**Behind the Prose Transcript**

Episode 32: Kim Brooks

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Host:

Keysha Whitaker [KW]

Guests:

Kim Brooks [KB]

[KW] I'm so excited to talk to you. I read several of the essays in the Life section. I interviewed Sharisse Tracey who you published. We're going to talk about that, but first I just want to welcome you to *Salon* on behalf of us who read *Salon*. And many of us who follow it know that Sarah Hepola was the Personal Essays editor there, and you just assumed that position in September, so congratulations.

So Salon has headquarters in San Francisco, New York, and D.C., but you work remotely?

[KB] Yes, I live in Chicago. I work from home in Chicago.

[KW] So what is your average day like? How do you divide your time? You’re a writer; you write as well. How do you divide your time?

[KB] So I’m probably not quite as organized about it as I could be, but basically I have certain days where I try to focus on writing or my book, or if I'm working on a particular essay, but on the days when I'm working for Salon, I sort of divide my day between reading new submissions as they come in, reaching out to authors I know or to people who have submitted pitches that seem interesting, and then working on pieces that I've already accepted, whether that means writing up some revision notes or editing a piece with a writer, thinking about headlines, thinking about ways to frame a story. Kind of taking a piece that I've accepted through the whole process between the time the writer sends it to me and the time it goes up on *Salon's* website.

[KW] So you have your own work that you do. You have a novel coming out, called *The Houseguest*, in April. Do you make a point to work on your stuff first, early in the morning? Is there a set schedule other than some days you do Salon, more so?

[KB] That's a good question. Some of it I'm still trying to figure out the best balance. Generally, I think what works best is to have a day or two each week that's devoted to working on writing where I can immerse myself in the process, whether I'm revising my work or researching or trying to get a draft of something. I find it a little bit challenging to dive in and out of writing - to sort of do that at the same time as I'm working as an editor.

I try to protect that time and set it aside. Whereas when I'm doing Salon work or editorial work, it's easier to sort of multi-task - to edit one piece then to jump into dialogue with another author. You have to go back and forth. I find that writing requires a different kind of concentration.

That's what works best for me.

[KW] Let's talk a little bit about your novel, The Houseguest. I'm gonna read a line from the write-up of the book. And this is just one line: "Set on the eve of America's involvement in World Wart II, The Houseguest examines a little known aspect of the war and highlights the network of organizations seeking to help Jews abroad, just as masses of people, seeking to escape Europe, are turned away from American shores."

When I read that, there are two things I thought: One, how timely is this, that we're in the midst of this same type of struggle with refugees or not. And the second thought I had is that "This is a movie." This is definitely a movie.

[Laughter]

 [KB] Well that would be very exciting. I definitely feel like there are points when I was writing when it felt somewhat cinematic to me. That would be very exciting.

[KW] I have a track record with this. Let me tell you. Natalie Baszille, the author of Queen Sugar, was on early in the year, and three days before this information was released, I tweeted that ‘oh, I read the book, if there ever was a book that should be a movie, it's this one.’ Three days later, she revealed that it got picked up by Oprah.

I'm gonna shoot two for two with yours.

[KB] Wow. Okay. I'll have fingers crossed.

[KW] When did you start writing this book?

[KB] So I started writing, gosh, it was probably almost five years ago at this point that I first started thinking about it and playing with different ideas. It kind of originally started a very long time ago as a short story, which I wrote and published and later grew out of that.

I was working on it on and off for about five years.

[KW] Just the timeline, around five years ago, is that the time when you first started freelancing with Salon?

[KB] Yeah, you know it actually is. As I'm saying it, five years sounds like a very long time, but I also had two kids in that time period. And that's sort of the way that my Salon work started. I was working on this novel; I had these two small babies very close together. There were times when having very small children and being home with them wasn't compatible - or I wasn't finding it compatible with the research-intensive work of writing this novel.

To kind of keep writing during those days or weeks when working on the novel didn't feel possible. I started writing a lot about my life, about parenting, about my experiences as a mom. That's true. They're very different kinds of writing but they sort of developed side by side.

[KW] I'm trying to contain myself from going so far into your background because there are so many things I want to ask you. You also have done a number of fellowships and you're a graduate of the Iowa Writers Workshop and part of me wants to know 'Oh my goodness. How did you do all this?' I guess the short question that I can ask is were you doing any of those things after you had your kids and were writing for Salon or had you finished the quote-unquote educational aspect of your training?

 [KB] Well, I think most of the fellowships that I've done weren't like fellowships where I had to go someplace for a year. Most of the fellowships were offering support so that I could write. In that way it was helpful. It was extremely helpful. For example, the fellowship that I got from the Posen Foundation was extremely helpful. I not only had to support myself but had to actually pay for child care if I wanted time to write and things like that.

Some of those were in recent years. I graduated from the workshop quite some time ago. I graduated in 2003. Those different fellowships were spread out over the course of ten years.

[KW] In your own writing, you write fiction; you write nonfiction. Last year one of the essays that you wrote for *Salon* was selected as the #1 Personal Essay of the Year.  And that one "The Day I Left My Son in the Car."

The narrator seems to - you take a position but it's not - how do I say this? The narrator seems to be exploring or evolving about what they feel about this situation. They never come down on one side or the other but it kind of allows the reader to experience both sides of the argument. I don't know if that makes any sense to you. But I felt like I could see the narrator wrestling with both sides, but also myself, like 'hmmm what do I think?'

Through the different - you know what I mean?

 [KB] Yeah, no I do. That is what I was aiming for. I think on issues like the one that I was writing about, about parenting and parenting styles, judgment of parenting and the criminalization of parenting, issues like that, I think when a lot of people write about them, people have very strong opinions and people often become very entrenched in those opinions.

I think that writing on those issues can sometimes be very didactic or strident which is not very fun to read. It's not very compelling or interesting to read. The writing - I try to write in a style - I try to write essays that I would want to read. I like to read essay or books on controversial issues. But the ones that make the strongest impression on me are the ones that sort of have an even-handedness. Certainly, I think with that piece, it helped that it was a subject that I felt conflicted about.

On the one hand, I felt things had gotten out of hand the way we criminalize common parenting behaviors, but on the other hand, I struggled with a lot of anxiety about keeping my kids safe and making the right decisions, so I could for too see both points of view and was sort of working that out through the essay.

[KW] How long did that take you to write? If you remember. And did you know you were going to send it to *Salon* when you had that idea to write it?

[KB]I knew I would send it to *Salon* because I had a really good relationship with my editor there, Sarah Hepola and had worked with her on a number of other pieces through the years. In terms of how long it took me to write, that's a kind of strange case because normally I get an idea for something, I sort of write it fairly quickly. But in this case, as the drama of the actual events was unfolding, I knew that it was something I wanted to write about, but I could not write about it as it was going on for very practical reason, legal reasons.

I was under strict instructions not to write about what was happening. I had to sit on it and ruminate. I was able to do some research, to interview people, to talk to people about these questions, take notes, but I couldn't actually write the piece, I think for about a year and half after it started to unfold.

Ultimately, I think that was a good thing. I think for a lot of writers - and I think I'm one of them - having some distance from the material you're writing about can be extraordinarily helpful. I feel like a lot of pieces I'm on the fence about as an editor, it will be strong writing, an interesting subject, and I can kind of see the framework for an interesting story, but I'll have this sense the writer is too close to the material. They don't really have enough perspective or distance to really deal with it in as complicated or sophisticated a way as they need to deal with it.

Sometimes having that space and distance can be really helpful.

 [KW] Do you think that there's a certain time of distance that people need? Does it vary based on how sensitive the subject is?

[KB] Yeah, I mean I think it totally varies. I think the key is sort of having enough, at least for like autobiographical, creative nonfiction, first-person nonfiction, I think often the key is to have enough distance is that you have some insight about what took place. Or how what took place fits into some larger narrative.

Looking back, whether that looking back is a year or ten years or whatever, I can now see that such and such - some insight, some perspective that is very hard to have when you're right in the middle or coming out of an experience.

[KW] In terms of, you started out as a freelancer in 2011. How did you transition? From a more frequent freelancer to being the personal essays editor?

[KB] I started out by placing this one piece with Salon a number of years ago. I worked with Sarah Hepola on that piece.  I knew right away that she was such a great editor for me. I had never really worked with - now that I think about it, she may have been my first editor. I don't think I'd ever worked with an editor before.

I sort of imagined an editor as someone who takes what you've written and sort of spruces it up or fixes it up. With Sarah, especially on a lot of those earlier pieces, it wasn't just a matter of her editing it, she seemed to know what kinds of questions to ask me to get me thinking about the material in a more interesting way. She could tell if I was cheating my way into something or glossing my way over something that needed to be delved into more detail.

She knew how to draw out those elements and we had just a very good rapport. I actually - just like over the years - if I had a new piece over the years, sometimes there would be a part of me that would think, 'Oh should I spread my work around? Should I really just to send these to new places? But because I liked working with her so much, and I felt like she was really able to help me with my writing and I had a good relationship with her as an editor, I would often just go back to *Salon* so that I could continue to work with her, which now gave me something great to work toward now that I'm in that position of being an editor.

That's sort of my goal. Not just to find essays to publish. Obviously I want to find great essays to publish, but to also find great writers to work with. That's one of the things that - I've only been doing this for a few months. I've really been looking forward to finding writers whose work I really admire and developing editor-writer relationships with them that can develop over time.

[KW] What was the interview process like for the position?

[KB] I don't know if I should say too much.

[KW] Confidentiality. I understand. I think people who are listening can take away that we understand that in publishing, relationships are everything. If you show yourself to be a good dependable writer and a publication likes who you are, and your writing style and feel that you're a good match for them, anything can happen.

 [KB] Absolutely. I think that's really true. I feel like the editor/writer relationship, it really is a relationship. This is ideally someone that you're working with. If I have two different pieces and they're both sort of, I'm on the fence about them, but I feel like one of the writers is someone who I can really communicate with, someone who I wanna work with, that's the piece that I'm going to go for.

I think that's it's really important to think about it in those terms. Or, at least for me it was.

 [KW] Do you have a certain number of pieces that you have to publish weekly? I've looked - it seems like on average there are about four or five.

 [KB] Yeah. It varies week to week. But generally yeah, that sounds about right.

[KW] On average, do you know how many submissions you get?

[KB] Again, it varies. I'd say in terms of submission, things that I don't solicit. I think it could be anywhere from 80 to 150 per week.

[KW] When you're reading submissions, how long does it take you to know? Well first, I guess, what are some turn-offs that you're not even going to read the cover letter. Or do you go through a bad cover letter and give a piece a first paragraph or two?

[KB] Well, it depends on how bad the cover letter is. I definitely try to look at all the pieces. I want to see the piece itself. If the cover letter is really ungrammatical and doesn't make any sense or seems like this person doesn't even know what Salon is, then I'm probably not going to bother to open up an attachment. If the cover letter seems professional, seems at all thoughtful, I'm definitely going to look.

What was the other part of the question?

[KW] Are you turned off instantly in the first graph or two of the piece?

[KB] I definitely try to give everything - sometimes I think starting an essay, the beginnings and endings are very challenging. There's definitely been cases where I look at the first paragraph and think this is kind of a mess; I don't know what's going on here. But the time I get to the third paragraph, I see, oh there's a very interesting story here, they're just not beginning it in the right place. That said, if the first paragraph again is ungrammatical and makes no sense, I have no idea what I'm reading even on a sentence level, then I'm not going to probably get very far. But otherwise, I definitely want to read past just the polish level to see what the story is that's being presented.

Sometimes there will be a really great story and the writing itself, the prose, needs work. Often, that you can work on. It's harder if the prose is perfect and polished but there's no story. If there's no story, there's not that much you can do.

I'm kind of always looking for what's the story that this person is telling. Is this a story that I want to read? Is this a story that other people are going to want to read?

[KW] When you are editing pieces that you've accepted, I'm just curious if you print them out and look at them and send the person comments?

[KB] I don't personally do that, just because, I don't know, I'm always running out of printer ink and breaking my printer. I'm just not organized enough to do that. Maybe one day, I could work toward that. But no, I just look at stuff on my computer. I edit in track changes. I try to separate out my actual edits from more general notes or questions I want to ask the author or comments.

[KW] One of the things that I notice that is unique about Salon is that you can go to their staff page and see who the editors are for that section and get the actual email address as opposed to a submission form or something.

In terms of when someone is pitching you, are you, would you be inclined or do you like to hear when people are complimenting you specifically on your work or is it more that you want to hear people complimenting the work of the column? What do you look for that shows they get who you are or who your column is?

[KB] In a cover letter you mean?

[KW] Yeah

[KB] Well, I mean of course it's always nice to be complimented. I can't lie. [laughter] but really what I'm looking for is not so much that they've read Salon. I kind of assume if they're pitching something that you've read the site. I'm more just looking at what they're presenting. I think that knowledge of the site and appreciation of the section comes across in the actual material. If you're sending something that looks like it's in line with the sort of essays that we publish.

[KW] Does Salon pay freelancer for essays?

[KB] We do pay writers.

[KW] OH wow. Hear that writers. That's awesome.

I noticed in some of the essays the people use names in quotes. Even in your essay, I think you use a fake name for your son in quotes and you say this is not his real name. So is that Salon's policy in general to only run essays with either an acknowledgment that this is a fake name or the real name only?

[KB] Right. If someone were writing under a pseudonym, we would always say that's a pseudonym or that a name had been changed to protect someone's privacy.

[KW] On Halloween this year, you published two themed essays. Is that something that you see doing in the future with upcoming holidays and events?

[KB] I just think it varies. We usually do publish a few essays each weekend. I think it just depends on what's going on at that time, what's going on in the news.

[KW] Let's actually transition into talking about the style of the column. I interviewed Sharisse Tracey, as you know and I was asking, what I saw the difference between her Motherlode column in *The New York Times* and her piece in *Salon*. “Motherload” is a shorter pace and built on in and out of scene, whereas the *Salon* pieces you have a longer - it's longer and it's more exposition and reflection and there's some reportage where people are quoting sources.

The pieces also seem to hinge on some sort of social commentary, either subtly or overtly. I wonder - I guess the question is: one is that an accurate assessment of what you see the column is as far as the style. I mean there are scenes, but the ones I've read seem to open with a scene and be more exposition.

[KB] Right. I'm open to all different kinds of styles and structures. I think that the style and the structure have to serve the piece itself. In that piece I think that he material and voice was served well with alternating between exposition and scene. But certainly there are some pieces that lend themselves to more scene, that are more dramatic. There are others that are more reflection driven, voice driven. I think you kind of have to evaluate it on a case-by-case basis.

Much of the stuff that we publish - many of the essays that I do like  - have some sort of mixture of summary and scene.

[KW] What drew you to Sharisse Tracey's essay?

[KB] Sharisse Tracey's essay - I thought - there were two things. First and foremost it was an incredible story. It was very harrowing and upsetting, but also in the end a very moving story. I was drawn also to how it's this story of this horrible thing that happened to her and this horrible thing her father did, but at the same time, it's not just the story about this awful thing that happened to her or this harrowing experience she had, but it's also really about her relationship with her mother.  And her quest overtime to be able to forgive her mother for not protecting her and create a relationship, sustain a relationship with her mother whom she loved.

So I really liked that. I feel like I read a lot of essays about really terrible things happening to people, but to me that was different. It wasn't just about the harrowing experience; it was also about the relationship. And also just the story and the writing itself, I thought was handled very beautifully. That it was just a well-written piece.

In addition to that, one thing that made this piece really great to work on, Sharisse is just a great writer to work with through the editorial process. She was very responsive to my thoughts, my ideas; so that made the whole process very easy.

[KW] To your point about distance, when I interviewed her, she said she had been working on that piece for years, prior to sending it to you. But even though she feels like it's not quote-unquote done because she's still living the story, but that distance that you spoke of, I'm remembering that now as you talk about her essay.

[KB] I mean absolutely. That makes sense. If we're still alive, we're still living out all of our stories. A story is done when we choose to end it. I think that's one of the most important decisions a writer makes. Where does a story start and where does it end? Those decisions determine what the story is, right?

Whether a story has a happy ending or a sad ending, the meaning of the story depends on where you end it. So yeah, I think that's a great example of something where she was probably able to write that so well because she did have a lot of distance.

[KW] You did say that you publish a variety of different styles of pieces. I guess I might categorize it as a lyric essay a bit. It's "My rapist asked me to pray for him. I did what it took to stay alive."

That's where it is in the Roman Numerals, divided into maybe five or six sections. One of the notes that I had is - and I wanted to see if this is what drew you to the piece - is that I noticed immediately the voice and control that the writer had. Is that what drew you to it?

[KB] Yeah, I think that I was definitely one of the things – it had an incredible story but also the voice was so controlled. So powerful. I felt the voice was in control of the material in a way that was unusual. So definitely that was the draw for me with that one.

[KW] And that piece does something that a number of them do. I was just actually flipping I should say the writer's name -

[KB] I think - is it Lara Naughton.

[KW] Yes. So I noticed this piece does something that I think happen in several of them as well - it seems like they build to a note of understanding or a turning point in the narrative and the line that hit me as that is when Lara writes "I'm doing it even now. It had to be pointed out to me that terms like 'offender,' 'perpetrator,' 'victim,' and 'survivor' turn individuals into one note archetypes. Each of us is a multi-dimensional person who is more than the worse we've ever done. And more than the worse thing that's been done to us."

Do you think - does that happen organically on the part of the writer because that happens in the columns and they picked up on it or do you guide them in the editorial process?

[KB] Right. It's hard to generalize but I think that when people read an essay on *Salon* or maybe when they read an essay in a lot of different places, that's one of the things that we look for when we read an essay. It's not just the story that entertains us. We want to be entertained, but something that takes a piece of writing to the next level is that in addition to holding our attention and entertaining us, we also feel like we are learning something or that the writer is trying to understand something, to gain some insight into their experience.

It's not like that's a formula and I'm forcing pieces to fall in that formula, but I think that's something that really good nonfiction writers, many of them do instinctively.

Certainly there are times when there really isn't enough of that insight and reflection and then there are times when it feels overdone. You don't want an essay to feel too neat, tidy, like it's all being packaged and delivered to the reader in terms of meaning. I think there's sort of sweet spot of resonance and ambiguity that I think that me personally as a reader and an editor, that's what I'm looking for.

[KW] In the essay, "My doctor told me it was all in my head. I might have died if I believed him" the intro of it starts in present tense but then there's a backstory of the medical history of this narrator. I thought that it did a really good job parsing a lot of information that could had been complicated and overwhelming, so I was curious if you worked with the writer on the organization of that and if not, how do you approach helping writers how to parse out what they need to include in an opening or backstory versus what they don't need to include.

[KB] Well, I mean I guess my general rule - or rule sounds too rigid - my general guiding principle for a personal essay, research, or interviews - the outside information is most effective when it flows naturally from the story that is being told, from the personal narrative. So in sort of the places where it would seem natural to reach beyond one's experience for information or opinions of other people, those are the places where i think it sort of works best to sort of bring those other voices in. IF it doesn't seem to connect in an organic way to the personal story that is being told, then I can feel like it's extraneous or it can feel like it's weighing down the essay.

Obviously all of this is very subjective, but I think that's what is going through my head as I'm thinking about what needs to be cut, what needs to be added, etc.

[KW]  In terms of the topics, if I'm gonna scroll down, - woman clarifies her detest for babies, woman wrestles with social stigma of abortion, woman realizes unconscious bias affected her treatment by a male doctor, woman reflects on leaving the Mormon church and disowning her gay brother, woman explores her brothers - how her brother's Halloween death change the holiday for her - which for me that was the quote-unquote "mildest" one in - maybe the baby - even though she wrote it in a way.

I guess as a writer looking at these and you think you have quote-unquote "ordinary life" or I don't really have anything provocative. For example, one of the essays is about a guy who is a pedophile and he hasn't acted on it but he writes about you know this illness, so they are so heavy you can't ready a bunch at one time. They're so intense.

I guess the question is - Is there space in that column for - do you have a hard-hitting provocative story in order to get into the life stories column?

[KB] 45:25 Yeah, I don't think - I see what you're saying. I don't think that there's one kind of story that we are looking for. I think it's a mix. There's definitely ones that are more provocative. But I think if you look at all the stories, we also do a lot of pieces that are about relationships, that are about families, that are about families, that are about body image. But I do think that all of those pieces have in common though is that if you're going to write about something that might not seem that out of the ordinary in terms of an experience, it's important that you are looking at it in a new or interesting and provocative way, if that makes sense.

Like for example, there was one piece about a - a parenting piece that ran a few weeks ago by **Stelle Erasmus** and she was just talking about the challenges that she faces as a woman who had a daughter when she was a little bit older, and as her daughter gets more older and independent, her parents who live near her, were becoming less independent and had some age-related health problems.

She kind of writes about struggling to balance those two desires - to be a good mother, to be a good daughter - and if you think about it, that's not an unusual experience, right? That's something that I think a lot of people probably deal with, but what I liked about that piece is that she was thinking about it in a provocative way, like are we putting reasonable pressure on women as individuals to sort of be everything? To take care of our parents as they age, to take care of our children, often without a lot of community support.

Does that make sense? It's not that the story has to be so dramatic and harrowing and intense, though certainly plenty of those stories can be really powerful essays, but if it is something more commonplace, the perspective, the voice, the intelligence of the narrator has to be provocative.

 [KW] So I want to transition a little bit into something I call Ask the Editor. You've been on both sides as a freelancer and as an editor. Are there things that editors did - what are - is there anything that you do differently or a making a point to do that was your pet peeve as a writer? Are you doing anything differently now based on that experience?

[KB]

Sure. So one that jumped to mind is when I was exclusively a writer, I was just very very impatient. I still am just kind of an impatient person. I would sort of take it personally when it was taking an editor forever to get back to me or when I would submit something and it just seemed like it always took forever and it was just very frustrating and difficult to wait. Now that I'm on the other side of the desk, I realize that no, it's not personal. I think hat most editors have many balls in the air and they have so much they're trying to get through and to read - that sounds like a commonplace thing - but I feel like being an editor has made me more patient when I'm pitching something, when I'm waiting for feedback, when I'm waiting for notes.

It's also showed me how important clarity is when you're presenting something. Just having a clear, concise, straightforward cover letter just because now again, I see just how much a typical editor has on their plate. Even though you hear that as a writer, it's sort of like, once you experience it, it makes an impression.

I was saying to a friend, it's kind of like the feeling I had that if you're going to eat in a restaurant, you should wait tables at least once in your life. It's just different. But I could say the same thing about, because I was exclusively writing or freelancing for so long, I feel like I have some perspective or insight into the challenges of putting yourself out there and putting your work out there and how much it means when an editor takes the time to offer some meaningful feedback on a piece to get it as good as it can be.

I definitely think it's really valuable - in both writing and editing - to sort of know and to think about what it's like on the other side.

[KW] My next question ties into what you've just said. I'm also an impatient person. I have a scenario that is ongoing on. In June a sent a pitch to a place.

---- VOICE OVER HOST: This is the part of the show where I launch into a long, unwieldy and mostly irrelevant rant about a horrible experience with an editor who keeps telling me they will let me know next month. I’m going to fast forward and get to the real question

[KW] When should you just move on?

 [KB] Well I think it definitely depends if you're already working on a piece with an editor or if you're just pitching something that they haven't accepted. For instance, if a writer sends me a draft of something and I say 'Oh this is great. I want to send you some ideas for revising' and a few weeks pass and they don't hear from me, I think it's completely fine for that writer to say, hey just following up, just checking in, and I appreciate the reminder.

IF it's something where you're just submitting and you don't think they're going to take it, I think like in the example that you just read, it seems like the writer has every right to send the piece elsewhere if it seems like they just weren't getting an answer or weren't being responded to.

I mean, I don't really know. I think every publication is different so it just really depends on the publication. Some places will give a rejection to to every piece they don't want. Other publications, I think it's just assumed that no answer means no. But you know, in general, I just think it's a really hard business, trying to do writing, do freelancing; it just takes an incredible amount of perseverance. I know how hard this is because I've been in this position, but I think the more you can keep writing, keep sending stuff out, keep generating new ideas, new material, new contacts, the better off you're going to be.

And again, this is one of those things that are easier said than done, if you're just focusing so much on one piece or one publication you're waiting to hear back from, it's just going to be a lot of frustration and a lot of waiting. So I think the more a writer can kind of have in the air and have out there, the easier it is to deal with the inevitable waiting and frustration the two all have to deal with.

[KW] My final question for you Kim is, as an editor, what is your editorial superpower? What do you really well that could save the world?

[KB] That is a really hard question. What is my editorial superpower?

I think it's probably sort of the teaching process with writers. This is my first major editing job. But before I had this job, I taught writing for about ten years, both creative writing and composition at colleges, community colleges, especially the one-on-one process. Sitting down with a student or writer, looking at the work, not just making the words on the page better, but helping that writer learn something from the process of revising or going through another draft.

I think that - I hope that I'm good at that. That's sort of the thing that I like the most about the job. I would say that's my superpower.

END