



[Intro music]

Hope St. John (HS; 00:08):

Hello everyone, and welcome back to Write for You, the podcast from the University of Washington's Odegaard Writing & Research Center where we talk about writing and how it happens. I'm Hope, your host and disembodied writing buddy, and together with the band of fellow graduate students we'll explore the writing processes and experiences of actual graduate writers in their own words. Listen, in, as we talk about the ups, the downs, and the practices that help these writers get words on the page. Maybe you'll even find something that sounds right for you.

On this episode, we'll hear from Brittney and Christopher, doctoral candidates from the College of Arts and Sciences. This was such a rich conversation touching on transformation, problematizing the production of knowledge, sustaining oneself, and engaging conversations outside of traditional academic spaces. I loved getting to hear Brittney and Chris' takes on all of this, and I'm excited to share them with you as well.

As with all of this season's episodes, we recorded this virtually, so there are a few audio hiccups here and there. This episode also contains some strong language.

Now, with all of that out of the way let's hear from Brittney and Chris.

Christopher Santo Domingo Chan (CSC; 01:24):

So, my name is Christopher Santo Domingo Chan. I don't want to think about how many years I've been in grad school, but I think I'm an eighth year -- seventh year? -- doc student in the Department of Anthropology. My pronouns are he and him. And I did my fieldwork at a video startup where I worked with creators and producers and videographers on a YouTube channel. Um, and yeah, I'm really

interested in the relationship between sort of like algorithmic advertising, creative work, and the production of race.

Brittney Frantece (BF; 01:59):

Wow, that sounds really cool. And I feel like a lot of my interests align with that. So, I'm Brittney Frantece. I use she/her pronouns, but also, like, identify as nonbinary. And... I'm in the English department. I am going on my third year, but I also agree with you -- do you want me to call you Christopher or Chris?

CSC (02:19):

I also go by Chris, so you can call me Chris.

BF (02:21):

Ok. I agree with you, Chris. I can lose track of time very easily. It's almost like, you know how when you get to a certain age and you almost forget how old you are? I feel like I'm that way with the Ph.D. program that I'm in. But in the English department, I look at literary and visual studies, Black literary and visual studies, cultural studies, and I like to really look at speculative fiction predominantly because I love the world-building aspect of speculative fiction. And I love how Black artists and writers are building another world. Kind of getting rid of this world with these sort of like systems that are meant to continually oppress us and use our bodies and our labor for gains that we will never see. And they're just building something completely new. And so I love to see how artists and writers are doing that. And I love to see the grammar that they're using to build that world. Like, what are the logics that have to be rewired and restructured to build that world? And so I guess that's me and what I study and what I like to look at in a nutshell. But I also have a very keen interest in, like, visual studies and pop culture, and so I love film and TV and... YouTube is also probably one of my favorite... What is it? Streaming networks? Like, bye Netflix, I'll just go to YouTube.

[Laughs]

CSC (03:49):

[Laughs]

I'm, well -- I'm so glad we're together in this episode 'cause, you know, like, I think the entire time I was in grad school, I was like, "Oh, I'm too serious to watch YouTube." And binge-watch terrible things on all of these platforms and every single thing, but yeah, like there's something to be said about trying to, you know, professionalize as an intellectual, but having one eye open towards vernacular culture, right? And popular culture, and those things that are so pleasurable, especially because our work is so often displeasurable, you know? So...

BF (04:24):

No, I agree with that so much. And, yeah, just thinking about how many shows -- like, I really am so fond of the stories that get had. Like, I sense how you're defining vernacular culture -- like, I don't really know -- but I get the idea that it's... how people like outside of the academy are expressing their ideas, their work, like, through videos and TV and like pop culture and references. Am I, like, understanding how you're viewing vernacular culture?

CSC (04:54):

Yeah. I'm really, like, inspired by Tina Campt's work. And yeah, so her book, *Image Matters*, she talks about, you know, these family chests of photographs people were taking for their own purposes to display themselves in the way they want it to be seen, right? And that those archives are, like, they're counter-archives, right? They interrupt these metanarratives like there were no Black people in Germany. There were no Black people in 18th century Britain or 19th century Britain or whatever. So when we think about 2020, and we think about the kinds of media that people are producing there, they are theorizing, they are creating these worlds. You know, they're doing all of this stuff we're slowly trying to do and procrastinating on doing. And in many ways, you know, with pleasure.

BF (05:39):

Yes, I agree a hundred percent. These works are theorizing a way of being and living and I find so much pleasure in seeing how certain shows and arts and literature are... communicating their ideas about the world.

CSC (05:58):

[Laughs]

Um... Well, that just brings me to this question I have just naturally stumbled upon for you, Brittney.

[Laughs]

But yeah, so we're thinking about, you know -- we have our eyes open, we're looking at all these places that people are theorizing in performance and in popular media and on their Twitter accounts. How would you describe yourself as a writer?

BF (06:22):

You know, like, so much about academia is that, like, "we're gonna write these scholarly books with chapters," and this, that, and the other. And, like, it's not that I'm against the, like, traditional scarce quotes, "academic scholarly works." It's not that I'm against it, but I really want to see myself contributing in more of like a creative and artistic way to scholarship.

BF (06:46):

Yeah. So I kind of see myself as an experimental writer. And so, yeah, I like to, like, play around with ideas -- ideas that contribute to, like, an ongoing conversation and Black studies. Right now I'm particularly interested in social death and how Black studies has conceptualized such. And so, yeah, I like to infuse prose in my academic texts to bring out how I'm also communicating and theorizing the world, in much the same way that creatives do. Like artists and videographers and people who might not necessarily see themselves and the academy per se, but still see themselves engaging with these sorts of ideas.

CSC (07:31):

Mhm.

BF (07:31):

What about you?

CSC (07:35):

Yeah. Um, so I find myself in a similar position. It's definitely a different one because we're all different and we have, you know, our different orientations in the world, but in the beginning of graduate school, I thought like, "Oh, okay, I'm learning to perform this rigorous intellectual thing." And yeah, like, I think I could do that. It gives me no joy now, though, in 2020, after returning from fieldwork and then living in the world we're living in right now. Like, if that was ever sustainable to do, but I don't know that it is now. I also have been reading... There are some amazing texts out there and that have really called into question how we can write theory. And again, it's people at their kitchen table doing theory. I'm not that special. I don't need to become this specialist in theorization, but my intervention, maybe, is to produce a work that, you know, takes the aesthetic dimension of this very seriously at the same time that I'm doing my theorizing. So, like, I just read -- do you know Emerson Whitney?

BF (08:37):

I don't.

CSC (08:37):

Okay, so you should check out this book called *Heaven*. It is -- I consider this work to be very rigorous research. They're trans nonbinary, and it investigates the question of causality, um, and about whether or not they can ever escape causality -- the question of causality -- when it comes to identity. And the book itself is mostly memoir. It's highly memoiristic. It's about these moments in childhood. It's about these embodied memories, um, but woven in between are all of these texts and theorists. And so, like, a story about smoking weed in high school is interwoven, you know, with a little bit of 19th century Vienna when Freud is talking to people on the couch. And the way it was written is -- it's so affective rather than the kind of, like, empirical, generalizable knowledge that we, I think, are often disciplined into performing -- in the way that it's a text that makes you feel rather than think and interpret.

And then, at the very end of that book, produces kind of insight, like, I don't think is possible if we're really trying to, you know, shoot for a top tier journal. So reading things like that, those people out there

that are sort of own the borderlands, those things, give me a lot of inspiration and energy.

CSC (09:59):

So yeah, right now the kind of writer I am, I think I'm, like, really just following my bliss completely because, yeah, I think writing should be pleasurable. And it should be revelatory. And it should be affective. And I think art and creativity and those other modes are really good at doing that. And in fact, it's actually academic writers that are really bad at it. So, I'm writing what I want to, when I want to, highly memoiristic, not following any rules. So... [chuckles]

BF (10:27):

Yes! Rule breaking. I love to break a good rule.

[Laughs]

And what I really love what you were saying, is how much your experiences -- especially, as you said, like, coming from fieldwork, you had this realization that something's gotta give, you know, something's gotta be... different and new. And so that brings me to another question that I want to ask you, which is, how do you think that your experiences influenced you as a writer? Like, how does your experience change your commitments? Who do you want your writing and your works to communicate to? And I'm really like thinking about your interest in a memoir per se, 'cause memoirs put those lived experiences to the forefront and have those experiences as theory. And so, yeah, I guess I'm wondering how your experiences, especially with that field work that you came from doing -- how did that change your commitments as a writer?

CSC (11:25):

I mean, fieldwork is... interesting, I think for all of us in anthropology. So, like, we go and do X number of years of fieldwork and to varying degrees, I think we have relationships with people in the fields. Um, I think the thing that, just in my research, like, I've been really interested in is how this advertising apparatus uses technology to triangulate who people are, what they're interested in, what they care about, and then like how to extract value out of them. I think what we discover, like anybody that works in the field, anybody that's creator

that, like, has to upload something to a platform that uses these technologies also understands that their audience is a moving target. The subject is always in transformation and always in dialogue and conflict and, you know, alliance with other subjects, right? We are all kaleidoscopes. We are all undergoing transformation all the time. So yeah, it's... something I've thought about a lot. And particularly the subjectivity of the author -- what it means to write something at a moment in time when we know we're about to transform within 20 minutes, or in the process of writing this paragraph. Right? Um, I'm just ruminating about this now, but that's such a fruitful question for me because memoir is this sort of commitment to yourself in a moment in time. The moment in time at which you are able to narrate something, even though in two hours, it might be completely contradictory.

So I started writing my dissertation kind of right when COVID started, and we were all in lockdown and I was like, "Okay, I have no excuse. I'm sitting here at my writing desk." And I live on Capitol Hill, and so throughout quarantine and then in the post-George-Floyd moment, of course, like, the writing desk is literally also the place where I got teargassed, right? I cannot sit here and write and not look out the window and see police violence and Proud Boys and people advocating for their lives. Um, and the like, yeah, being a subject in the world it's impossible, I think, to commit to something that is permanent and true. And so the little long way of answering your question, I think, is to say it's challenged me to think about writing with the affordance for that constant transformation, that constant flux, which is very challenging, but ultimately much more satisfying. Um...

So you're in your third year, Brittney, how has the writing process changed for you?

BF (14:01):

Hm. Well, you know, my writing process has evolved into so many different things. As a person who identifies as a writer, I actually do get writing anxiety.

[Laughs]

Like, when I see that blank page on the screen, I just like, ugh, I get really panicky. So I'm realizing that I can't just go into it. And I also

have to be in the right frame of mind to actually put things out on the page. And, you know, sometimes -- even though writing is a very solitary thing, I do find a lot of encouragement when I write in community with people. So I have some of my colleagues that are, like, in my department and also in other departments, I write with them and that helps me be accountable. I'm also a resident in the Black Embodiment Studios at UW. And because that's like an arts writing incubator that helps us hold each other accountable.

So, I want to say community is a great foundation, I guess, in my writing process and also influences my experiences. Because I think what has helped me grow as a writer is... understanding how the academy is a white supremacist institution, and that it seeks to uphold and support white patriarchal, elite ways of reproducing knowledge. And even though people as graduate students oftentimes go into the academy wanting to, like, change it and mix it up, the academy is filled with people who are in certain positions that are here to keep a field intact. And they want to keep this field definable, so they train their grad students to be in that field, I guess, but, like, in a way that can kind of... it feels like we have to cut ourselves off. Like, maybe, in your classes or talking to certain professors, you feel the sense of, "I have to conform to fit into this paradigm that is the academy."

CSC (16:16):

Oh yes.

[Laughs]

Oh yes. Definitely. I mean, the sick, bitter irony, I think is -- especially if you're in the social sciences or the humanities and you're interested in a subject that is directly related to trauma -- that your process and the way that the discipline is probably disciplining you to do it in, is solitary. Right? You have to sit there and think about all of the horrible things that have happened for centuries and then somehow be responsible for the solution. By yourself. And then you submit something and then it gets rejected or it doesn't, and you've just spent all of your emotional capital on it. And meanwhile, like I look to our colleagues in computer science or in engineering and they work on teams with eight people and they get happy hour afterwards. And, you know, like they don't have to think about that in

the same way that we are asked to professionally. That doesn't mean, like, of course, they don't have their own suite of issues. But yeah, like, the entanglement between our work -- what seems to matter, especially in an institution that doesn't desire our presence. Yeah. That's just this extra little cherry on top.

Um, I think like, yeah, year seven, for me, in grad school. Watching the world burn down, watching academia put, especially junior people, in situations that are ever more precarious, um, if not impossible. Like, it has only made me think, why bother writing that piece, that dissertation, that manuscript, whatever? To compete for, something that I don't believe should even exist. Right? And so, like, if I'm here and I have to write something, like, I think it might as well be dangerous. I might as well be unsettling, you know. Or at least a little bit... I don't know. I have -- I mean, I know we're not supposed to say this word -- but I have zero fucks to give really [chuckles] at this moment. You can cut that out, if you want.

[Both laugh]

BF (18:15):

No, I resonate with that so hard. And, yeah, I feel the pressure of literally the discipline. Like we literally get disciplined into performing in a certain way. And, I agree with you about, like, not really caring anymore and having to be risky. Because, like, acknowledging that the academy is a particular way and it wants me to perform a particular way, I look towards Black feminist, uh, scholars, thinkers, artists, who acknowledge institutions that actively want to silence certain people's voices in order to uplift another voice. I seek Black feminist ways of being bold and fighting against that. So I'm, like, thinking about like Audre Lorde's uses of erotic in her essay, the dangers of silence, and also think about the life work of Toni Morrison and Zora Neale Hurston, who also want to... to see this expansive life that their bodies are holding, that they are moving through the world with. And like, even though this white world wants them to hate their blackness, they're, like, reveling in it. They're like making it glow and they're being rule-breakers and they're being bold. And they're, like, giving zero cares, [chuckles] you know? Just so you don't have to, like, bleep out other things.

[Laughs]

But I agree. And so I just like look towards Black feminist ways of thinking to give me encouragement in my writing process. To be creative, to be bold in the face of being disciplined. And, like, trying to figure out, how can I break the discipline mold in this process? So, yeah, I would say that's overall my experiences, but I realize, Chris, that I asked about your experiences, but I didn't ask about your writing process. Do you have a particular process that you go with?

CSC (20:22):

Well, I can tell already, yeah, we have so much to talk about in the writing processes [laughs] for the first thing. So yeah, um... My writing process is a work in progress. So, I think one of the things, yeah, I've discovered is that I'm not a Type A person.

[Laughs]

Um, this is maybe just my perception or my imposter syndrome or whatever, but I don't think I'm motivated by same things a lot of other scholars are. You know, like, I'm motivated by community. I'm motivated by that feeling when you, you know, the hair is raised on the back of your neck when something is generative and exciting, right? And so that makes it really hard to sit in front of that blank page, by myself, alone with my own notes, with no deadline. So yeah, like, I think we could all Google, all of those little writing hygiene tips, like writing in 20 minutes a day, starting a Pomodoro, all those little things. They're helpful because they cut up the process. I think the most helpful -- this is, like, maybe bad advice, so if you're listening out there, take this with a grain of salt -- but weirdly, a couple of things have been really helpful for me. So, one is being on Twitter. And I know that's, like, crazy. I can't recommend anybody be on Twitter. Except there is this hashtag, like the hashtag citeblackwomen that, like, almost saved my academic career.

BF (21:50):

What was the hashtag again?

CSC (21:51):

#CiteBlackWomen.

BF (21:54):

Okay. Okay.

CSC (21:56):

Yeah. Like, in that hashtag again, there's this counter-archive of brilliant work that we were never exposed to, or that's never been promoted, that is not always at the top of the publication list, right? And yet this incredible generative, amazing material is coming out of these thinkers that completely reframe the way that I think about my own work along axes that I care about. Right? So, yeah. Being on Twitter and tweeting and having to write a tweet with only so many characters. Like, the sort of fortune cookie copywriting that happens when you want to write a really juicy, fire tweet. That, uh, just, as a discipline, a little writing practice, has been really incredibly helpful for me. Writing captions on Instagram. Like I'll just post a stupid picture, but, like, I will also talk about what I'm reading and what I'm thinking about. And how do I describe it to, you know, a 13-year-old girl in Malaysia or a 16-year-old guy in.. Austria. Right? Like, we can describe the things we're thinking about in ways that are interesting and matter to these people, too. And so yeah, writing and across those registers, in those different media have been really helpful for me.

BF (23:13):

And then the other thing I would say is just journaling and that free writing, you know? Like, that is incredibly useful. To put away the dissertation outline, to put away the abstract and the lit review and all of those things, put that aside for a second, do a 20-minute free write and realize the outline is wrong because that's not what I cared about, right? So, I think those little escapes have been super helpful for me. And then of course, yeah, write 20 minutes a day and turn it in the chapter piece-by-piece and... that's going to happen. But the fun stuff, I think, has been helpful for reframing what I'm doing and why I'm doing it.

Mhm. Oh, that's -- I resonate with that so much. And that's like Twitter, and that's how you do like those -- what is it? 30 characters? I can't tweet.

[Christopher laughs]

BF (24:02):

I can't figure it out. I made one tweet and it took too long to make that tweet and I was like --

CSC (24:08):

Uh-huh.

Yeah. It's like -- I don't remember how many characters it is -- but I will say, Twitter has become academia's water cooler. And that's where people go to just have unfiltered feelings at all levels of the institution. And it's completely cathartic. It's really good intel, especially for junior people. And then, like, what you discover is, you are just completely not alone. Like everybody is having some flavor of this problem you're having. And if you're having a really particular problem, there's maybe a kindred person out there that's in a very similar situation. And they're talking about it on Twitter. So, I hate Twitter and Twitter is evil and it's destroying the world, but that is also true. Yeah.

BF (24:52):

No, I hear that. Like, my kryptonite is Instagram. Again, like, it's discouraged to recommend these things, and like maybe if you're easily distracted, I don't know, blah, blah, blah. Like, things that people say in the discipline to discipline us, again. I love Instagram and I have a lot of fun on there. I do have to put on a timer that, like, it cuts off if I spend too much time on it [laughs] but, like Twitter, like, I would love to be on Twitter, I just can't figure it out. But I do have that community sense that you're discussing. And I find that on Instagram, like, I find that I'll post a response, like, say when I'm doing responses, I don't always think in words. I also think in visuals. And so, if I'm reading something, I'll do a visual and I'll post it on Instagram. And the caption will be a couple of paragraphs of a reading response that I'm doing about the latest book that I read. And like, that's just a way for me to... I don't know, kind of not feel that isolation of academia and being sitting at this desk, writing something that it's like, do I actually care about this? And it's like some days, yes, most days to do a 20-minute Pomodoro-style writing -- it's hard for me to do that all the time [laughs]. And so I do find joy

in social media and engaging in thoughts in that way, too. I find it very helpful.

CSC (26:32):

Yeah. I mean, it should be said that, unlike academic writing, when you put something on social media, you immediately get feedback and validation and recognition or critique or questions. Immediately. Whether you wanted it or not. And like, actually that's the lifeblood of intellectual life is feedback. Right? And... It's kind of cool and beautiful to use these tools for that in a way that's generative. Yeah. So.

[Both chuckle]

BF (27:03):

Ah, did we discuss this already? What we find challenging about writing? Well, I mean, we talked about isolation and things like that. Are there other things that you find challenging?

CSC (27:14):

Oh yeah.

[Both laugh]

BF (27:17):

It's like, let me pull out my list.

CSC (27:20):

I don't know, tell me if any of this resonates with you, but like, I think, yeah, you have a suite of things that they tell you in the first week workshop at grad school. Like, this is what imposter syndrome is, this is how you will encounter it, and I think the hilarious thing about imposter syndrome is that there are just infinite iterations of it, right? Like those insecurities, they come up in so many ways and especially if you're inclined to intellectual life, you'll find ever more brilliant intellectual ways to feel inadequate.

[Laughs]

So yeah, like, I think one challenge is feeling like, why am I doing this? Does the world need this? You know, all of those dark existential

questions, right? And then also thinking about, you know, just the environment in which we publish and circulate this work. And it's hard to be motivated if all we really do is identify problems. And when people aren't really rewarded for doing public scholarship, for experimenting, for writing between and across disciplines. It's really hard to stay motivated in that sense. So, I think we've talked about this before, but, like, the solution to that is just to follow your bliss and do what is satisfying in soul-nourishing.

Um, yeah, I think like just a technical challenge for me is organizing all of the things I'm thinking about, because when I start writing, you know, we release the flood valves and then just more confusing ideas come out. Ideas that need to be organized into narrative, right? And so I have, like, millions of half-page, little free writes in an Evernote stack somewhere that I've externalized and compartmentalized away. But knowing that each of those things could really just be their own dissertation, if I spent another seven years starting over and working on them. That is hard, too, is the act of writing is also an act of editing and foreclosing other things that you care about. Other things that actually do matter for the world. And so I think those are my big challenges. What are yours?

BF (29:36):

I resonate so much of what you're saying, especially about the idea of the imposter syndrome. Like, I feel like I have to talk myself through that so often. Because, like, on one hand, literally nothing is perfect. Literally everything is going through a transition. Literally everyone has to start somewhere. Even if I read the beginning works of bell hooks, like, she had ideas that she later had to revise. And so it's this idea of... not being perfect that I feel like I have to let go of. And it's a challenge to do. So, like, I don't know, maybe it's my Virgo Sun, Capricorn, Moon talking, but perfection is just... it's so hard for me to reckon with. But I'm really realizing that for my mental health, I have to let it go. And it's easy to be in these disciplines and writing these dissertations and seeing how people are rewarded, or seem to be rewarded, based on how much labor they put into something, based on if they did this study for like eight hours every day, then they get rewarded. And it's like, I find that if I keep thinking about that, that's the challenge that I have to, like, hurdle over. Because

one, it's kind of like how they say don't judge people's life by what they put on social media, it's kind of the same in academia. Like, don't judge somebody's work progress by the accomplishments they put out there. Like, I guess all that is to say, I have to keep reminding myself to, like, take those breaks, do that... thing that's going to bring me joy. And it might not be sitting at this computer for eight hours a day. It might not be looking at that writing thing that I have to do all week. Like, that just might be what I have to do in order to feel like I can continue to do this work for the long haul. So, I feel like not surrendering to that pressure to be perfect, because we always seem to think that perfection is rewarded -- which is just not true -- I feel like that's a challenge that I have to constantly remind myself to work through in this process.

CSC (31:57):

Yeah, I mean, thank you for reminding me [laughs] of that, too. I mean, yeah, like I -- and this is not a secret, it's the elephant in the room, that academia is really good at getting people to pressure each other into very toxic behavior, like, right, toxic work-life balance stuff. And like we fetishize overwork and exhaustion and busy-ness and, like, solitary commitment to our projects and things like that, you know? Which is not cool. Not healthy. And it's just not true, that doing all those things will produce better work, either. Let alone work that matters and that we're proud of and gives us satisfaction and contentment, right? And it's funny you say the analogy between social media, our, you know, public persona on social media and our public persona as scholars. It's actually, to me, like, not at all different. We are in a content industry also. We are content producers. We are creators, just very slow ones and for much smaller, smaller audiences. But I think, like, we can learn something from some of these influencers, for better or for worse, about like what we sacrifice to produce that image. Right? I mean, that's just all interesting stuff to think about, but...

BF (33:17):

No, I think so, too.

CSC (33:17):

Yeah. What's a tip or any bit of encouragement that you have for other graduate student writers?

BF (33:27):

Trust the process. I read somewhere -- and it's a probably very common quote, or whatever it is -- to fall in love with the journey and not with that destination. And that kind of resonates with me in this process. It makes me feel better and makes me feel like I'm on the right path in my life when I fall in love with the process of learning. When I fall in love with the process of getting my ideas out there, getting feedback, restructuring those ideas, really falling in love with how I see my brain transforming, how I see the way I'm thinking to be transforming. I'm not necessarily falling in love with that moment that I walk on the stage and my advisor puts that... shawl around me and I walk off, like, even though I am, like, looking forward to that moment, I'm not in love with that moment as much as I am in love with where I'm at right now, this like reading and responding and growing and learning from different people. I am in love with that process. And the reason why I think that that's a tip is because that's gonna carry me throughout this long career. I'm not just going to be looking for, like, that final destination of this book is published and that book is published. I'm not just looking forward to that finish line. I am enjoying running. I'm not really in it for the race. I just want to jog. Even though I don't like running. That's not a real analogy. I hate running. I don't get it.

[Laughs]

CSC (35:06):

Yeah. I don't do physical exercise either. Although that would probably be a good tip for another graduate student writers, I just have never done that myself. But no, if I could just basically say what you were saying, probably less eloquent words, like, I think that tip is... For me, I would interpret that as, you know, like, in a dark moment, having a block, in a slump, in a moment of low confidence in graduate school -- as will probably happen to you -- to just remember, like, why you applied. You put yourself here for a reason. It mean you should tolerate abuse. It doesn't mean you should tolerate your own subordination or anything like that, but there was a

reason why you applied. And it was probably because you loved something about the process, like you were saying, right? Like, you loved the discovery. You loved the questioning. Or the being in dialogue with other thinkers. Right? Whatever that thing is, if you just remember what that is, and then try to recover it in the present, in your own work, like, it will be so much better. You'll be so much happier. And you'll feel so much better saying "no" to all the other things that do not spark joy for you.

[Chuckles]

Um, so I think that would be my big tip is like, go back, read your statement of purpose that you used to apply. Like you'll cringe a little bit probably, but you'll also see in there, the person that desired something out of this process. And maybe you'll triangulate what that thing was. Yeah.

BF (36:30):

That was gold, I would say. That's some gold advice.

CSC (36:34):

I mean, you inspired it, so, you know. I have to say, I'm a Gemini, so I just copy the Virgos.

[Brittney laughs]

CSC (36:43):

Um... My only other tip is drink water.

BF (36:47):

Yes, hydrate!

CSC (36:50):

Mhm.

BF (36:50):

And coffee is not hydration!

CSC (36:53):

Yeah, coffee and wine and beer are not hydration.

BF (36:57):

[Laughs]

Yes. That's some gold advice, though.

[Brief musical interlude]

HS (37:05):

And there you have it. Thanks for listening to this episode of Write for You and a big thanks again to both of our guests. On behalf of the Odegaard Writing & Research Center, I hope this has been informative, affirming, and maybe even inspiring. If you want to learn more about the OWRC, its programs, or services available to University of Washington students, faculty and staff, you can find us online at depts.washington.edu/owrc.

[Brief musical interlude]

HS (37:37):

Looking for more Write for You? Check out the rest of season two, out now, or listen back to our fabulous guests from the first season for more conversations about writing experience, process and practice. In the meantime, for myself and all of us at the OWRC, happy writing.

[Brief musical interlude]

HS (38:04):

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[Outro music]