too.

01:21:00.172 --> 01:21:02.788

And knowing that the online
and offline, like, it's a continuum.

01:21:02.812 --> 01:21:07.548

It's all part of this one
messy, awesome, scary thing.

01:21:07.572 --> 01:21:09.543

So, with two minutes to spare,

01:21:09.568 --> 01:21:10.948

I think this is a
nice place for us

01:21:10.972 --> 01:21:12.548

to sort of bring
things to a close.

01:21:12.572 --> 01:21:15.748

Really appreciate all that
people asked and shared,

01:21:15.772 --> 01:21:16.852

and I know because of time,

01:21:16.876 --> 01:21:19.388

we've maybe not been able to
get through absolutely everything.

01:21:19.412 --> 01:21:21.828

So, certainly if
this is something

01:21:21.852 --> 01:21:24.708

that you would like to have
more of a conversation around,

01:21:24.732 --> 01:21:26.228

we really appreciate feedback.

01:21:26.252 --> 01:21:28.628

It's useful to know what
people are interested in.

01:21:28.652 --> 01:21:32.028

And we know that everybody
is busy and has a lot going on,

01:21:32.052 --> 01:21:33.868

so thanks for making
the time to be here.

01:21:33.892 --> 01:21:37.868

Yeah, we're all for planning
more of these sorts of discussions.

01:21:37.892 --> 01:21:40.188

And if anybody's working
on something or wanting

01:21:40.212 --> 01:21:43.468

to get something going and make
something happen and have a chat,

01:21:43.492 --> 01:21:45.628

we're here to speak
about that as well

01:21:45.652 --> 01:21:47.361

as other people who
have joined today.

01:21:47.385 --> 01:21:48.748

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So thank you very much

01:21:48.772 --> 01:21:50.628

and I'll drop a couple
of links in the chat box

01:21:50.652 --> 01:21:52.988

before it probably
closes in a minute time.