

Episode Twenty-Eight: A Routine Inspection: Exploring the Role of Regimen in the Writer's Life

Ad Aster Transcript

[intro music]

NABEEHA 00:12

Hey, Asterisks. Welcome back to another episode of Ad Aster. For those that are just tuning in, Ad Aster is the youth-led podcast of the literary magazine Aster Lit, that is focused on cross-cultural connections within the writing world. I'm Nabeeha, and today I'm here with Angie and Judy. Today we'll be talking about writing routines.

ANGIE 00:33

So before we dive into the topic, it's time for our fine or scope writing and reading check in. So, Nabeeha, how is your writing and reading routine going lately?

NABEEHA 00:44

I think I'm really glad to say that it has been going well. I recently finished the short novella "What Feasts At Night" by Ursula Vernon, and I'm currently enjoying *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin. Fingers crossed, I'll achieve my reading goals for the month with ease. What about you, Angie?

ANGIE 01:01

I've also been reading a lot of fiction books lately, like *The Goldfinch*, because I really love dark academia and the genre. And as for writing, I've also been getting a lot into poetry again, and I'm trying to get out of my writing slump, so I hope for the best that I keep getting productive in my creative process, which links also to this topic of writing routines. So what about you, Judy?

JUDY 01:27

Hi, guys. So, for me, my writing has been going quite well lately. I've actually written this one page story. So it's quite short, but I'm quite proud of it. It's about mental health, specifically about feeling regretful in the past. So it's kind of been getting me out of my

writer's block. And as for my reading, I've actually started reading *The Book Thief* lately, which is very interesting. So I can't wait to finish it.

NABEEHA 01:56

That is wonderful to hear. So this is also very relevant to our current topic, writing routines. And I think we're all feeling very productive right now, so I think we're good to go and start with the topic. Judy, would you mind explaining writing routines?

JUDY 02:11

Yeah. Okay. So writing routines are mainly a specific daily routine that you do for your writing. Maybe not even daily. It could be weekly, could be very random. But basically it's just your writing habits all combined together into a specific routine that you usually find yourself doing before you start writing. So why don't you guys let me in on your writing routines, Nabeeha and Angie.

NABEEHA 02:42

Yeah. So for me, I think usually I'm a very spontaneous person, especially when it comes to writing. Because for me, I think there's more of a therapeutic element to writing that I do not really associate with normal work, for example, like my schoolwork. But nowadays I think productivity really depends on your writing routine. So if you're all over the place and if you wait for inspiration to come to you, you won't ever know when to write or when you actually have some good ideas. So I think it's better to remain consistent or have a writing routine. So, for example, nowadays I try to write something like maybe a page or a few hundred words before I'm going to sleep, because I think that is when my mind is fully fresh and I can actually write some things down. And so far, it has been going really good. What about you, Angie?

ANGIE 03:33

Personally, I think I'm a very intensive person, so I usually would force myself to write even if I don't want to. So for me, my writing routines are usually much more intensive rather than spontaneous. So I usually go for more structured ways of writing throughout my day. For example, I would tell myself that I have to write at least two to three poems a day when I'm

on a break. So I really continue to be consistent about how I write. But sometimes when I'm really going for a slump or I'm busy, I'll just tell myself that I just need to edit a poem and that'll be fine. But either way, I really think that I'm more on the productive side of writing and that I tend to burn out more easily with my style of writing. But I think that's just for me. What are your other parts of writing that you would like to share with us in terms of our routines, Judy?

JUDY 04:33

So for me, when I'm writing, I usually write whenever I feel like I have even just a slight bit of inspiration. Because I feel like when I—unlike you, Angie—I try to force myself, I end up just not enjoying the activity and I end up also distracting myself, maybe scrolling through Pinterest or watching YouTube videos and calling it being productive, when in reality, I'm just distracting myself from the project. But I've noticed that what worked for me was to definitely try to be consistent by creating a writing routine. So I always, like Jane Austen, in my writing routine, I usually try to sit outside in my balcony, though Jane Austen used to sit next to her window in the family sitting room, and I would observe the environment around me, maybe any people walking by the trees and just smelling fresh air is really great and helps me feel inspired to write. So that is something unique to my writing routine. What about you guys?

NABEEHA 05:39

Yeah, so, for me, when I was discussing the topic of these writing routines with other people and I was researching about it, I found the writing routine of Maya Angelou, and I figured out that there were some aspects that were very similar to my own writing routine, even though hers is very more stringent and disciplined. But I think I relate with her in the sense that I like to have some sort of solitude when I'm writing. Unlike you, Angie, I prefer being alone in a room, and I also like to sit down while I'm writing. So, I need to feel the ground beneath me to actually feel grounded when I'm writing. And also, she kept a Bible beside her when she was writing, so. And the explanation for that was that she used to. I gained inspiration from the language, the melodious language that is present in the Bible. So, similarly, for me, what I do is that I go onto Instagram, and then I go through several hashtags that are related to literature or magazines. And then I see on certain pages that there are several prompts that are given. So I challenge myself to work on those prompts. So that has helped me a lot, because I

can also compare what I'm writing to other people. So that gives me inspiration, too. Like, that gives me a heads up—Okay, I need to start like this—and it also helps me feel productive. So I think going on to Instagram and then choosing some prompts from there and then working in solitude, I think that really works for me. And Maya Angelou, also, she likes to go to a hotel and then spend her morning to afternoon over there to work. So I think I relate to her in a similar sense.

ANGIE 07:12

Wow, that's so interesting.

NABEEHA 07:12

What about you, Angie?

ANGIE 07:14

Well, for me, I'm also similar to what I heard as Jane Austen, where I need to work at a specific location or a specific place in order to write. Because for me, while I don't really have to go somewhere to write, I really need a phone to write. Like, I cannot physically use a piece of paper to get my ideas out. I really need a device for me when it comes to writing. So for me, my writing routine usually consists of me just taking my phone out and going to my Google Docs app, just writing down whatever I can, basically just word vomit, and let the poem just guide me into whatever direction it goes to. So for me, my writing routine starts off with me just rambling on with writing terrible prose and just really anything at all. So, I think that I kind of relate to a lot of more intense writers. For example, Charles Dickens, who I read to be very rigid in his writing routine, where he would write for hours on end, because for me, mine is usually letting the poem guide me instead of me guiding the poem. So I need a lot of time in order to flesh out an idea, because I'm usually using my feelings to guide how I think in order to write a poem. So, a good writing routine not only requires us to formulate a place where we can write in our own path, but it also should be able to find the right mindset for you to write what you want. For example, I think that my writing routine is so intensive that it fits my personality, which is that I usually let something guide me instead of me guiding it. So I need more time to grow. So that's why my writing routines are usually much

longer and are stretched for longer than others sometimes. So what are your writing routines you would like to share? Any writing routines of famous authors?

JUDY 09:11

So something you mentioned, Angie, before, is that you write even if you're not inspired. Like, you try to force yourself to write. And I know you compared it to Charles Dickens, but I also think that it's similar to Haruki Murakami in a sense, that if he's in novel mode, he would wake up early at 4 a.m. and he would write for five to six hours, which seems to be quite intensive and similar to your writing routine in a way. And also that brings up another question that I think we should address, is, do you guys think our writing routines differ based on whether you're a professional writer or an amateur or a hobbyist writer?

NABEEHA 09:52

Yeah, I would say it most definitely does differ, and I think the most fundamental aspect of it gets down toward the mindset. So I am a hobbyist writer. I mostly prefer to write poems in my side time or when I'm feeling really inspired or mostly overwhelmed, to deal with my emotions. But I think when it comes to professionals, they have this mind. They have this as their career. They depend on it as well, so it's their job. So they have to write it whether they're feeling inspired or not. But I think it also goes down more than that because I think these people realize that consistency is the key. So, Judy, as you mentioned, Murakami's routine. So I think when I was going through his routine, I was like, this is very unachievable for me personally. And that was because it not only put some strain on his writing abilities, but also he had a very strict physical routine as well. So I thought to myself that maybe I won't be able to replicate that. But I think it's a very good starting point, because human beings, we are creators of habits. When we develop a routine, we like to stick to it. And I think this is a very clever way of manipulating our own selves to get in the work zone, even if we don't want to. And writing is like a form of art. It differs a lot, essentially, from other forms of work in which you don't have to devote your mind, but you have to just work mechanically. So I think in order to do that, in order to specifically write, we have to develop our minds as well to get into that zone.

JUDY 11:18

Yeah. So I agree with everything you've mentioned, especially when you said that Haruki Murakami had a little bit physical, intensive writing routine as well. But I think that maybe the reason he would run 10 kilometers or 6 miles per day is because he was writing a book about what do I talk about, when I talk about running. And that brings up another question also that I think we can discuss, which is, do you guys think that writing routines differ based on what genre you're writing? Because I feel like definitely if someone is writing a murder mystery, part of their writing routine may include watching some thrillers or murder mysteries before writing a story to sort of get themselves into the mood and deciding what plot twists to include, any red herrings. But if you're, for example, writing a romance or a childhood friends to lovers story, you might be more interested in going on Pinterest and just seeing pictures of friends or lovers, you guys know what I mean? So does that differ in your writing routines as poets?

ANGIE 12:29

I think that it does, sort of, because I'm both a poet and a short story writer, but I've also delved into novel writing, but I stuck with poetry. But for me, I think that it does differ, because when I used to write novels, I would really take inspiration from the movies I've watched. For example, when I watched *La La Land*, I was so inspired by it, I started writing and planning different novel projects that I unfortunately never finished. But I did really think that watching movies with a lot of plot devices used and a lot of storylines that are thick and luscious really help with a novel writer's writing routine. But for me, when I get into poetry, I'm more inclined in a much smaller scape of writing, instead of watching a huge, well plotted idea, like a movie. So when I'm writing poetry, I'll usually just look up song lyrics or just read through poetry from any literary magazine. So, in order to get my creative juices running and inspired. So I think that it really depends on what sort of genre it is when it comes to formulating a right writing routine for you. So I think while I'm a writer, I also have different writing routines for the different genres I try and dabble into, showing how writing routines really do matter when it comes to what genre you're trying to delve into. So what do you think, Nabeeha, about what sort of writing genre you think would matter in a writing routine?

NABEEHA 13:59

Yeah, I definitely agree with everything you said. And to answer your question, I think genres really do matter. So I'm more of a poetess myself as well. I started a short story, and I wrote a few chapters, but then I just left it in the middle. And I think it's because novels and even short stories require much more dedication compared to poetry. And when I'm going into a poetry piece, I have an idea in mind, but when it actually comes to implementation and execution, I think it's so different from the original idea that I had. And when I think about novels, I don't think I could really go on with that because I would have to develop characters for that, I would have to develop the whole plot devices, the setting of the story. And I think changing it last minute won't really work for me. But for poetry, I think it does work because I tried my best to deliver the emotions that I'm feeling on paper and to actually get others to feel emotive about it as well. So when I'm writing, I try to get in the mindset of my audience. Like, if somebody would read this, would they like it or not. But I think when you would write a novel, and obviously, I do not have that much expertise on it, I think you would have to trust yourself a lot more, and you'd have to understand, that what you are writing, you should not be the biggest critic of it until it has gone through a lot of drafting and also reviewing. But I think before, you need to be open minded when you're writing. So what do you think, Judy?

JUDY 15:27

Yeah, so you mentioned something that I really liked, and I would like to add to it. When you said that when you're writing a novel, you're also incorporating, or you're writing about characters and you're delving deeper into the characters and who they are and what they're doing, because a novel is larger or bigger than just a poem or a short story. So I feel like most of the time, writers also incorporate things from their daily routines that have nothing to do with your own writing routine. Maybe, let's say I wake up early every morning and I have a cup of tea to just get started with my day. So maybe I add that same thing to my character. So I feel like, in general, even if it's not specific to our writing routines when you're writing a novel, maybe even a short story, you can incorporate things from your daily routine into your characters. And I think that also, just to bring up a famous author who I think also did something similar to that is Jane Austen. When her characters, you can see that they have experienced sewing or cooking or traditional activities based on their timeline. But also, Jane Austen used to organize the family breakfast at 9 a.m., she would play the piano. So you

could see that a lot of the things she incorporated into her stories are things that she experienced herself, and so add a lot more to her characters and their depth.

NABEEHA 16:54

Yeah, I definitely agree. And Jane Austen's novels, I would describe them as more slice of life as well. So I think it's easy to implement them. But again, I think the writing routines do differ based on genre, because if somebody's tackling a totally different type of genre, such as suspense, thriller, or mystery, then I think they would have a much harder time incorporating the aspects of their real life into their own writing. But I think ultimately, if the author has a good writing routine established for themselves, I don't think they would have that much of a problem. So one thing that I was really curious about was how do you write your pieces or whatever you're working on currently? So, in the digital age, I think most of us prefer to write in Google documents, or there's a trend of writing our half baked thoughts at 03:00 a.m. in the Notes App. But I think many of the famous authors that I've read about, they have discussed that they like to write through typewriters or on pen. So, like, physical. So they want to have a physical monument of their writing. So what do you guys prefer?

ANGIE 17:58

Well, for me, as I said, I really like using a computer or a phone or an iPad because it's much more convenient, but also because my handwriting is truly abominable. If I leave it out on paper, I don't think I can be able to read it after two days. So I really have no choice but to use a phone because I really just won't be able to read it if I just leave it out. So I think that technology really has saved me in ways that I cannot fathom. Besides that, I think that a lot of writers like writing by hand, because of the time they were in, because a lot of famous writers are usually born in the 20th century when technology really wasn't that popular. So they really had to go and use a traditional pen and paper to get their thoughts out, which really leads to a lot of inconveniences, I believe, because it's much harder to edit, copy and paste their words out. So I think it's much more convenient anyway nowadays to just write on your phone. What do you guys think?

JUDY: 19:09

I was just going to say, for me, I usually write on Microsoft Word, actually. I don't really use Google Documents, but the reason for that is because I've just found that if usually you find a specific font, a specific software, that you prefer, also size, structure of your novel, poem, or whatever you're writing. This can also add to your writing routine and make you feel a little bit more familiar with your project each day when you start to work on it.

NABEEHA 19:44

I was also thinking, on the topic of writing routines, do our methods of writing, like our writing methodologies affect our writing routines? Because I think it's much more convenient and also lenient in a way that we have easy accessibility to writing. So, for example, when we have our Notes App and we could access our phones at any time, I think it makes us very much slack in the sense that we think that we can write at any time. But authors in the past, especially in the Victorian era, when, like, English literature was initially establishing, I don't think they had that privilege, so that they had to have a specific writing routine they could abide by, because in other times, they won't be able to write. So I think that is also a huge contributing factor to why they had more stringent writing routines than we do in this age.

JUDY 20:32

You know, something really funny about this is I just read a post yesterday, I think, or the day before, about this writer who was actually in jail, and they wrote about how before they went to jail, they would barely write, but the minute that they were in a jail cell, they would trade their meals for paper so that they can write their stories. The thing is that when you're in jail, you have nothing but time and time and time and time. But you also don't have as much access to daily things that you would do if you weren't there. And I thought that that was very interesting, that during his time in jail, he managed to write a whole lot more than he did when he was outside.

ANGIE 21:13

Right. I think that's actually a really difficult place to write them, in prison, if you know what I'm saying. Because there's usually so much happening—there's a lot of routines they have to follow, and they don't really have much time left to write. So I think that it takes a lot more discipline to write in such an intense and stressful place where people are often mistreated

and disrespected because they committed a crime, so they might not be able to have enough time to write. So I think that being able to write so much in prison and to trade off so many luxuries just to have pen and paper is truly implausible. What do you guys think?

JUDY 21:54

I agree with you. I think it's quite interesting and very, very impressive, and I think that that could help us shift into the topic of writing versus wellness, on how certain writing routines can sometimes make us neglect our own health, whether physical or mental. So I want to hear your guys' thoughts about that.

NABEEHA 22:17

Yeah, that is such a great and important aspect of writing that you have come up with, Judy. So I personally think, as writers, it is very difficult to have a writing routine while also being present in our other aspects of life. So, for example, in many of the writers routines that I have personally read about, is that when they dedicate themselves to their writing projects, it's for days on end, they would go without any social activities or any contact with other people. So I think that is very unhealthy. And Murakami's routine, I think it's good in the sense that he goes out and has some physical activity. But also, I think there was a lack of social interaction present in his routine. So I think that was one of the disadvantages that were present in his routine, according to me. But I also think it's really important to manage our physical health and also our mental health side by side when we're focusing on a writing project, because I know that when we're into the writing zone and we're feeling so passionate, we can often forget. And like you said, Judy, we neglect our own health. So during those times, it is important to remember that we should get a healthy dose of interaction with other people. Maybe go on walks with our friends, or just meet up with our neighbors or our family members, just get some fresh air and have some breaks as well, because we might not realize it in the moment, but we don't know when we will get burnt out or when we will feel totally wary of writing. And it's also harmful for our writing as well, the writing momentum that we have established. So I think it's really important to take breaks and take care of ourselves.

JUDY 23:52

Yeah. And especially, I've seen people place on themselves really hard writing goals. Like, for example, I want to write 50,000 words in just a week, which is great to have a goal, obviously, but also, it needs to be a little bit realistic to your writing and daily routine to make sure that it's not going to affect you negatively, whether mentally or physically. So, Angie, what do you think about that?

ANGIE 24:19

Well, for me, personally, I think that writing routines really do affect us physically and mentally, for better and for worse. Because I remember sometimes when my writing routines get too intense that it comes towards disturbing and disrupting parts of my life that cannot be disrupted, or else it would affect my health quite adversely. For example, one time, I wrote a lot because I was writing a novel, and it really, really takes a lot of time from your life instead of writing poetry. So I was still studying at school, so it took a lot of my free time. So it really hurt me physically because my eyes were seriously taking a lot of damage from staring at a screen and also studying and staring at a textbook all the time. So I think that when it comes to writing routines, we really have to think of what genre we're writing, in order to determine what sort of writing routine works best for you in the current mental state and physical state and working, the lifestyle you're having. So I think that these writing routines really teach us to balance our work life and our lives better and more efficiently in order to be able to be productive while being healthy at the same time. So what do you think are other aspects that we consider when it comes to deciding to write a routine for ourselves?

JUDY 25:54

So actually, you mentioned how you were writing for so long because you're writing a novel. I had the exact same experience. I remember I once didn't sleep for like an entire day because I stayed up all night writing until sunrise, and then I slept for like 2 hours, and then I woke up again and continued writing. So it was, my sleeping schedule was a bit of a mess. And I remember at the end of the day, I just ended up passing out because of how I wasn't really conscious. Like, I was sleeping on myself constantly. And obviously it affected my sleep schedule. So I think that also sometimes you might be carried away. And I know it's like we have this hit of inspiration and writing is just coming to us. Like, we're able to write and write and write and write and write. And we know that this is very rare, so we want to hold on to it and we don't want to give up to go sleep or to go do something else that we must prioritize.

But also, it's very important for us to realize that our health comes first, because without our health, our writing doesn't even come. You guys know what I mean?

NABEEHA 27:02

Yeah. I just wanted to say what you have said is so relatable to me because my summer break is going on currently, and I have such a terrible sleep schedule because I feel the most productive at night. And it's so hard because even during the school days, what happens is when I have that burst of inspiration, I stay up until like three, four in the morning, and then I have only like two hours of sleep. And during the whole school day, I'm clagging off and I'm not paying proper attention. And so it affects my studies as well. So I think the writing versus wellness is such an important topic to discuss, and I take that into consideration, like what we should do to actually combat these negative effects of not having a writing routine. So what do you think are some steps that we should implement to better ourselves or to get a more moderate or a well balanced routine so that it does not affect our health negatively.

JUDY 27:54

I was just going to say it's definitely important to incorporate breaks because I know that I would sit on my chair, like I said, I used to write in my balcony, and I usually write from 10 p.m. up to 4 a.m. in the morning until sunrise, which is very damaging because that's the time where I'm supposed to be sleeping, but also because I've been working the entire day, whether I'm going to school or I'm doing anything else. And then I just sit on my chair for six, seven hours doing nothing but write, write, write, write, write. So it's very important to take breaks, to stand up, stretch, maybe go to the bathroom, drink water, make sure that you're not just sitting down and writing.

ANGIE 28:39

I think that in order to have a good work life and balance for your writing, you have to really realize what's your goal in writing. For example, if you're writing to express yourself, I think that you also should consider your health as well. Because writing is supposed to be an emotional release for you, if you're trying to express yourself. So, when you're writing, you should not only consider how well you're writing, which comes from working, but you should also consider your mental state you're supposed to be working on when outside your

writing space in order to nourish yourself in order to be able to write. So I think that also depends on your goal, because on the contrary, when you're trying to write for money or monetary success, like a lot of writers, you have to be able to be more intensive when you're writing because your life depends on it. So, I think that in order to develop a healthy, working work life balance while also prioritizing your writing and your life, you have to consider what's your goal in writing first. So I think that's some advice I could give. What are your thoughts?

NABEEHA 29:50

Yeah, I definitely agree with all of what you guys said. And my advice would be to just not overthink and also trust in ourselves, because I know when we're writing, we tend to be very harsh, and we want to for example, achieve a specific word quota or we want to write several pages or whatever it may be. Like, we have certain goals for ourselves. And while it is important to realize that we should fulfill our goals, it's more important to prioritize our own health. So when we think that we're borderline obsessing over our writing or we're going on about it for hours and hours on, and I think that's a good time to realize that, yeah, we should take a break right now. So, I think, granted, our work is pretty much very different from other people, for example, who do nine to fives or who have work in different fields. But it's also important to realize that we need to, as you said, like Angie and Judy, we need to have a healthy work life balance. And I think that the way of achieving that would be to not be overly critical of ourselves and to appreciate us for the goals we have fulfilled, but also do not criticize ourselves too harshly if we have not yet achieved something, because I think for the pursuit of that something, we grind ourselves so hard that we lose ourselves in the own process. So I think it's very important to be moderate in it and to think of ourselves from a more compassionate lens. I think that is very heavy. So do you guys want to go on to some other light hearted topic?

JUDY 31:18

Yeah, sure, okay. So I think we can discuss maybe weird writing habits that we've ever heard of, things people do that are kind of funny, but actually helps them in writing in some shape, way, or form.

NABEEHA 31:31

That's a great idea. Would you mind elaborating?

JUDY 31:35

Yeah. Okay. So, for example, I know people who, if they're trying to write a certain emotion and they're writing a piece, for example, if their main character is scared or is happy, then they would do something before they start writing that puts them in that circle of emotion. For example, if they're scared, they can watch a horror video clip. Or if they're happy, they'll try to watch something funny and laugh a little. You know what I mean? And I think that that's such a light hearted and very interesting writing habit to have that really does put you in the mood and actually does help your writing, in some shape, way, or form.

ANGIE 32:14

I totally agree with the weird writing habits you just listed. And I think that there are some different writing quirks that we all have, which sort of aid how we write. And I think it accommodates also to our different writing styles. For example, I think that a lot of poets who are much more nature oriented tend to look out the window or just focus more on the silent parts of nature and people when they write, instead of focusing on the louder parts of people, for example, prose writers or novels, who focus on the human nature. I think that this also attributes to how Emily Dickinson writes her poems, where she usually tends to look out her window, because that's what she did for the majority of her life when it comes to her writing, because her writings were super abstract and nature-oriented.

JUDY 33:06

If I can add. I also heard from one of my writer friends that when they have a really funny dream, or a very interesting dream when they're sleeping, what they usually do is they wake up and they write an entire scene based on that dream. They don't write specifically the dream itself, but it's more of a writing exercise that also helps them incorporate certain scenes into their writing, or maybe even just exercise before writing. And I think that's really funny as well. Nabeeha, do you have anything you want to add to?

NABEEHA 33:40

Yeah, I definitely agree with you guys. And I think it's also important to remember when we're immersed in writing, I think we become such a part of our writing itself. For example, if a novelist is writing something, and I think they put themselves in the shoes of their character. So, for example, if there's a battle scene going on, I think the writer's emotion would be very grim and gruesome as well. So I think having that light hearted breather is very important and crucial.

ANGIE 34:07

Mhm.

JUDY 34:07

Yeah. I can add another weird writing habit if you guys would like.

NABEEHA 34:12

Yeah, go ahead.

JUDY 34:14

Okay. So I know, I don't know if this is just me, but whenever I'm writing a scene or anything, once I'm done writing it, I'll act it out loud and read the dialogue. And if it's a fighting scene, like you mentioned, Nabeeha, literally get out of my chair and start fighting in the air just to make sure that the scene makes sense in my head. And definitely if someone who doesn't know what I'm doing looks at me, they'll definitely think I'm nuts. So...

NABEEHA 34:41

That is so interesting to hear. When I'm writing poetry, I try to read out the lines out loud, and I sometimes go to just my sister and I start blabbering whatever I've written. And for a few moments initially, she's so confused, like, what am I talking about? But then she eventually understands. I'm just practicing how the words roll off of my tongue. So I agree with you on that. I would like to see you fighting the air for a battle scene. That would be a funny sight to watch.

JUDY 35:10

Yeah. Maybe I can film a video for the audience, you know?

NABEEHA 35:15

Yeah, I think we'll all appreciate it.

JUDY 35:17

Yeah.

NABEEHA 35:19

Yeah. Do you have a weird writing habit, Angie, that you would like to share as well?

ANGIE 35:24

For me, when it comes to writing, weird writing habits, I'm not really sure. For me, when I read a lot—part of my writing routine is just reading—when I read a physical book, I tend to wrinkle the hell out of the pages. I tend to fidget when I read. So when I'm thinking, especially when I'm trying to digest really hard prose or poetry, I just have to fiddle with the pages or the cover or else it'll be very uncomfortable for me to just sit still and just digest everything. So I think that's a bit of an unhealthy habit because I could come close to vandalizing a book if I didn't buy it. So it's a habit that I'm trying to get over with, but I still can't get rid of at the moment. It's just a part of me, I think.

JUDY 36:15

Yeah. And I think that that actually adds a very, I don't know how to call it, like human aspect to your book. It shows that you've actually read it and you've spent time trying to understand the text, and it shows that you've basically enjoyed the book. And I think that that does add something that's unique to your own books, because you won't usually find books out there with the same wrinkles.

NABEEHA 36:40

Yeah, I agree. It's like a testament to your own reading habit and how you are associated with that book. So I think the deeper the wrinkles it means, the greater resonance you had with that

book. So I think that's beautiful in and of itself. And I also think our routines are very much tame compared to the other famous authors. For some guys in the olden eras, they used to chug 50 cups of coffee a day, and they used to take particular drugs in order to boost up their creativity and their mind's productivity. So I think how they did it, I don't know, and I do not want to comprehend that either, but I think we're pretty much tamer compared to them.

JUDY 37:18

Yeah.

ANGIE 37:20

All right, that was such a nice session with you guys. Talking about writing routines, I definitely learned a lot about the importance of having a healthy work life balance, now that I've talked to you. We had a very nice time!

NABEEHA 37:34

Yeah.

JUDY 37:34

And so did I.

NABEEHA 37:36

So, Angie, I definitely agree with what you said. It was so lovely getting to know your writing routines much more deeply. And I think I will definitely take the advice you have given me, and hopefully we all can establish a writing routine that does not affect our health. Judy, do you have any final thoughts?

JUDY 37:53

Yeah, I love the conversation that we had today. And thank you guys so much for listening. This episode couldn't have been possible without you guys. For more, follow us on Instagram at aster.lit. That is a-s-t-e-r dot l-i-t. And check out our website, asterlit.org, for transcripts

and more subs for our next issue, Translatability, which are open until July 28, 2024, so make sure to submit any of your pieces if you have one.

ALL 38:22

Bye!

[ending music]