

## Interview Transcript

S: I just kinda want to have a conversation with you, really not too formal. I have some questions and some things that I want to point out, but I'm thinking it'll be about fifteen minutes probably. Unless, I mean, kickoff, I don't know, who knows.

K: We'll find out when we hit fifteen minutes I guess. (laughs)

S: Yeah. So, I'll start with-- if you could just introduce yourself that would be great. Tell us a little bit about what you do.

K: Sure, so my name is Kirsten R----. I'm from West Virginia originally, but I'm living in New Orleans to do my MFA in creative nonfiction, and you know I've been mostly doing that for a while. I also teach freshman comp now, and for a while I was a journalist, and that has been pretty much my illustrious career in writing.

S: Hey, that's pretty significant. So we're talking to you today because you submitted a story to Epoch Press called "First There Was a Comb Jelly" and I have to tell you that-- obviously you're our featured artist for issue 01--

K: Thank you.

S: I have to tell you, we are like-- it's a staff favourite by far. We all loved it. So I wanted to start off on that note, to give you a bit of the praise that our staff had for your piece.

K: I love that!

S: It's a good way to go. So, I think the overall consensus was that everyone was very impressed with your interwoven narrative. There was a lot of talk of going between the scientific factual and the personal, and I was just talking to our Editor in Chief, and she was telling me that that's what she is looking for specifically. Specifically her, in creative nonfiction. That is her favourite thing, is seeing those two things go hand in hand. It's really an elegant production that happens there. Personally, I'd like to add in that I really enjoyed the additional sort of ecclesiastical element. So it wasn't just this scientific, it wasn't just this personal, it had this religious symbolism that was

really captivating and interesting. So how do you feel about your piece today? Obviously that was submitted a while ago.

K: Forever ago, right?

S: Who knows what time is anymore?

K: It's all fake, haha. I was thrilled, I actually wrote this piece for the press.

S: Oh fantastic!

K: I know! Well I'm working on my final thesis. I figured it out kind of this summer what I wanted to write about-- it's all memoir, and science, but each one has an animal narrative to it. I saw the prompt in the Beginning, and I was like-- well, I'll just look up the first animal and run with it. And if they say no, it'll still be in my thesis and we'll just figure it out. Then I learned this really interesting stuff about the comb jelly. It was so engaging, and I was like-- oh, this is perfect! And my grandfather was a preacher, so you get a lot of that. I feel like that was very influential, especially the idea of like 'in the beginning' which already has religious connotations with the language being used. I really wanted to pull that out, without being like, 'My grandfather, the preacher...'

S: Well, you did it! The execution was really excellent. I definitely think it speaks to something primordial in a lot of people when we evoke those words. The biblical, 'In the beginning...'. We all know that's how the bible starts-- famous first lines, right? We're all with you there. What an amazing thesis idea, too. I can't wait to read the whole thing. I'm very excited.

K: I hope so!

S: One of the interesting parts about your story is this -- it's not like a throwaway line, it's not like the focus of the piece, but this idea that we don't evolve in this linear way. That scientists are questioning productivity when it comes to evolution. And like right now that's the theme, not being productive. We're all facing that in Covid, and I think people are becoming aware of capitalist ideas of being productive and how damaging that can be. But also what does that actually mean? Just reflecting on that a little bit, I imagine it's something you've given a lot of thought to.

K: Yeah, you know I think it's a really common narrative, especially for people in their like mid-twenties-early-thirties who are sort of figuring it out and you're realising all at once that like maybe I don't like have a dream job because I don't dream of doing a job. We're kind of all at once realising that. You know we've been told for so long that we need to take on internships, and we need to do things to pat our college resumes. Then in college we need to do things to pat our job resumes. Then in our jobs we need to say 'yes' to things, because a job is not guaranteed, despite the fact that we need it to live. So there's a whole lot of-- I think it's almost a pressure cooker of this feeling of needing to be productive. I've seen it with my friends turning their hobbies into Etsy businesses because if they're not selling their work, is it good work? This idea of like having to do these things. And then this pandemic hits, and all at once we're like-- ooooh. Maybe we stay at home and like that's the thing we're doing. It's been really interesting to engage not only with myself personally, which I don't think my story is a particularly unique one in that I felt like I had to do a lot and then I didn't do anything. And I was like *Oh my god what am I doing?* It's not a unique narrative. It's something that I think a lot of us are facing in the idea of like: *What is it that I want to do? What do I want from this life?* Float in the ocean? Maybe! I don't know.

S: Well, in my opinion that should be a viable option for sure.

K: I agree.

S: You know there is so much of this pressure. I think we see it in-- I mean, we've seen it over the years. We're feeling it now in a particular way, but I mean you have culturally men in the past that pressure has been put on them until they have like women's lib and we switched to women moving into the work force en masse. Women have always been in the workforce in one way or another, but like--

K: It comes with this idea of women doing it all, which I think is extra pressure. Especially for women who, you know, it also comes down to this sort of like kinda age when you're in your early-to-mid-twenties-late-early-thirties, so-on, where it's like 'oh if you want a family then you have to raise the kids, and you have to work because one income doesn't support a family anymore' so theres this piling of things over and over again. Especially, I realised when I was working full time, and I still

had to do my dishes, and I was in skill. Like, what do you mean I still have to do the dishes? That was a full time job at one point!

S: I mean I certainly relate to that. I have a toddler, so I feel like I never have enough time or energy for anything. I remember growing up with a single mom and it was like the weekend wasn't time off for anybody. It wasn't time off for us as kids because we had to help her clean the house and do all the things she couldn't do during the week because she had to work. It was just a product line. This workers line of 'get things done all the time'. There isn't really time for rest. I think we're all being really pushed into confronting what that means, and now like-- sorry, we halted production. I mean, not nearly as much as they should have, the government.

K: Definitely. I think everyone should've gotten paid like \$4000 dollars a week to like, hangout in their house. Personally I would like \$4000 dollars a week.

S: Yeah, I'm completely here for that. And I think that's something that I picked up on in your story-- like I said, it wasn't like the point of what I felt your story was about but it was there. This presence of understanding the zeitgeist feeling of the world we're all experiencing at the moment, and this turn, I think, of consciousness-- and people are like, 'What now?'

K: Definitely! I'm really glad you picked up on that. I wanted... you know, I think writers are drawn to writing about what's happening. Writing like the experience, especially in creative nonfiction, where it *is* the experience. Right? And you know I was like, well I wanna write about the pandemic, cause we're in it, and I'm feeling it and I feel like I wanna write about it but I don't wanna be like: 'the pandemic story: everyone is wearing a mask! Wild.' Like, I don't know, they don't draw me in as a reader. They don't draw me in as an editor. Because I'm living it. So I felt like maybe tapping into this consciousness feeling that's happening in tandem would be a little more engaging. I hope. Also, I wanted to write about jellyfish for a really long time. It's been something that was swirling around in my brain, writing about jellyfish, and the idea of like... that they just float around all the time. And that I would like to float around all the time. But like nothing was really coming together structurally or memoire-ally, other than being like-- 'jellyfish'.

S: Because they're great!

K: You might've seen one, once. Um, I would like to be that. So when I found out about the comb jelly I was like \*gasp\* yes! Perfect, I wish for this.

S: I think that's a great note to writers who, especially if anybody is like struggling to start a piece, is sometimes you just have to look at other things. At other ideas. Without really putting a whole lot of conscious effort to try to make your own writing work, when it's not working. If it's not coming together in your head, just like let it go and look at something and sort of research. Figure out something else.

K: I agree completely. I think, um, I spend a lot of time... like, I'll have these big notions, like: I wanna write about something in a quiz format. Like: I wanna write about jellyfish and capitalism. And it just sort of whirls around for like, I mean, anywhere from like a couple weeks to years. I think I came up with the jellyfish idea like three years ago. And I wrote it for you all in like two hours.

S: That's, that's wonderful. That's wonderful.

K: Well you all got, sorry, I should've like looked over it again, but I was like, "well, they won't accept it so I'll just send it in."

S: No! No. I'm so glad. It's really cool to see the pieces to that were written to be submitted, especially like 'Beginnings' I think as such a rife topic. It's so... so open-ended. Now, talking about creative nonfiction, what is it-- so, I did do a bit of internet sleuthing. And I read a few of your other pieces that are out there, and you've got a bit of a fan. I was like, okay, well, she's great, so.

K: Thank you!

S: Yeah, so, what is it about nonfiction, creative nonfiction, that sort of calls to you? I mean, that's what you're doing your MFA in, right? So that's a big career choice.

K: It's like, pretty much I've dedicated myself to writing about myself for a pretty long time if I'm going to make the money up. Um, yeah. You know I think, well, you know I started by being a reader. I think that's how a lot of writers start out, is that they read a ton and they're kind of like-- well, professional reader is like not a popular career choice. So perhaps, writer. So there I was. And you know I grew up in a very, very small town. Like graduated-with-a-hundred-people small town. So I

didn't have a lot of like resources, and we weren't getting a lot of outside influences. I read the classics and stuff, but I think growing up in that kind of environment (and I think for a lot of people, generally) is that you're either a fiction writer or a poet. And those are kind of your options. Creative nonfiction, I was reading it but I wasn't aware that was what I was doing. Cause when you write, you either write Tom Sawyer or you're a poet. And those are your two options in the world.

S: That is so funny, because when I was talking to Cara about this, I was saying that you know my dream when I started writing was to write the next American novel. And now I write mostly creative nonfiction. I don't really do a terrible amount of fiction anymore.

K: I was never, like... I like listened to a lot of poetry, and I read a lot of poetry, and I was never that good at poetry to be quite honest. I could never make it quite work, and I didn't actually like writing fiction. Like, I wrote it because I was like an english major in college, but not because I felt deeply passionate about my characters or my story or the meanings I was putting out. I was like, I have workshop, time to write. But I took a nonfiction memoir literature class, and I was just like, "Oh! This is great! Like, I could do this." And then my professor at the time, thank god she gave me Brenda Miller's second book, *Season of the Body*, and it just like blew me away. I was like, this is exactly how I want to sound. This is how writing can be. Oh my gosh. I'm like 21, I'm like \*gasp\*. The experience. That was a really, really big influence for me. From there I got into Kim Adrien, and Maggie Milson, --- bliss, and these like lyric essays and the weird things you can do. And so I ended up being really drawn to creative nonfiction. I think all my fiction was secretly just creative nonfiction, I was just like-- but I'm a boy now! And so realising that it could be true and honest and so deeply raw, and (I personally think) so much more interesting stylistically. Like, I love a --- essay. If you go back and look at my work, they're all over the place. I love the infusion of like different storylines coming in and you can do these strange formats that aren't-- they're much harder to pull off in other genres. They don't always work. But in creative nonfiction, figuring out how to make the story interesting through style and through language and pulling out metaphors and images is really really like what creative nonfiction is. And I love that. I love the challenge. And I love getting to play with language all the time. And digging into the craftwork.

S: Yeah, I think you make some excellent points for sure. I think that's something as an editor and a writer I appreciate a lot in my own work and in other peoples work. When there can be an exploration. Because in my mind that's what creative nonfiction is, it's like an exploration of what's happening in your life. And in that way you get this like mastery and control over your experiences as well.

K: Definitely. It's definitely-- I love watching people figure out something on the page. There is something really engaging watching like the emotional movement happen in front of me. Whether it's been like very carefully curated, or like written in a flurry at 1am, I am really drawn to that. And that's something that really, for me, I read primary in nonfiction. Definitely. Yeah, I'm just like-- I love it!

S: That was way more than just, "I love it!" I find, recently I've been reading-- I've been following a few artists and writers I know on instagram who are sort of doing this journalistic... not, not... journaling. They're journaling, not journalistic. So they're using it as a diary. As a place to come and express their day and like I'm always, always-- this is beautiful! And you've done nothing. They're talking about the walk they went on with their dog. The moment they didn't call somebody on the phone. You know? Not like, these sort of nothing things. But it's like this... this format, this artistry, that's tied as well.

K: In the language being chosen, I am willing to read about basically any single thing that's happening if I like how the person is telling it to me. Like, I will read almost anything if I like the way you're saying it. And that really is what draws me to creative nonfiction I think.

S: I think that's probably something that, at least at Epoch Press and hopefully a lot of our readers have in common with you. And so that sort of answers the question I had, which was, 'Did you always want to write creative nonfiction?' Let's see, what other. Do you have a writing routine? Is there something, and obviously that lines up with this idea of productivity. That typical question. How do you do it?

K: Not really, um, I got really into submitting this year. I wasn't very heavily into submitting and publishing or really sort of like-- it seems so far out of reach. I got like one thing published my first year in grad school. And I was like, 'This is going to carry me for the rest of grad school. I've done it! I have the publication'. But I got really into this year because I realised that I had all this work that I wanted to like

edit and just put out. I'm just sitting on this, and I know I can get published because they accepted that one story one time. So, I got really into that, and that's been a part of my writing routine now. I will look for lit mags I like, or I think are interesting, or doing something new and exciting! And I'm like, okay, what do I have for them. And if I don't have something for them, I just kind of start working on something. And sometimes it comes out all at once, and sometimes it takes a really long time. And of course I have, like, the bonus that I'm doing my MFA right now so I have to come up with like three stories every semester. (S: Yeah) So I'm sort of constantly having to engage in the like -- okay, what am I going to write about next? Cause I can't leave these nine people hanging, because I pay a lot of money to make them read it. So-- (\*laugh\*) (\*indistinct words\*) ship where you sign up and you're like, "I gotta do it now!"

S: Yeah exactly, you're invested and--

K: Yeah, but I do a lot of - like, I sit down and I typically write a piece from generally start to finish in just one go. That's what's easiest for me, like my braided essays are written in that order typically, sometimes I'll move things around but I don't write, like, two essays and put them together. I'll typically do something start to finish, and if I feel really good about it, I'm like "gonna send it out right now nothing can stop me! I'm a woman of my own control!" If I don't feel amazing about it, I'm just like "okay, I'll let it sit" and then I just tweak. I'll go in and am constantly playing with things and I write out each section on note cards, and move them around to see how they're working together -- it's fun, it's like a little science game but with words.

S: That's beautiful, that's so wonderful. I'm -- I'm much closer to your first thing, which is where I write a piece and I'm like that's - there it goes! As I've gotten older, I do edit a lot more, and go in and try to really add some actual artistry and fine tune things, but it's so relatable for many writers, especially with creative nonfiction, sometimes pieces just pour out of you.

K: It all works. When it all works it feels so good.

S: Yeah, because it's therapy too, it's like this organic therapy that you don't have to pay for.

K: It becomes this very organic therapy for yourself, that's why people have been journaling since the beginning of time, right? Like, it's all non fiction, it's all figuring yourself out. And it really is like a reclamation of narrative, and sort of being able to be like -- this is how I felt about that, and at the time, it was really confusing and strange and I had a lot of feelings about a lot of things, but if I sort of key in and look for exactly how I felt about this thing, then I can sort of like suss out how it has affected me long term, and what's going on with me now and how it's like -- even if none of that comes up on the page. None of it has to be there for me to be like "oh, this is who I am!"

S: Yeah, definitely, and does that mean that you journal as well?

K: I actually don't, but I feel like I should - I consistently am like, I should start journaling? And I know especially since I've decided I'm going to do creative nonfiction, it would probably be good for me career-wise just to be able to go back and look at like -- oh yeah, on August 23rd I was doing this, and that must have come before this thing I'm writing about

S: I guess an element to creative nonfiction that I love is that it's the creative part, the part that we acknowledge that memory is completely fallible.

K: We're working with the worst tool. The worst tool of all time is memory, and yeah you're right, there's like -- the emotional truth of it. Like, maybe this didn't happen exactly the way I remembered it happening five years ago, but emotionally this is what is true for me. And this is how I saw what was happening. And if there's a camera in the room, they might not have agreed, but like, camera wasn't there, so --

S: **But my story is, happily - you have a record.** So how long have you been in New Orleans now, I mean obviously you're back home for holidays and things?

K: I have been there for about - it'll be three years this May, so a little over two and a half, which is wild.

S: What is it like being a writer in New Orleans? And I ask that as like, a very personal question, because I grew up reading Anne Rice, so again, very romantic view of being a writer in New Orleans

K: It's pretty awesome, I'm not going to lie to you, I really like it. There's something really fun, and also because New Orleans was my first time really moving away from home. Like, I didn't live in my hometown but I was kind of circling it like a moon, So this was my chance to really comet out and be somewhere else and it's very fun, it's a really artistic city. And so, because it's such an artistic city and such a friendly city and I think (you would know) it does an especially good job of getting people to connect within the program. It's like, 95% of people are from out of state, so it's a lot of people coming and being like "I don't know anyone" - we're all friends now. So it's nice to be able to connect up with those writers and people that are doing what you're doing and also nothing like what you're doing, and then they have their own connections and it kind of spreads out into this little artistic community and you sort of fan that way. Everyone's so talkative, so you can just sit at the bar and have four beers and you talk about writing for five hours. And everyone's like, "I'm going to read a little bit of what I wrote yesterday!" and I'm like, "please, I would love that!" We have a salon, it's so much fun.

S: Okay so but, in these COVID times, especially Glasgow where we're in a full lockdown, that idea is almost -- it's almost raw to think of, to picture that and imagine that feeling of community. It's like, okay. I'm ready to go back to that place.

K: I miss being able to have a beer and listening to one of my friends read their poetry.

S: Oh my goodness.

K: There's something so magical about being out at 2AM right before the bar closes down and everyone's just talking about what they're doing in workshop and what they're getting published and what they're excited about that they're working on and like thematic elements of blah blah blah -- it's so much fun. I do, I really miss being able to get together in person in these kind of, like, impromptu shop talks about writing, that's really really fun.

S: Yeah, I think those places where you grow in really unexpected ways as a writer to engage with your peers and even people who just like -- your friends who read to you, you know, and youse just go off -- you're drinking and you're just like "No I've

got to read you, I just like, I wrote this line, this really fantastic phrase, I've gotta show you!"

K: "You won't believe it and it goes with this thing that I wrote in the first paragraph and I'm not gonna read that to you but you will understand!" Yeah, and of course you know, luckily we have things like Zoom and stuff so there's still some kind of connectivity. I am constantly like, man, what if this happened in 1995?

S: Oh god.

K: How much worse would everything be?

S: Oh yeah, those poor souls at the turn of the century with the Spanish Flu.

K: Imagine, right? And so I do feel lucky that I'm able to connect online.

S: Yes, like this! And I've been so - I think Epoch Press has been a big light in my life because I get to read all of these pieces of work, every day I sit down and read a few stories and I get to have opinions and I get to talk to my coworkers and my peers and things about literature, so there is that element that exists still. Granted, it's you know, the veil of the computer screen and internet wires.

K: Yeah.

S: That did remind me, I read your story in Hippocampus Magazine, well you had several, but I read the graffiti in New Orleans year-long catalogue and that was excellent, enjoyed it very much. I think it's something that like -- you just took a really universal experience like reading bathroom graffiti - which is so small but so - and I can't imagine anybody in the United States or the UK or the Western world really not going into a bathroom stall -- and I'm sure it's everywhere, but like -- who isn't like absorbing a bit of that, who doesn't remember a few lines from a bathroom stall years later that made them laugh or think weirdly enough?

K: I love it, I mean, I truly had taken those photos throughout the year and it was like, the first - we were coming into my workshop and I was like, "I have to write something, I'm gonna write about the bathroom graffiti photos I took, I'm just gonna do a bunch of vignettes and that's gonna work!" and so it did, obviously, but yeah I

think there's something so attractive to the idea. We've all seen it, we've all seen bathroom graffiti, it's very hard to escape. And even if you're not, like, an active connoisseur the way I am about my bathroom graffiti, it's hard not to intake and just see, even if it's just "BK was here 2012" and just appreciate, also, the vibe that it gives the overall space, it's like a little pocket of wherever you are, and is especially nostalgic now.

S: Yes!

K: Especially in New Orleans, a lot of those bars I wrote about have been shutting down. So there's something like very **\*indistinct sound\*** about having it out in the world at this time, right now, right after, and yeah -- it's a little love letter to bars mostly. It wasn't a love letter to bars when I wrote it but it is now!

S: I see it though, I think there's this narrative that's strung along that you're not telling - by, that you're telling by not telling it, which is like all of these experiences you have in bars. Like you go, you relate all of these little bits to parts in your life, but there's also a story of you like you travelling through all of these little places and I did, I did notice that one note about that, cause I know this interview isn't necessarily about this story but --

K: That's okay, I hope everyone goes to my website and reads it, please!

S: It reads like scripture in a way, which ties into a note that I had that does relate back to "First There was a Comb Jelly" - that you have this -- you talk about this search for God

K: Yeah

S: And so it hearkens to this religious, sort of, soft light that falls on your work. And you said your grandfather's a pastor, which is funny, my grandfather was one as well!

K: Ooh!

S: Coincidence!

K: it fits a lot right?

S: I think that it was its - it's so relatable, just this idea and having it in there and I wanted to know your thoughts on what you think is so captivating about the search for faith in contemporary Western culture, because I feel like that's its speaking to our generation in a big way.

K: Yeah, I think there's something about -- yeah looking for faith in something and I think obviously religious language is sort of like -- immediate hearkening to that, and I like really use it a lot, so \*laugh\* it really is like a strand throughout my work and was a big influence on me, because yeah, we're just looking for faith in something I think. And it kind of goes back to the comb jelly thing too, and what we've been told that our bodies and our selves are meant to do, and sort of this kind of realization that maybe that's not true? And we're looking to figure out -- I mean it's a tale as old as time, like what are we supposed to do here, what is a higher meaning? And so a higher meaning looking for, yeah, a singular religious meaning, but looking for faith in ourselves and like, finding inner gods and outer gods and what religion looks like to us, or there'd be like, a religion within relationships or a religion within wonderful everyday morning rituals for yourself, and what kind of rituals and gods that we fall into rather than like singular holy gods that just like -- where do we find faith to continue existing in the way that we want to exist?

S: Yeah, definitely, that's a -

K: I read a lot of Annie Dillard growing so \*laugh\* she has this beautiful quote that I like had to Google to pull up so I can quote it right to you

S: Oh wonderful!

K: That it's the beginning of her book *Holy the Firm* which is one of my favourites, and not everyone's favourite but I really love it, it's the opening line, its: "Everyday is a god, each day is a god, and holiness holds forth in time." And there's something so, I don't know, that really like impermeated into me when I first read it and it's something I kind of like have clanking around in the back of my skull when I'm writing nonfiction, and the handling of time and space and godliness

S: I think it's really powerful, I like it a lot, I hadn't heard it before. I really like it and I think that it ties in - I think there's this, maybe it's me and just the literature I've read in my life, but I feel like there's this part of Americana in particular that has these -- the religion is so permeated into all of it and in these big ways and in these small ways, and I think it's culturally just become so important for like --

\*indistinct sounds\*

K: It's become really part of the fabric of how we exist in the world, whether you are religious or not religious or grew up religious and aren't now or have never been and never raised - there's something tying it in. I mean I think it relates back to my story "First There was the Comb Jelly" in just, like, productivity and capitalism. In a lot of ways, especially in Western literature, these things are tied into how we exist, whether we are actively speculating and thinking about it or not, it doesn't stop it from being there.

S: Yeah, absolutely, I mean that's what - that's the nature of things that are both insidious and ethereal, right?

K: Wow.

S: So it's - there's definitely layers to all of that and our experiences because, I think about it as somebody who's studied literature at several different levels, you know -- I think I have copies of lots of spiritual texts because I don't want to miss them, I don't want to miss those references in literature. Like, I want to know, even in just that way that's a completely practical, sort of divorced from theology and spirituality

\*indistinct\*

K: Yeah, I'm rereading *The Master and Margarita* right now - I love Russian lit, I'm a huge fan out there, but I'm reading *The Master and Margarita* and I'm so glad I have the annotated version that's like "this is referencing this thing in the Bible, also this thing in Russia" because I don't know if I would get it otherwise.

S: Yeah well it's a lot like - yeah, it's a lot, especially you've got different -- in Russia you have orthodox Catholicism, right?

K: Whole new space handling religion, in historic -- it is just way different - especially cause yeah, so much of my work is infused with this, like, religious undertone. I like how you put it and I think it's like really nice, and the sort of soft aspect to the work is sort of like this religious space of looking for gods in all these things, and yeah there's something really engaging that about reading something so overtly being like "uh, the Bible".

S: Or even just like overtly asking, like, what is the meaning, or why are we here, because I mean, that's what "Comb Jelly" is about really - like why are we here, and what are we doing, and where did we come from and where are we going? Obviously all these massive questions, not really answering an answer.

K: **\*indistinct\*** get it all - I try really specifically not to give any answers.

S: Yes, yeah, there's nothing there that gives any clue. I think what our Editor in Chief, one of the questions she had suggested for me is that, how have you been since you wrote the story, and do you feel like you've gotten any better at floating? Or are you still sort of, like, thrashing? So that productivity versus resting - how are you doing?

K: I like to think I'm better at it. It helps a lot that I got back into school, so I got into a rhythm like that, but I only have one class because I've been working on my thesis. So I have something that I love and get to tinker with and play around with every day, while still keeping the schedule. I've also been teaching asynchronously, which is really great - so I don't meet them via Zoom or in class. We just - they have due dates and I send them out, I make little voiceover powerpoints where I'm like "hey guys, please learn about dialogue today!" **\*indistinct\*** I can be really productive for five hours, like sit at my desk I feel like I'm really doing something I can, but I've gotten better at being like "okay now the boundary's up and now I'm going to sit on my couch. And I'm going to read my book."

S: that's really good!

K: And this is it, like we're putting away - I dedicate **\*indistinct\*** - I think I have gotten better mostly because now I'll full days to "i'm not gonna look at my computer all day" and I do so much on my computer now, like I have school there, I have work there, any side writing i want to do just for me is on my computer so i've

gotten to a point where I'm like, "I'm gonna close this and I'm gonna open it on Monday, and that's it." And that has been really good for me, to have a physical thing, I think, you're like - "no more of this", instead of multiple things to boundary up. Boundaries are hard especially when you are doing something you love.

S: Yeah.

K: Like, its harder to put up a boundary, I think, when you really enjoy -- your work is something that you do like, because you want to keep doing it, but also -- \*technical difficulties for a bit\* Sam I lost you!

S: Yeah, here, are you back? I was like, ugh!

K: Oh there you are!

S: I did get a lot of that, I did, it was mostly - I think it just started cutting out at the "boundaries", which is funny. But I think you were saying that having a specific boundary is really useful. And also impressive, like - good for you for being able to do that, because I haven't mastered it at all.

K: Thank you! I don't always stick to it, but I tell myself sometimes. And, but it's kind of nice though, because then if I want to write, like if I have this idea at like three in the afternoon, I'm like, okay I'm gonna open it and write it cause that's what I want to do because that's what I want to do, but not what I feel like I should be doing.

S: Yes, yeah. It's inspired by that internal drive, not - that drive for productivity. It's totally different. This has been such a good conversation, I'm so glad we got to have this!

K: Oh my gosh, I had a great time, let's do it again!

S: Absolutely, let's just be friends because you seem awesome.

K: I would like that, yeah! Good, we're friends now, glad we're decided!

S: Perfect, perfect. I wanted you to - if you want to take a moment to plug some of your work, this whole conversation is going to be transcribed on our blog, and below our audience should be able to find plenty of links, so anything you want to link if you have your social media or just your website, whatever it is, if you want to just plug those, then we'll add them to blog post!

K: Great, yeah, I want everyone to follow me and share all my work 'cause I'd like to be famous on the internet and \*laugh\* that's kind of the end of my plugs. Please allow me fame and fortune on Twitter.com!

S: \*Laughs\* Well, you've got one more follower now, I think it's - after we've spoken I feel a little more appropriate to go and follow you.

K: I was kind of waiting, I like - checked my website analytics and I was like "hm wonder who that is over there looking at my website!"

\*both laugh\*

S: Well you're exactly my kind of person because I would do the exact same thing.

K: I love having a website but it's truly just me being like "oh analytics!"

S: That's great, so when I say sleuthing it's obviously not very sleuthy - completely trackable.

K: \*indistinct\* online and people think it is nowadays, it was much easier in the days of AIM and MySpace.

S: I miss them! Okay so, I'm gonna go ahead and sign off now, the recording bit.