



Annual Report

2024-25

WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The work of artists and storytellers could not be more important than right now. We have entered an era flooded with propaganda that is both as old as power itself and being delivered in new ways. It's an era filled with misinformation, rumor, and conspiratorial thinking that prioritizes spectacle over integrity, with algorithms building walls between us. It is an era where false narratives challenge our basic freedoms.

Our work at Literary Arts is to uplift truth tellers—be it a personal truth, or the facts of a subject or a time—and to do so for an intergenerational audience. Our work is to center voices from all walks of life here in Oregon and connect us all to some of the most inspiring artists, writers, and thinkers from around the world. We approach this work with sincerity, deference, joy, humor, and tenderness.

Forty years after our founding, we are still here to serve you. Because of the generosity, talent, and determination of so many in our community—see the hundreds of people who work, give, serve, partner, or support the organization on pages 16–20—we have reinvented Literary Arts, making it larger, more resilient, and capable of reaching more people. All the programs you love are still thriving, serving tens of thousands in concert halls, classrooms, on the airwaves, and also online. To house these programs, we have now completed a new permanent home for books, storytelling, and ideas, a place rooted in our city's history that is open seven days a week and includes a bookstore, cafe, classrooms, a recording studio and staff offices. Our historic building at 716 SE Grand Avenue is named The Susan Hammer Center after the transformative gift from the estate of Susan Hammer which kickstarted our \$22.5 million fundraising campaign, *The Campaign for Literary Arts*. Through the generosity of our community, I am proud to say that we own our building outright, with no debt whatsoever. This means the organization stands firmly here in Oregon, braced for the coming years and ready to offer shelter to the most important stories and ideas for readers and writers of all ages.

Thank you for the trust you have put in this organization, and for all the time, feedback, and resources you have given to our mission. We are here to continue to serve our community and adapt to the difficult times, in these moments of increased need. At Literary Arts, we are ready—and honored—to keep showing up for readers, writers, and dreamers across Oregon. We hope you'll continue to be part of this story.



Andrew Proctor at Portland Book Festival 2024.

ANDREW PROCTOR,
Executive Director | andrew@literary-arts.org

Our mission is to engage readers, support writers, and inspire the next generation with great literature.

LITERARY ARTS PROVIDES



44,000
arts experiences

to



29,500
unique individuals
across Oregon

and



260,000
radio listeners

23,000
readers engaged

From the concert hall to the classroom, world-renowned authors interacted with our communities throughout the season. Our 2024–25 season of events featured more than 150 authors at Portland Arts & Lectures, Portland Book Festival, and other events. We loved welcoming audiences in the concert hall, festival stages, our new headquarters and bookstore, and on the radio.



Joe Wilkins, Renée Watson, and Mitchell S. Jackson speak at Portland Book Festival 2024.

2,000
writers supported

We honored the work of published writers with Oregon Book Awards and provided financial support to emerging and established writers and publishers through fellowships. We featured local and national writers at our new bookstore and community space, and brought writers to towns across Oregon for readings and workshops. We also hired writers to teach a variety of classes, in-person and online.



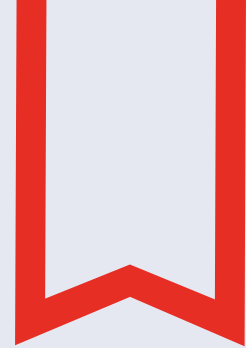
Jaclyn Moyer accepting the Sarah Winnemucca Award for Creative Nonfiction at the 2025 Oregon Book Awards.

4,500
youth inspired

We are excited to have reached so many students this year. Our Writers in the Schools program was in 12 schools, across classes such as Vocal Justice, Psychology, and Film Studies. Students read and performed their original writing in local bookstores, on festival stages, and in the Schnitzer Concert Hall. We had our busiest College Essay Exchange season yet, supporting 355 students with their personal statements.



The winning youth poets from Verselandia! 2025.



23,000 Readers Engaged

PORTLAND ARTS & LECTURES

Thousands of subscribers and hundreds of high school students gathered in the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall for our 40th anniversary year of presenting. The landmark season lineup featured Amy Tan, Abraham Verghese, Timothy Egan, Emily Wilson, and M. Gessen. In addition to the lectures, authors engaged with readers and writers of all ages in sessions with professional writers and meetings with public high school students.



Emily Wilson speaking at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.



2,274 annual subscribers • **650** students attended for free • **648** books provided for free • **1,089** attended author visits • **\$34,117** donated to Youth Programs during the subscription renewals period

THE ARCHIVE PROJECT



Our radio show and podcast *The Archive Project* broadcasts a wide range of Literary Arts programming, including recordings from Portland Arts & Lectures, Portland Book Festival, Everybody Reads, Verselandia!, and other events. Our eleventh season premiered in November 2024.



Listen every Sunday at 7:00 p.m. on OPB radio, and subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.

EVERYBODY READS



Javier Zamora on stage at Everybody Reads.

In partnership with Multnomah County Library and The Library Foundation, this year's Everybody Reads program featured Javier Zamora and his bestselling memoir *Solito*. The library distributed 8,200 free copies of *Solito*, more than 1,200 of them in Spanish. The eBook and audiobook copies were checked out at least 8,000 times. During his time in Portland, Zamora met with around 500 students at Roosevelt and McDaniel high schools.

“As a Nawat Pipil who advocates for Land Back everywhere, I’ve never felt so supported by an organization and an audience. The organizers took time to plan an event that was thoughtful and inclusive, and it was an honor to be a part of such a powerful community. I am so grateful to Literary Arts for all of their work, their allyship, and their commitment to building a better world.”

—Javier Zamora, author of *Solito*



“Portland Book Festival delivered a truly inspiring day of events, connecting storytellers of all types with a broad community of readers of all ages. This was a weekend of engaging conversations and wondrous realizations.”

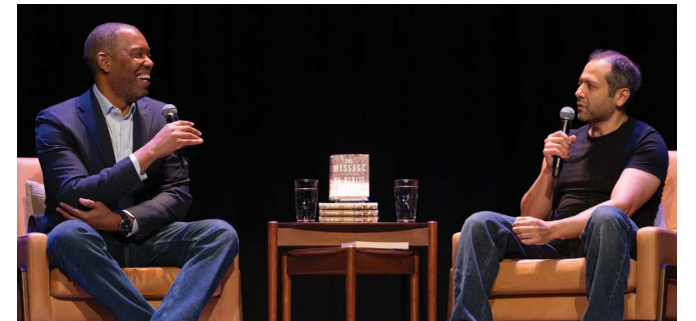
—Festival attendee

PORTLAND BOOK FESTIVAL

On Saturday, November 2, 2024, more than 6,000 book lovers of all ages flocked to Portland Art Museum and neighboring venues in downtown Portland to hear conversations about new books, from bestsellers to exciting debuts. Presenters included Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Richard Powers, award-winning musician and picture book author Ani DiFranco, horror writer extraordinaire Stephen Graham Jones, bestselling romance novelist Casey McQuiston, and Portland’s own Renée Watson. The day also featured food trucks, a book fair, and pop-up readings in Portland Art Museum galleries.



148 presenters • **250+** volunteers •
10 stages • **6** venues • **79** exhibitors



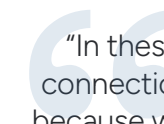
Ta-Nehisi Coates in conversation with Omar El Akkad at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Literary Arts is honored to have hosted Special Events with some of the most remarkable authors at work today. In fall 2024, we hosted groundbreaking journalist Connie Chung speaking on her memoir *Connie*, bestselling author and podcaster Malcolm Gladwell and his latest book *Revenge of the Tipping Point*, as well as Ta-Nehisi Coates with his first book of nonfiction in 10 years, *The Message*. Coates was in conversation with local author Omar El Akkad.



Audience members at Portland Book Festival 2024.



“In these times, we’re hungry for genuine connection. We’re also drawn to good books because we need substantive, soulful, moving stories. The Portland Book Festival connects readers to writers in a warm, inclusive atmosphere, year after year. It’s a first-rate experience, a symbol of goodness in the world.”

—Festival attendee

DELVE READERS SEMINARS

Delve participants gathered weekly to read and discuss works by Karl Marx, Ursula K. Le Guin, Marilynne Robinson, and other writers.

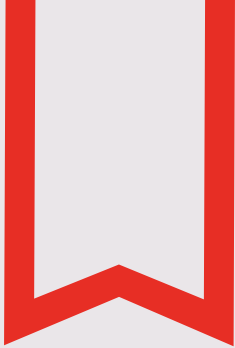


190 readers participated in Readers Seminars



COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

- Portland Book Festival lineup featured more than 50% BIPOC presenters (on-stage authors, moderators, and pop-up authors).
- Free and reduced-price tickets were offered for all programs, including through Arts for All and the Multnomah County Library’s Discovery Pass program. Youth tickets were free for Portland Book Festival, Everybody Reads, and Verselandia!.
- Javier Zamora’s sold-out Everybody Reads event was presented with live Spanish language captioning.



2,000 Writers Supported

OREGON BOOK AWARDS

The 2025 Oregon Book Awards finalists included 35 titles in seven categories, selected from 212 submissions by out-of-state judges. Omar El Akkad hosted the 38th annual Oregon Book Awards ceremony, held in-person on April 28, 2025, at Portland Center Stage at The Armory. The ceremony included the announcement of the Oregon Book Award winners and the presentation of the the Walt Morey Young Readers Literary Legacy Award to Jelani Memory, founder of A Kids Co., and the Stewart H. Holbrook Literary Legacy Award to Laura Moulton, founder of Street Books.



212 books submitted • **33** finalists recognized and celebrated • **443** books donated to **25** libraries across Oregon



charity e. yoro accepting the Stafford/Hall Award for Poetry at the Oregon Book Awards Ceremony.

OREGON BOOK AWARDS AUTHOR EVENTS

The Oregon Book Awards Author Tour visited Springfield, Corvallis, Grande Ronde, and Monmouth for readings and discussions. We also hosted two readings with finalists at the Literary Arts Bookstore at 716 SE Grand Ave.



8 authors visited **4** towns



2025 OREGON BOOK AWARD WINNERS

- Ken Kesey Award for Fiction:**
Kimberly King Parsons, *We Were the Universe* (Knopf/Penguin Random House)
- Stafford/Hall Award for Poetry:**
charity e. yoro, *ten-cent flower and other territories* (First Matter Press)
- Angus L. Bowmer Award for Drama:**
Brianna Barrett, *Still Harvey Still*
- Frances Fuller Victor Award for General Nonfiction:**
Rebecca Clarren, *The Cost of Free Land: Jews, Lakota, and an American Inheritance* (Viking Books/Penguin Random House)
- Sarah Winnemucca Award for Creative Nonfiction:**
Jaclyn Moyer, *On Gold Hill: A Personal History of Wheat, Farming, and Family, from Punjab to California* (Beacon Press)
- Leslie Bradshaw Award for Middle Grade and Young Adult Literature:**
Makiia Lucier, *Dragonfruit* (Clarion Books/HarperCollins Publsiherers)
- Eloise Jarvis McGraw Award for Children's Literature:**
Anne Broyles, *I'm Gonna Paint: Ralph Fasanella, Artist of the People* (Holiday House)

SPECIAL AWARDS

- The Stewart H. Holbrook Literary Legacy Award:**
Laura Moulton, Founder, Street Books
- Walt Morey Young Readers Award:**
Jelani Memory, Founder, A Kids Co.

"It is a true honor to receive this kind of recognition from Literary Arts. Holbrook was a legendary figure who helped put Oregon on the map with his journalism, teaching and affinity for all things 'lowbrow'. An award in his name offers a legacy to live up to, and I'm grateful for the opportunity."

—Laura Moulton, founder of Street Books and
2025 Stewart H. Holbrook Literary Legacy Award winner

OREGON LITERARY FELLOWSHIPS

We received 479 applications from writers and 24 applications from publishers for the 2025 fellowships. Recipients were selected by a panel of out-of-state judges who spent several months evaluating these applications, using literary excellence as the primary criterion. Four of these fellowships were funded by the Oregon Arts Commission.



2 writers awarded Oregon Literary Career fellowships of **\$10,000** each • **13** Oregon writers and **2** Oregon publishers awarded fellowships of **\$3,500** each, for a total of **\$72,500** fellowships awarded

EVENTS FOR WRITERS

We hosted our ongoing resident series featuring local and emerging writers: INCITE, One Page Wednesday, Slamlandia, and the BIPOC Reading Series. We also hosted the Bigfoot Poetry Slam.



1,561 total audience members attended **32** events with **13** community partners and **60** presenting artists



A poet performs at Slamlandia in the Literary Arts Bookstore.

WRITERS FORUMS

As part of their visit to Portland, several of our Arts & Lectures writers met with current and former fellowship recipients and book awards authors for one-hour Q&A sessions.



33 Oregon writers met with **4** visiting authors

WRITING CLASSES

Writers honed their craft and explored a variety of genres in our classes, including autofiction, memoir, novel writing, and poetry. Classes met in-person and online. Over half of our students were from outside Portland.



466 students participated in **49** classes

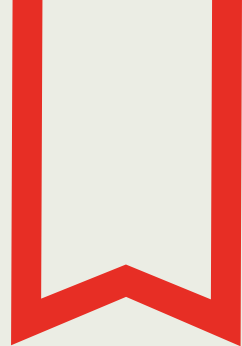


Daniel Nieh teaches a writing class in one of the new Literary Arts classroom spaces.



COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

- 47% of 2025 OBA judges identified as BIPOC.
- 23% of writing teachers identified as BIPOC.
- 28% of 2024 OLF judges identified as BIPOC.
- 48 writing class and readers seminars students received an access tuition scholarship.



4,500 Youth Inspired

WRITERS IN THE SCHOOLS RESIDENCIES (WITS)

We partnered with 21 educators at 12 public high schools throughout the year, serving students in Creative Writing, English, Psychology, Film, and a host of other subjects.

“As someone who enjoys writing in my personal time, getting a peek inside the mind of an accomplished writer was meaningful to me because it will help to shape my voice and ensure that I take into account a multitude of perspectives in my writing.”

—Benson High School student



878 students served in **41** classes • **20** professional writers hired • **56** students were published in the WITS anthology *Standing in the Same Land* • **11** more were published in the WITS chapbook *Steppingstone*



High school students exiting a school bus at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall for Javier Zamora's *Everybody Reads* lecture.

AUTHOR VISITS, EVERYBODY READS, AND STUDENTS TO THE SCHNITZ

Hundreds of students engaged with eight world-class authors in the concert hall and classrooms during our 40th anniversary season of events. 650 students attended lectures, and 1,089 students attended author visits. Youth Programs continued to partner with OPB's *Think Out Loud* to combine the live interviews with author visits, giving students the opportunity to participate in the radio program. We held *Think Out Loud* interviews at Franklin, Woodburn, McDaniel, Grant, and Lincoln high schools.



728 free books provided to students who attended lecture events and author visits

“Working with a professional writer made writing feel more real, and she showed [us] a lot of other professional writers who inspired me to want to be more focused on writing what I want to say.”

—Franklin High School WITS Student

VERSELANDIA! AND EAST SIDE SLAM

Verselandia! brought together poets from Portland and east Multnomah County high schools to compete for the title of Grand Slam Champion. Educators, friends, and family came out to the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall on Thursday, April 24, to hear the students perform. Poet Julia Gaskill hosted the event.



21 students from **12** schools performed to an audience of **1,055** for a top prize of **\$1,000**

The East Side Slam, which gives students from east Multnomah and Clackamas counties the chance to compete for the night's top prize of \$500, was held at Adrienne C. Nelson High School for an audience of educators, family, and friends. Seven poets from Parkrose, Nelson, and Gresham High Schools participated, and two finalists advanced to compete in Verselandia! Poet Stephen Meads hosted the evening.



Verselandia! 2025 champion Qiana Woods of Parkrose High School performs her winning poem at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

COLLEGE ESSAY EXCHANGE

The College Essay Exchange offered 18 in-person sessions. 355 students from nine Portland area high schools received help from 88 volunteers to write and edit their college application materials. This year, we began a new partnership with local nonprofit Word is Bond to help mentor young Black students aged 14 to 18.

WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

We offered three workshops at the 2025 Portland Book Festival for high school aged students: poetry, fiction, and spoken word poetry. Students from across Portland, east Multnomah County, and Woodburn read their published work in front of an audience of nearly 200 at the WITS anthology launch.

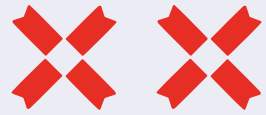


22 students attended our workshops • **14** students read at the WITS student anthology launch



COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

- Continued deepening our relationship with schools outside of Portland and with culturally specific institutions
- 45.4% of students served identify as BIPOC, and 61.3% qualify for free and reduced lunch.
- College Essay Exchange, Students to the Schnitz, and Verselandia! are completely free for students and educators.



Literary Arts: *Our Next Chapter*

In February 2025, Literary Arts announced the successful completion of *The Campaign for Literary Arts*, which raised over \$22.5 million in support of a new permanent headquarters and the future Ursula K. Le Guin Writers Residency.

Our new headquarters, located in Portland's Central Eastside Industrial District, opened in December 2024 and is a vibrant hub for the community, with a main floor independent bookstore, classrooms for workshops and seminars, a podcast studio, staff offices, flexible event space, and a cafe. The historic building is named The Susan Hammer Center after a transformative \$3 million gift from the Susan Hammer estate that allowed Literary Arts to purchase the building.



Left to right: Literary Arts board member Mo King, Literary Arts board chair Amy Donohue, Literary Arts executive director Andrew Proctor, State Representative Rob Nosse, City Commissioner Carmen Rubio, and Literary Arts managing director Hazel Valdez at the ribbon cutting ceremony for 716 SE Grand Ave.



Patrons perusing books at the Literary Arts Bookstore.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY



- 50% of the cost of the building construction and renovation project went to minority owned firms (35% BIPOC and 15% MWESB (minority, women-owned, and emerging small businesses).
- Twenty BIPOC leaders were paid a stipend to advise us on the project, from early visioning of the space to the furniture selected. The group included writers, educators, community leaders, and business owners.
- Removed all fossil fuels from the building and invested in an all-electric system.
- Added solar panels to the roof, a project made possible by Portland General Electric's Green Future Renewal Development Fund.
- Hired Relay Resources for our janitorial services, a company dedicated to creating meaningful work for people with disabilities.



The Literary Arts Bookstore filled with guests on opening day.

Our Next Chapter:

An Expression of Art

Literary Arts commissioned a poem from former Literary Arts Board member and Oregon Poet Laureate Anis Mojgani to commemorate the grand opening of our new home at 716 SE Grand Avenue in Portland's Central Eastside. Anis performed the poem in our new independent Bookstore as part of the grand opening celebration. His words welcomed in community and marked a transformative moment for the organization.



Anis Mojgani performing This boat we are in at the Literary Arts Bookstore.

This boat we are in

Anis Mojgani

after Joy Harjo and Rebecca Solnit

In the wilderness
may our joy proclaim to us
this imperfect map is what will bring us there
from here to a far away nearness
that is perhaps closer than it is far—
it is hard to know sometimes
the distance we are all carrying
the map there after all
is imperfect

the map there has been drawn
by a number of hands
some gone
some not yet arrived

(excerpt)



Scan to see video of Anis performing the full poem live at the Literary Arts Bookstore.



Our Next Chapter:

A Story of Gratitude



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

AMY DONOHUE

Chair, Literary Arts Board of Directors | Principal, Bora Architecture & Interiors

Amy Donohue is one of the most impactful community members to be involved at Literary Arts, and she has made a profound difference in our organization. In 1984, Bora Managing Partner, Pat Harrington, offered free office space to a fledgling organization that would become Literary Arts. Since that time, Bora has remained connected and involved with Literary Arts. Amy continues that tradition during her last ten years on the Board of Directors for the organization.

In addition to board service, Amy served as principal architect of the new home for Literary Arts. Her contributions to the successful renovation and opening of our headquarters at 716 SE Grand Avenue have been transformative. Her visionary capacity to reimagine a 1904 building as a headquarters for Literary Arts and a welcoming cultural hub has been inspiring.

Amy's leadership was integral to every phase of our capital project, initially touring more than 40 buildings with our team and investing an extraordinary amount of pro-bono hours over multiple years. She led the engagement of hundreds of people in creating the vision for our new headquarters, including an advisory group of community design advocates comprising of 14 intergenerational leaders from BIPOC communities who were involved for the duration for the project.

We are deeply grateful to Amy Donohue and to Bora Architecture & Interiors for their incredible contributions to Literary Arts and its mission. Her work continues to inspire us as we step forward into the organization's next chapter.

“From its start, the campaign has been a bright spot on the horizon, offering hope to our community and deepening our commitment to Portland. It has been my great honor and joy to be part of it.”

—Amy Donohue

THANK YOU

Thank you to the generous supporters who invested \$1,000 or more in *The Campaign for Literary Arts*. These transformative gifts totaled more than \$22.5 million, establishing Literary Arts’ new headquarters at 716 SE Grand Avenue. *The Campaign* also honors the work of Ursula K. Le Guin and will help launch an international writers residency program in the home where she spent much of her life.

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\$1,000,000+ RAISED AT BOOKMARK 2024

Thank you to the generous donors who raised more than \$1,000,000 at our annual Bookmark Gala on October 24, 2024!



Literary Arts supporters at Bookmark 2024.



Poet and Oregon Literary Fellowship recipient Armin Tolentino performs from stage.



Board member Ginnie Cooper makes a bid at Bookmark 2024.

SAVE THE DATE

BOOKMARK

LITERARY ARTS
FIND YOUR STORY HERE

THURSDAY
OCTOBER 23, 2025

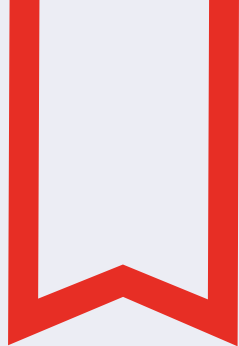
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2024-25

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\$1,000+

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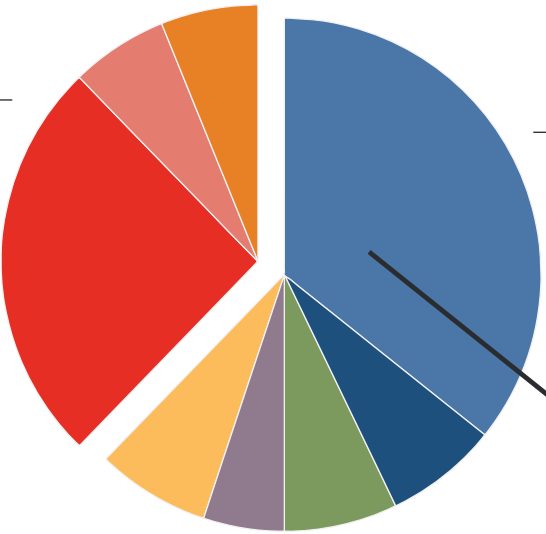
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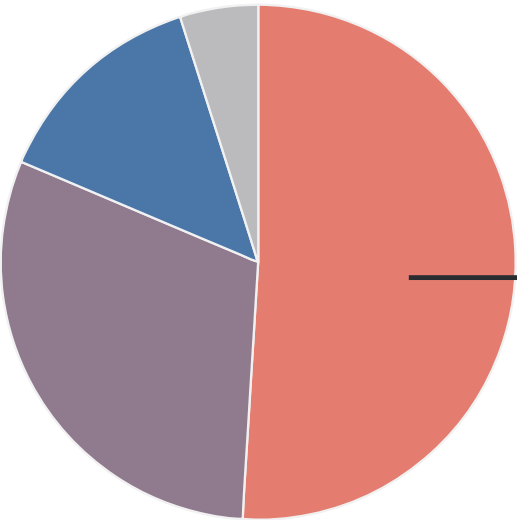
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The Road Ecologist Watches a Deer Chase a Coyote Off the Snoqualmie Wildlife Overpass

They might have a little history together. The road ecologist reads the WSDOT Tweet, watches the video over and over.

She squints at the night vision shapes of coyote and deer, bright and eyeless and bounding. She sides with the coyote, lone soul

just trying to navigate the dark. The road ecologist understands what it's like to be driven away, tail between legs, running.

The doe is alone, but who knows what small hearts quiver in the forest beyond? The coyote is alone, but who knows

what small mouths pant in the distant den? *I don't want to be alone*, the road ecologist thinks, refreshing the video again.

She can't sleep, listens to nothing in the empty night. *A little history together.* As if that could explain instinct

or fear. As if that could explain every severed longing, luminous bodies expanding the distance between them.