

Episode 4.12 Cool Poet Mom with Dina Del Bucchia

JANUARY 24, 2020

Hannah McGregor: [00:00:10](#)

Hi. I'm Hannah McGregor and this is Secret Feminist Agenda, and I have two things I want to start this episode with. One is a question and one is a plug? Sure. The question is in what ways are you gaslighting yourself right now? The context for that question is pretty simple. I am currently just barely surviving through a truly wild menstrual cycle that has been wreaking havoc on my mental health and I somehow keep forgetting that there's a perfectly good hormonal and biological reason for why I'm feeling low energy, depressed and uninspired and instead transforming those feelings into narratives about personal failure and worthlessness. And I keep having to remind myself like, no, something biological is happening right now, you will feel better next week. And as I was giving myself literally exactly that same talk for like the third time in the past 10 days, just this morning I thought, Oh yeah, this is a thing I do. I do have a real tendency to gaslight myself. It was kind of the whole inspiration for starting this podcast in the first place. And starting this podcast taught me the most important tool I have for when I start doing that, which is that I reach out to other feminists to get help processing whatever is going on. And lo and behold, feminists are remarkably good at helping me stop gaslighting myself. So I'm paying it forward in the form of this introduction and encouraging you to do your own pause, check in, ask in what way am I gaslighting myself right now and then reach out to somebody who can help you stop.

Part two of this introduction as promised is a plug. I think I've mentioned a few times that I had a exciting new podcast project on the horizon. Well, that podcast project is no longer on the horizon, it is now fully dawned. It is a new podcast called Bad Choices in which a friend and I are rewatching and discussing, at extensive length, the first season of The Good Place. Now it's a spoiler-y podcast. We spoil the sort of premise of the first season, which has a big reveal at the end of it. So you should go and watch the whole first season of The Good Place. It's only 13 episodes and the episodes are 22 minutes, so it will take you no time, but you should do it so you can listen to this podcast, which is great. It's up on all of the pod catchers and online badchoices.ca. We're also on Twitter, I don't run the Twitter account, my cohost and the podcast producer does. But you know what? It's a very entertaining Twitter account, so you should follow it too. It's bad_choices_pod. There's probably going to be merch at some point. Honestly, you should get extremely into this podcast like yesterday. Speaking of things you're going to get extremely into, it's time to meet Dina, who isn't a thing, she's a person, but you're gonna get really into her. Alright, sound effect.

Dina Del Bucchia is a writer cohost of the Can't Lit podcast, artistic director of the Real Vancouver Writers series and an otter

and dress enthusiast. That's not a lie. She was wearing a beautiful dress when we recorded this very conversation.

Hannah McGregor: Good. Well, this is recording.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:04:16](#) Okay wait, we're already starting?

Hannah McGregor: [00:04:18](#) I mean we can start whenever you want.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:04:19](#) What are we going to talk about?

Hannah McGregor: [00:04:20](#) What a great question.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:04:22](#) I love this. This is great already.

Hannah McGregor: [00:04:29](#) This is the energy I like to bring into this podcast. I'm like, what do you want? What are we gonna, what are we going to talk about?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:04:34](#) Whatever the fuck we want.

Hannah McGregor: [00:04:35](#) I mean, I feel like we should start by talking about poetry, or let's talk about poetry first.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:04:43](#) Okay.

Hannah McGregor: [00:04:43](#) How does that make you feel?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:04:44](#) It's fine.

Hannah McGregor: [00:04:45](#) Great.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:04:45](#) Great.

Hannah McGregor: [00:04:45](#) Great. So can you describe to me like what various jobs and roles you have in relation to the poetry community here in Vancouver?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:04:57](#) I'm not a regular poet mom. I'm a cool poet mom. I'm a poet.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:03](#) Step one.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:04](#) I write the poems.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:05](#) You write the poems.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:07](#) I write them.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:08](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:08](#) I look at them.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:09](#) You edit the poems.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:11](#) I edit the poems. Well, I used to edit the poems, but now Poetry Is Dead Magazine, RIP, we gotta plan a wake for that.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:19](#) How long did you?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:21](#) Many years. Many years. Yeah. I started in 2012 doing some work with Poetry Is Dead and then that continued until the termination of the magazine.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:34](#) So that's...

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:34](#) Eight years. Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:36](#) Amazing.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:37](#) Yeah. So editor as well obviously event producer, coordinator host.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:44](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:44](#) I also have a podcast where we sometimes talk to poets.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:48](#) Yup.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:48](#) I also, for those near and dear to me or, you know, people who maybe don't have access and are near and dear to me and know me will provide notes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:05:59](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:05:59](#) On your manuscript.

Hannah McGregor: [00:06:01](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:06:02](#) I'll cheerlead. Cheerleading is a big part, I think, of my role. I have only watched the first 20 minutes of Cheer because I started watching it too late in the day and I'm a sleepy little puppy and I was like, I really am into this, but I have to go to bed.

Hannah McGregor: [00:06:19](#) Okay.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:06:19](#) I really liked that coach and her like flat iron hair, heeled boots while coaching, just like a great aesthetic and I love her.

Hannah McGregor: [00:06:28](#) I really like how much the directors are interested in her boots. There's a lot of close ups of her boots.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:06:34](#) It's unbelievable. Even in the first 20 minutes. I was like, this is just a masterclass in boot shots. I think it was really good.

Hannah McGregor: [00:06:43](#) It is great. I mean, all I want to do now is talk about cheer, but you've only seen the first 20 minutes.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:06:48](#) I know. I'm excited to eventually talk about it with everyone.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:06:51](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:06:51](#) Instead of a book club. We should have a Cheer club, where everyone gets together and talks about Cheer. And then I guess the only other thing is I teach and sometimes I do teach poetry.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:01](#) Yeah, so that's literally everything somebody could do. It's all about a poem.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:05](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:05](#) That's all of them.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:06](#) I've never eaten a poem yet. Not against it. I want a sauce on it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:12](#) What's an acceptable poem sauce?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:13](#) This is a crossover with retail nightmares. Acceptable sauces.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:18](#) For poems.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:19](#) For poems.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:20](#) Parenthesis (for poems).

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:21](#) I guess it depends on the poem. Like it might be a barbecue sauce. It might be soy sauce.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:25](#) Yup.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:25](#) But also like a marinara.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:28](#) Yeah, I guess it's like wine pairings.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:29](#) You deep fry it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:30](#) You've got to come up with your sauce.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:30](#) Like a mozza stick and then you dip it. Oh and I've moderated events. Is that an additional skill?

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:37](#) Moderating is an additional skill. So where did it start? Did it start with writing the poems and then finding the community or did it start with the community and then the poems?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:46](#) It started with the pumps and then the community came around the poems.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:54](#) Okay.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:07:55](#) The community really rallied around the poems. Cause I was writing poems in undergrad, and grad school, well in high school.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:04](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:04](#) When I was in grade two.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:06](#) Weren't we all writing poems in high school?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:08](#) Yeah and the first reading I did was in second grade at like a parent teacher night.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:12](#) Do you remember the poem?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:13](#) Yeah, it was about a cat. A little kitten that was jumping over a tiny cup. I know. It's pretty cute.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:18](#) It's really cute. It's a really good poem.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:20](#) Yeah, and I drew a tiny drawing that went with the poem.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:24](#) Do you do drawings that go with your poems anymore?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:26](#) No, but I did draw some drawings today.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:29](#) What were they drawings of?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:30](#) I'm working on some characters. They're all ghosts. My favourite character is Lipstick Ghost and it's like ghost who wears lipstick.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:36](#) Great.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:38](#) And the ghosts all look very similar. They're like squiggly ghosts with big round eyes. And then one other thing,

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:45](#) What's the defining feature.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:45](#) They only have one other.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:47](#) Okay, so Lipstick Ghost.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:48](#) There's Eyebrows Ghost, has fake eyebrows. There's Bandanna Ghost.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:54](#) Where's Bandanna Ghost wearing their bandana?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:57](#) Like covering like the mouth area.

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:59](#) Oh like...

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:08:59](#) Like shy, like a cowboy. But it's because they're very shy.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:06](#) I think of a robber.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:09:06](#) Yeah. They're just really shy.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:08](#) Okay.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:09:08](#) And then Lil....this is so ridiculous.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:08](#) Don't stop now I need to know every ghost.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:09:15](#) I only have four so far. Lil Baby Blue Eyes. Not a baby, but thinks she's so great and has blue eyes. All the other ghosts have black guys.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:28](#) Thinks she's so great.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:09:30](#) So anyway, that's what I did this morning. Yeah when I was sick with pneumonia a couple months ago I bought some just like sketch paper and pencil crayons or coloured pencils. I have heard them called elsewhere in the world.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:43](#) Nope that's wrong, they're pencil crayons.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:09:44](#) Agreed, they're pencil crayons. They have to be at Laurentian brand. They're not. I wish they were.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:48](#) What're these fucking off-brand pencil crayons you're using?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:09:51](#) I know I know I know. Yeah, but I posted these on Instagram.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:54](#) Oh shit I missed them!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:09:55](#) For people to appreciate.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:58](#) Podcast over, gotta go sign into Instagram.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:10:02](#) So I'm like, will I do anything with these characters? Who knows?

Hannah McGregor: [00:10:04](#) Yeah, absolutely, you're going to write poems about them. This is your next collection of poetry.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:10:08](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:10:08](#) It's called Four Ghosts.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:10:09](#) I'm honestly not against this.

Hannah McGregor: [00:10:11](#) And it's stories about these four ghosts.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:10:11](#) Yes, it's, it seems fine.

Hannah McGregor: [00:10:14](#) I mean what I'm trying to get towards is that you, like I met you when I moved to Vancouver because you do everything and are at everything and I'm wondering how somebody goes from like writing a poem about a cat to doing the amount of community organizing that you do, because you are at the center of a lot of forms of literary community organizing in Vancouver.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:10:36](#) Well, I mean I will say that I, unlike many, some people that are in the literary community, am very outgoing, i'm very extroverted and I really love collaboration, I love working with people. For me, I gravitated towards that in a way that I think people don't always do. So like if I was offered an opportunity at those times, I was like, Oh, I'm taking this right away. Yeah. So in grad school, I was one of the hosts of a reading series. I went to UBC, you know, there's not much to say about the creative writing program there, it's pretty tame.

Hannah McGregor: [00:11:08](#) The UBC MFA. Not a topic of any conversation for anyone.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:11:12](#) No one's ever talking about it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:11:13](#) Hey listeners, I'll just drop some links in the show notes.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:11:20](#) So anyway, but I ended up being the host of the grad reading series and I was like, Oh this is great. Like I had a bit of a performance background from before, so I was like, Oh this is a nice mix. And I feel like that was a big draw for me. The idea that I could mix the parts of the literary world and the parts of sort of like theater or performance world that I liked without really engaging for the most part with the stuff I didn't like.

Hannah McGregor: [00:11:47](#) What's the stuff you don't like?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:11:48](#) I don't know. I remember thinking about like going into acting, going to a class one time and just being like, Oh, I don't know if I can be around these people. Not that they were bad, but it's just like an energy where I was like, and I have a lot of energy.

Hannah McGregor: [00:12:05](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:12:05](#) But it felt, and again they were young obviously and everyone you know wants to be successful at whatever they're doing. But I was like, I actually don't think I can do this.

Hannah McGregor: [00:12:13](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:12:13](#) Yeah. So I had to find a way, same thing with like stand up or any of these other more specific things. I feel sometimes like a fraud because I'm doing these things that are adjacent to these other things, but I'm not actually doing those things. So I'm not necessarily this practiced person at those other art forms.

Hannah McGregor: [00:12:34](#) But doesn't it also feel like in this whole world of creating art, there's like a small handful of roles or positions or identities that are disproportionately rewarded as being like the peak. And then all of these other forms of work that people are doing are like ignored or denigrated or made invisible. And like there's a really strong correlation between like the identifiable forms of doing comedy and being successful at doing comedy, which are like disproportionately straight white men who are doing that, who have that success. And so then it just becomes self fulfilling. When you look at like how much of a comedy scene in any given city is like made up of other people who are doing the work of like building community, making venues, curating shows, mentoring new comics, creating non-traditional kinds of events that people actually like going to. Like all of this other stuff.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:13:27](#) Yeah. And agree with that and I think that's what keeps me doing what I'm doing and also makes me feel less of those other negative shitty things.

Hannah McGregor: [00:13:35](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:13:36](#) Yeah. Cause I actually do really like that. Like yes, do I like going to a play? Yes. Do I like going to see stand up? Yes. But do I also like going to, yeah, alternative events that combine both of those things? Like, you know, something like Millennial Line where you have comedians and poets alongside each other and sometimes you know the comedians are getting really dark and the poets are being really funny or, and there are so many people that you know have broken ground in all sorts of ways around that, black indigenous people of color and queer people who are doing that work all the time anyway. So I hope people are paying more attention to what the fuck is going on and aren't just experiencing the same shit over and over and over again.

Hannah McGregor: [00:14:16](#) But that's the, it's so easy to experience this same shit over and over.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:14:18](#) It is. It really is.

Hannah McGregor: [00:14:19](#) Because that's the stuff that disproportionately rises to the top. And so unless you are, like, seeking out indie weird stuff, it's the stuff that you're going to see. It's the stuff you're going to read.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:14:31](#) Or unless, you know, a marketing team has decided it is like the hot shit for right now.

Hannah McGregor: [00:14:37](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:14:38](#) And then you get, you know, tokenism or exceptionalism with certain types of art.

Hannah McGregor: [00:14:45](#) Yup.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:14:45](#) Instead of, I dunno, that also exhausts me to just think about people doing that because people are working really hard.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:14:52](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:14:53](#) They've written something really great and then, you know, they might not get the care that they want to get because maybe someone's going to rush it up because they're like, this is so hot right now, so fucking hot should just like, push this out. And it's like,

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:03](#) There are so many things lately.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:03](#) What if people need more editing.

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:06](#) Yes!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:06](#) What if people have questions? What if people need help in the marketing of themselves because they don't have the tools, the skills, and they get, you know, they get shit on or they're getting asked inappropriate questions or like all that shit. I've said shit so many times. Shit. Fart. Butt. And that's wha you call poetry, everybody.

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:32](#) So yeah. So poetry just farts for your soul.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:35](#) Yes. It's a release.

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:37](#) Okay.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:38](#) But it also can be a tension.

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:39](#) Yep.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:40](#) And the tension in the line.

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:41](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:42](#) Is very important.

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:43](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:43](#) The tension between stances depending on how you write, you know? I mean the tension in your sphincter.

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:48](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:49](#) And then a release,

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:50](#) I mean, yeah, I guess.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:15:51](#) So anyway! Metaphors, farts, poems. That's the name of my new book about writing poems.

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:56](#) Metaphor. You need to do them with the little tildes in between like Bart does for like whatever that fucking like language idea, something, a metapho. Fart poem. Great. We've already come up with two new book ideas for you.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:16:11](#) I feel so great about this.

Hannah McGregor: [00:16:12](#) So we are crushing this.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:16:13](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:16:13](#) You are making me think of an article that I read recently by a friend of mine, Laura McGrath, who is like a sociologist of publishing, I think that's actually, it does like, she has like a lot of sort of data-driven like high level analysis of how the publishing industry actually works and she's particularly interested in the role of the agent. She has a book coming out that's about how basically a very small number of agents disproportionately represent all of the major award winning books in the US and,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:16:41](#) I'm sure it's not that different here.

Hannah McGregor: [00:16:42](#) Yeah, I was actually, I saw her present on a panel and I was arguing that American scholars tend to ignore Canada, but I think that we actually operate in almost the same way, but on such a small scale that all of those power relations become transparent.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:16:57](#) It's also so, I mean, it seems like a lot to me because we as a culture in this country, whatever we call this country, have to also pay attention to that. They don't have to pay attention to us.

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:10](#) No.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:17:11](#) It just adds more fucking work.

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:12](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:17:13](#) Like I don't like that. At all

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:15](#) Yeah. So privilege of being the center of an empire,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:17:18](#) Ignoring everything.

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:19](#) Yeah. It must be. But Laura wrote a really great piece for the LA Review of Books called *Compiling White* where she was analyzing, using some big datasets, analyzing comp titles and what comp titles were used for all of the sort of top bestselling books and narrows it down and is like one of the dead giveaways that publishing has not diversified as much as people like to claim is that even while more books by people of colour are getting published, the comp titles that are used to sell those books to publishers are still disproportionately like 98% books by white people.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:17:57](#) I'm in no way surprised.

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:58](#) Right? And so then it becomes this like the exceptionalism of the award winning book by a person of colour is undermined by the fact that their book is only going to be sold, the baseline of how the industry works is still on this idea that like literature at its heart is written by white people.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:18:15](#) It has to be in relation.

Hannah McGregor: [00:18:16](#) Always, always.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:18:18](#) I just, I also, I've talked about this a lot in many different formats, but like I think comp titles are fucking bullshit. And I absolutely hate it. I think it is a torturous task for authors to have to consider their work. Not that I think it's bad to consider your work in relation to other works, but to consider your work, not in relation to other works in a way where you are like paying tribute to things that inspired you or things that you learned from but things that are going to sell and it's awful. It's fucking awful. I hate comp titles. I hate the way they are used. It's just such a bad system.

Hannah McGregor: [00:18:56](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:18:56](#) And I don't want it, I can't do it ever again. And when you write a poem though, nobody cares. You have to go through the arduous garbage of making this comp title list but no one gives two fucks. No one is looking at that.

Hannah McGregor: [00:19:10](#) Let's talk about this because like maybe the second episode of Secret Feminist Agenda, second or third I had Adèle Barclay on and she argued that poetry is this like space for writing that operates primarily outside of capitalism and still so still has this like radical potential to it because like at the end of the day it's like there's already a bestseller poetry book, like comps titles, maybe you still have to go through the motions, but like nobody cares.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:19:36](#) Yeah. In some ways that is it. Like I actually think people that do care care a lot and they show care and I love that, and I think I love that about poetry, but I think it Adèle's right. I mean, Adèle's right about a ton of things to be,

Hannah McGregor: [00:19:48](#) Famously. Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:19:49](#) Adèle Barclay extremely talented and correct about stuff.

Hannah McGregor: [00:19:53](#) Extremely smart and incredibly right.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:19:54](#) Just wonderful.

Hannah McGregor: [00:19:54](#) Yeah, extremely talented. Beautiful, beautiful new book of poetry.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:19:59](#) Beautiful, amazing new book of poetry.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:02](#) Renaissance Normcore.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:20:02](#) Former editor of Poetry Is Dead.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:05](#) Amazing.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:20:05](#) The Coven issue. One of our best selling issues.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:07](#) Incredible.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:20:08](#) But I would agree. I mean, I think that that still exists, and I think that's a lot of times why primarily poetry is published by independent presses of varying sizes. And yes, bigger presses do publish, but they're always smaller imprints.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:22](#) Yeah, I mean, what are they up to? You know, why is, why is Penguin Random House still publishing poetry?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:20:26](#) Because they have M&S and M&S originally was like a more literary press. And so when they bought it out they kept that imprint. And I think, I mean I think M&S a great imprint to be honest. I think they publish.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:39](#) Yeah their poetry report edited by Dionne Brand.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:20:42](#) Yeah, like you have Dionne Brand. Like in this spring alone, I can't remember the titles, so I apologize to anyone who's I'm forgetting, but like, you know, two books that I'm super excited about. Canisia Lubrin new book and Nancy Lee's debut poetry collection.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:56](#) Incredible. Aren't you in a writing group together? Are you like super stoked and proud?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:21:01](#) Yeah, I'm extremely excited.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:02](#) Just wondering.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:21:03](#) Like I could not be more excited. So they're doing great work. But it is, it is a weird thing. You know, you have your Milk and Honey's and then you have literally everything else.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:13](#) Which is literally like the data supports that, right? And you look at like BookNet.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:21:16](#) If you look at, exactly.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:17](#) Like the sales of Milk and Honey and being a Rupi Kaur's second?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:21:23](#) First.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:23](#) First book.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:21:23](#) The second book is called The Sun and Her Flowers.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:25](#) Thank you. Very, very good. Like you know, has single handedly increased the sales of poetry in Canada by like, orders of magnitude.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:21:34](#) I'm really bad at remembering numbers. But yeah, I did a presentation a couple of years ago at the opening of the new Mount Royal library in Calgary and yeah, that was one of the slides I have was just literally like this is what happened to poetry because of this one person.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:50](#) Yeah. And when you look at those top selling poetry lists, now this has really stood out to me, that yeah, it's Rupi Kaur and everybody else, but there are some people who are sort of riding Rupi Kaur's, coattails just to same, they're not selling anywhere near as much as her, but they write in similar fashions.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:22:05](#) There's other Instagram poets. using that style.

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:08](#) Exactly. And they have functionally replaced the previous recurring top 10 best-selling poets in Canada who were all dead white men.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:22:19](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:20](#) Like Homer, like super dead and.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:22:23](#) Really old.

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:24](#) So it is this kind of, recently some publication declared Rupi Kaur the poet of the decade.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:22:31](#) Oh yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:31](#) Um, can't remember what publication.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:22:33](#) I forget also,

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:33](#) But a lot of my Twitter was.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:22:35](#) Time Magazine?

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:35](#) Was very mad. Maybe? It was probably a magazine or website.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:22:42](#) But it could have been a website.

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:43](#) Or a website that used to be a magazine, but it's just a website now.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:22:45](#) Oh, publishing. It's hilarious.

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:48](#) It really is. And a lot of people were really upset. But like I get it, she has been the poet who has changed those kinds of like status quo, like chances are if you're already a reader of poetry, you're not reading Rupi Kaur. But she has replaced the like who people who are not readers of poetry, what they buy so that they are now buying the work of a young woman of color.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:23:11](#) Oh, for sure.

Hannah McGregor: [00:23:11](#) Not, like fucking dead Irish dudes.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:23:14](#) Yeah. And it's also like, yes, we all have our favourites and if you're reading poetry already and you're involved in poetry communities, you just have more knowledge of who's out there and who's writing and you've read more. It's kind of how I feel about when everyone gets really excited about something that's good, like a TV show. And it's like, yeah, Fleabag is great, but like it's still a small insular community that loves it even though it's getting celebrated. Like my parents aren't watching that. You know what I mean? Like they're not watching Amazon Prime. The things that are still popular are still things that are on regular network television. With regular old commercials.

Hannah McGregor: [00:23:52](#) Fuckin' Big Bang Theory.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:23:53](#) Yeah! Even though it's not on anymore. But yes, exactly that type of show, like.

Hannah McGregor: [00:23:56](#) What is the version of that now?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:23:57](#) Like a, yeah, like a multicam fucking sitcom, still the popular thing. I don't know how many versions of Law and Order are still on, but those still popular. They are on regular cable like, and people pay for their cable package. They're not streaming. And that's just a cultural assessment across the board.

Hannah McGregor: [00:24:15](#) Yes!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:24:15](#) Like, yeah. People are getting excited, you know that I see in my magically curated Twitter feed, they're like, no, we love The Farewell. We love this, we love that. And it's like, yeah, but everybody else is just like going to watch, I don't know, some action superhero thing.

Hannah McGregor: [00:24:27](#) They're going to see Marvel movies! They're going to see something owned by Disney.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:24:32](#) Yeah. Like, that's what's happening. So if you're into that, you're not a nerd because you are now the majority. So no fucking come for me. You are the popular culture.

Hannah McGregor: [00:24:41](#) I don't think anybody who listens to this is going to...

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:24:42](#) People...I know they're not going to, but like I still cannot with that attitude. I'm like okay listen, like incels or whatever. Like it's not because you like a popular thing that people don't want to fuck you. It's cause you're disgusting inside and out. You're horrible person.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:24:59](#) Mostly inside.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:24:59](#) Oh mostly inside.

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:00](#) People who are disgusting on the outside deserve love.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:25:00](#) You can see it because you're just scowling constantly. Like that's your entire face is just like, why doesn't? Why don't these people want to get down on my dick and it's like, well I dunno what if you didn't just make your face look like a gremlin all the fucking time? Cause you're so mad that no one's getting down on that dick. Is this what you wanted for the pocket?

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:27](#) Yup.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:25:29](#) This is your first podcast of the decade.

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:32](#) For sure. For sure. This is how we want it. This is the energy we need to bring into the 20s.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:25:40](#) I was talking to our friend Megan earlier today and I said, I can't wait to be the first guest on your show who doesn't say the word praxis, but then I just said it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:49](#) Haha this podcast is a trap, it tricks you into saying the word praxis.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:25:53](#) Yeah but only for a joke.

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:56](#) Jokes are still real.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:25:57](#) They are very real.

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:58](#) So real.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:25:59](#) Language, real.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:01](#) You've already talked about like tokenism. We talked about like structural inequities in the publishing industry so nice try.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:26:08](#) It's too late.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:09](#) I conned you, I fed you my vegan cheese and I tricked you into saying smart words.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:26:13](#) I ate all that chocolate.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:14](#) Yeah. And you want more?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:26:15](#) I'm probably gonna eat more.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:15](#) Yeah. Good. What were we talking about?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:26:19](#) Who knows?

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:19](#) Poetry, um, in the decade. Oh yeah, monocultures, which is such an interesting experience that like I feel like we talk a lot about the sort of loss of monoculture and like we don't have a shared culture anymore and we don't have, but like there is actually still mainstream and majority cultures. It's just really possible now to like not necessarily engage in them, like they aren't mainstream to the degree that they used to be of like totalizing things. But then you end up with these like experiences where you, I don't know, where everybody you know is making jokes about how cats can have little a salami. And then I like went to Edmonton over the

holidays and referred to somebody being able to have little a something as a treat and everybody just stared at me blankly because my friends in Edmonton don't use Twitter.

- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:27:11](#) See this, but the thing is I think like subcultures is what we used to call this, but I don't think anyone is using that term anymore. And I mean that in terms of like the culture that we're a part of. Like, it's almost like when you're in high school and it's like we were in a corner that they called the greasy skin corner and that's where we hung out.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:27:31](#) Yeah. Wow.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:27:31](#) But then like jocks had their own area, blah blah, blah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:27:34](#) The jocks. The preps. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I've watched the first five minutes of a number of teen movies.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:27:39](#) Same. I only watch Heathers every couple of months just to reacquaint myself with
- Hannah McGregor: [00:27:46](#) That term.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:27:46](#) Perfection.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:27:47](#) Okay.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:27:47](#) But thinking about that part of it too, like that there actually are and always have been these subcultures, but I think partially because of television being in people's homes and cable being this very small, you know, there was only so many things you could watch, there was more shared culture if you were of a certain class and you could afford a television and then that started to change, you know, as we moved into the 90s and it like used to be the big three, then Fox got in there and then other people and other people and other people. Yes. I am a person who teaches a class on comedy writing and I think a lot about how television culture has changed. So now people, I don't know, I'm just making random statements, but I do think there are people,
- Hannah McGregor: [00:28:29](#) That's what the podcast is for.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:28:29](#) I think people are going back more towards these smaller subcultures.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:28:34](#) But you're right, they don't feel like subcultures.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:28:36](#) They don't! It's weird!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:28:36](#) There's columns of cultures.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:28:37](#) I don't know what to call it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:28:39](#) And I think part of it is because like when you participated in a subculture, you were always aware that you were doing so sort of as a response to the monoculture. But now it can feel like you can live in the subculture and not even be responding to or aware of what's happening in mainstream culture. Like it's these, you know, these deep niche ways that you can sort of engage with culture and just be like, yeah, like I don't know any of these mainstream things because I only watch all of this indie shit.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:11](#) Yeah. And like book culture is very similar because there's still the big names selling tons of books. You know, you've still got Nora Roberts and Danielle Steele,

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:20](#) John Grisham!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:21](#) John Grisham, Ian Rankin, like these bigger names. James Patterson. Is he alive or is someone writing his books for him? I don't even know.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:28](#) He is a robot. He's a well programmed algorithm.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:32](#) Tom Clancy, I don't know.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:33](#) Yeah,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:34](#) Is he alive?

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:34](#) I think Tom Clancy's dead?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:36](#) He might be.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:36](#) James Patterson's alive though, but he coauthors all of his books which is that he comes up with a plot and then somebody else writes it.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:43](#) And he also has all those video games.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:45](#) Oh yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:45](#) So there are still like.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:47](#) What a dream, a dream to be James Patterson...

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:48](#) Within book culture that we talk about so often in the circle I think, Hannah and I are friends just so you know, and the people that we know,

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:56](#) Oh no, my journalistic integrity.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:29:58](#) Oh no, I'm just, you know, giving some context, but like the conversations we're having are very different from the conversations people might be having who are just readers or people who were like, I just wanna you know, I go into a bookstore and I buy like the hot thing that's sitting there and like literary fiction is still not the hottest seller. It's always going to be these bigger name authors writing these books that they've developed a formula for. Stephen King, whatever it is, and they're still at the top of the heap of literary work, but they're also getting the least amount of critical work around them. Right? And that also is fascinating to me.

Hannah McGregor: [00:30:37](#) 100%.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:30:37](#) Like these people make the most money.

Hannah McGregor: [00:30:39](#) Like, we don't write reviews about them.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:30:40](#) No. So then you, you dropped down like a tier, like I'm talking a tier monetary tier to the next level and like then those people are getting the majority of that type of critical attention. Then you drop down more and then everyone else is kind of like waiting for the scraps of like what's available left of critical discourse for literature because we've decimated, you know, as we talked about publications, whatever they happen to be. That's why we have podcasts.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:09](#) So that somebody will still talk about books somewhere.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:31:12](#) Ding. Ding. Ding.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:13](#) I think about that. When I see like, I mean commercial fiction exists in a different world,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:31:17](#) Way different.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:18](#) In which review culture is not part of how it functions or part of the logic of how it is legitimized.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:31:23](#) And it doesn't because it doesn't need to be there.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:24](#) Because it's got, it's celebrity.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:31:26](#) Yes. It's got celebrity. It's got a name. The name itself is the marketing.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:30](#) Yeah. And then there's like very recently,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:31:34](#) Oh also those are the types of books that like in People Magazine, you know what I mean? Like in a glossy.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:39](#) No, they don't!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:31:39](#) Yes they do.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:40](#) They do not talk about the new James Patterson book,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:31:43](#) They don't talk about it but they'll show a picture of James Patterson. Oh yeah, they'll still do those, like there'll be a piece.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:48](#) Oh like a full page.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:31:49](#) Yeah. And it's like James Patterson's new boat or whatever it is. I don't know. But then it will be like also he just recently wrote this book, so it's almost like a profile, but it's not.

Hannah McGregor: [00:31:58](#) The shit that I feel like they talk about in glossy magazines is this kind of.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:32:02](#) We're finally talking about the things that I love the most. Literature and glossy magazines.

Hannah McGregor: [00:32:05](#) Like literary, not like literary commercial fiction like that mid world, the sort of like book clubby stuff.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:32:13](#) Yeah, book clubby stuff, quote unquote chiclit quote unquote like like a dishier memoir or even a hard hitting memoir but one that's like steeped in trauma.

Hannah McGregor: [00:32:24](#) Yup.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:32:25](#) Like Tara Westover's Educated, something like that. Those types of books for sure in there. But yeah, I still think publicists are saying, listen, you want to take a couple pictures of Stephen King in front of like this old house and they'll be like, yes. And then they're going to put that in a...

Hannah McGregor: [00:32:40](#) And you quote him saying a couple of kink of racist things and there we go, we've got a feature.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:32:43](#) Bingo bango. It is done.

Hannah McGregor: [00:32:46](#) That middle world like sometimes I read commercial fiction, mostly romance and I read a lot of like the sort of extreme end of literary fiction, like independently published literary fiction that's like never make it in a glossy magazine.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:33:03](#) Did you write a weird book that's like somewhat experimental? I'm drinking that down. I'm chugging it, give it to me.

Hannah McGregor: [00:33:11](#) Me. I'm one of your 10 readers.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:33:13](#) Give it to me.

Hannah McGregor: [00:33:13](#) But that middle world of sort of like quasi-literary, quasi-commercial fiction, the stuff that is like on the front table at Chapters Indigo, the shit that is like book clubs, I am never reading those books.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:33:29](#) And sometimes there's crossover there with those types of books. Like something will push forward and then I'll be a little more interested like Crazy Rich Asians.

Hannah McGregor: [00:33:36](#) Yes.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:33:36](#) Will do a little bit of crossover. Most of those books that we're talking about are, you know, they're written by women between like 25 and 55 and they all know how to do their hair in that like Real Housewives wave and that's how they look in their author photo. Tell me I'm fucking wrong.

Hannah McGregor: [00:33:56](#) Real Housewives way, that's such a mood.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:33:57](#) I don't know what else to call it. That's who does it every day.

Hannah McGregor: [00:34:02](#) Yup. Absolutely. I don't know how they do it but.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:34:04](#) Meet Sam. I don't know. It's fine. My hair is just going to be straight and it's fine.

Hannah McGregor: [00:34:08](#) And once in a while something from like quote unquote 'my world' will pop through and I'll be at an airport and they'll have a copy of like Alicia Elliot's A Mind Spread Out on the Ground and I'm like it's my friend! Even though, I mean Alicia, past guest of the podcast, friend's probably a stretch but like it feels like, Oh my world crossed over into this world. But for the most part like I tried in like five airports to find a copy of like Cherie Dimaline's Empire of Wild.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:34:36](#) That's weird.

Hannah McGregor: [00:34:36](#) Right?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:34:37](#) That to me is a total airport book.

Hannah McGregor: [00:34:39](#) A total airport book!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:34:40](#) Not like that that's a bad designation but it's the type of book that you can, it's exciting, it's fast paced. It's a kind of book that you can, and it's,

Hannah McGregor: [00:34:46](#) And it's a hardcover new fiction release from Penguin Random House.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:34:51](#) It totally should be there.

Hannah McGregor: [00:34:51](#) But it's not there. What's there is like all of the shit that I've like never heard of. I'm like what? How does the I have some followup research questions about how books get in airports. I don't know what that process is.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:35:02](#) I'm assuming it's all co-op maybe?

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:05](#) I think it, I bet it has something to do with a weird distributor though. I bet there's like a like special deal one particular distributor has,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:35:13](#) That's possible.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:14](#) And they've got all kinds of weird conditions.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:35:17](#) I don't know, it really makes me feel like, and again I could be totally wrong that it's co-op that those paid for because it's so little shelf space that's taken up in those spaces.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:25](#) And it's consistent from airport to airport, which means that you have to have massive print runs.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:35:29](#) And that's a thing, so that's why it's always the bigger publishers, they're always in there. Penguin Random House, Harper Collins, maybe you get some Simon & Schuster like that's who's there. Oh also I'm a bookseller so this is why I also have extra information about some of these other things.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:41](#) Yeah, so you have ended up like you work on all of these parts of the industry and so like you know how it works, you have a sense of all of the moving parts.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:35:51](#) It's also very humbling. I feel like it makes me do things less hard than some other people sometimes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:56](#) Oh yeah. Cause you know how? You know what's going on.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:35:57](#) Yeah. And it's also just like, I also know that it's not, I mean, I guess it's about me, but it's not about me.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:04](#) Yeah. It's not personal, it couldn't possibly be.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:36:07](#) It's not. And you know, like I have all sorts of advantages. I'm a cis white woman with super shiny hair, like.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:14](#) Your hair is so shiny.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:36:15](#) I've got lots of privileges.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:17](#) Shiny hair for one. I do need you to check your shiny hair privilege.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:36:20](#) I'm going to, I'm checking it right now.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:22](#) No, you aren't, what a liar.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:36:23](#) I'm definitely not.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:24](#) You just flipped your hair.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:36:27](#) Al looked at it and he was like, oh, I do like that.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:31](#) Oh you do? I didn't realise you were there. I literally was sitting here going, what is that weird wheezy noise?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:36:36](#) No it's your cat.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:36](#) It's because Al sitting right beside me. Wheezing. Yes. No, that is so key, I think to like surviving in whatever industry you're trying to survive in.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:36:46](#) Of course, it doesn't work all the time doesn't mean that I don't feel bad. But it definitely in some ways helps me understand the ways that I could truly, write, in my opinion the best book, and I can get good reviews and my book's still not going to, I've never been on a bestseller list aside from one week on a bestseller list at McNally Robinson in Winnipeg for the one week I was there because I did a book launch there. So like X amount of people bought my book.

Hannah McGregor: [00:37:10](#) And then you were a poetry bestseller.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:37:12](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:37:12](#) Fuck yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:37:13](#) But like you know it's not going to happen. Same thing with awards culture, you know, I know that I'm not writing books that are specifically the type of books that people are looking for in the traditional way.

Hannah McGregor: [00:37:24](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:37:24](#) And I say traditional in like the way people that are old school think about it and also the way contemporary people who are adjudicating those prizes are making of it, and,

- Hannah McGregor: [00:37:32](#) But we know that prize culture does things like,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:37:35](#) Oh yeah,
- Hannah McGregor: [00:37:36](#) Like privilege and support, conservative notions of literary value, disproportionately pay attention to the previous celebrity of the author even if that's explicitly not what they're supposed to be doing. Like they, there are all of these ways that awards culture just reproduces the status quo and continues to reward stuff that looks the same.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:37:56](#) And even when, you know, awards are trying to change the way their juries work it's complicated and problematic no matter how it shakes down.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:38:06](#) Yup. Well and because there's all of this scarcity attached to all of these things, attached to bestseller lists and awards and scarcity is like a way that we make literary or book culture navigable cause like there's just so many books. Like how do I decide what I'm going to read? Like I read books written by my friends and then also stuff my friends recommended.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:38:28](#) Yes.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:38:28](#) And then also whatever The Paper Hound or Massy Books or Iron Dog Books happens have on their front tables, cause I am friends the people who own those stores. And so trust what they put out, if I go to another city and I go to a bookstore in that city, I'm always going to look at what they have chosen to put on displays. So I might choose like, okay I'm going to read a specific genre. Like if I want poetry or I want fiction or I want an essay collection or whatever it is, I'll look to that. Which I also like, but I think, yeah, the discoverability of books has changed a lot.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:38:56](#) It really has, which really, I think, drives home whenever I read some report about like where is Canadian book publishing going and what are we going to do about the fact that like Canadians aren't seeking out Canadian books as much as they used to and like there's a report that came out last year called More Canada that was like, here's how we're going to get people to read more Canadian books. And right at the very beginning they're like, well, people will only buy Canadian books out of a sense of like the cultural mission of publishing, and so we can't rely on any pieces of the industry that don't have a cultural mission. So we're not going to talk about Amazon and we're not going to talk about Indigo. And I was like, sorry, you're going to talk about how to get people to read more books and you're not going to talk about the two mechanisms through which almost everybody finds books. Like,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:39:41](#) How great.

Hannah McGregor: [00:39:42](#) Good, good luck. Like they have a section in there where they're like, campus bookstores need to carry more books. And I was like, that is not how anything's gonna change, God.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:39:52](#) What the fuck.

Hannah McGregor: [00:39:55](#) It's wild.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:39:55](#) Also so many campus bookstores unsurprisingly because of Amazon don't exist anymore.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:02](#) Exactly!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:02](#) Get the fuck out. I don't care for this.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:05](#) It is not a great report.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:06](#) It sounds bad.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:06](#) Sorry. Sorry. Sorry folks. Sorry if anybody wrote that report is listening.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:10](#) Sounds bad. I don't like it. Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:14](#) But, uhh. What?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:18](#) Exactly.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:19](#) Yup. Publishing. Scarcity. Yeah. Scarcity. So we're all navigating this, right? It's just that we happen to be like kind of part of this world. I mean, you are actually part of this world and then I'm just like on the edge being like, hey guys I'm here too!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:31](#) You're part of it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:32](#) I'm here. I mean I show up at events.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:35](#) You edited an anthology.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:36](#) Fuck, I did.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:37](#) You're currently writing a book. It's still,

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:39](#) But that's going to be a university type of book.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:41](#) But that's still going to be, in my opinion, that's going to be a crossover academic.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:45](#) Well we'll see, in my opinion.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:47](#) It definitely says praxis every second word.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:50](#) Yeah of course it fucking does.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:50](#) It's all the words. Every word has an X in it.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:52](#) It's called 'Fucking praxis'.

Hannah McGregor: [00:40:54](#) Fucking Praxis Am I Right, Bitches? Is what it's called.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:40:57](#) I hope it is. Change the title immediately.

Hannah McGregor: [00:41:00](#) That would actually kind of work with what the book's about.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:41:02](#) That could be a subtitle?

Hannah McGregor: [00:41:02](#) Yeah. Hey!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:41:03](#) That's not for you.

Hannah McGregor: [00:41:04](#) Bad praxis!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:41:06](#) That really was.

Hannah McGregor: [00:41:08](#) The worst praxis I've ever seen. So does the feeling of like being not just somebody who is creating art, but also somebody who like participates in the mechanisms of culture. I'm wondering if that makes the sort of generalized horrors of being an artist, like does it make things feel more sustainable? Because you're doing these other pieces of it and you're like,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:41:31](#) Not at all.

Hannah McGregor: [00:41:32](#) Organising, no, okay.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:41:34](#) No, and I think it's because on a personal level it's very distractive.

Hannah McGregor: [00:41:39](#) Oh, tell me more.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:41:40](#) Well, I think it's just because I also have a regular job and so,

Hannah McGregor: [00:41:45](#) Several!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:41:45](#) Yeah. And so just like the level of capitalism I am participating in is also just exhausting. And so I think that's why, like if there were better ways to fund, sustain, pay people in any of those areas, that would really help overall and then I would think I would feel a little bit more confident or hopeful. It's not that I don't feel hopeful. I feel hopeful about a lot of things. But I don't feel hopeful that on

that level like that financially people will be able to sustain what they're doing. Whatever their practices, whether they're part of the backend of publishing, whether they're writers, whether they're people that are running reading series, whatever it happens to be. That is stressful.

- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:28](#) Yeah, it does feel a lot. Like right now the sort of middle of all of these industries is falling out and what we're getting is like either you've got to make it in the mainstream or everything you're going to be doing is like pro bono out of the back of your truck while you're also working three day jobs and that whole middle of like,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:42:47](#) You're like delivering food with the truck also.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:49](#) Yeah, exactly. Like you are,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:42:50](#) You've got your Lyft driver with the truck. You're also like.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:54](#) With the food,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:42:55](#) Delivering, two by fours, like who knows what you're doing,
- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:59](#) Two by fours! You know, Skip the Dishes, kind of scenario.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:43:00](#) No, all of those happening at the same time. You've got two by fours in the, full on in the back of the truck.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:05](#) You're just ready to build a fence.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:43:07](#) And then in the cab you've got.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:09](#) You're part of a new app called Fencer.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:43:10](#) Yeah!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:11](#) Where if somebody needs a fence you just drop by.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:43:13](#) It's so you can deliver the wood for people to build their laneway houses that they can then charge a bunch of money for people to live in.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:20](#) And charge you so much to live in that like fucking electricity-less squat that you have to work 17 additional jobs. Cool.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:43:26](#) That's the spirit!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:27](#) Capitalism is the best.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:43:30](#) It's really helping everyone.

Hannah McGregor: [00:43:31](#) It's good. Um, this is what, like whenever I have a conversation with the chair of my department about like what do we do about publishing, how do we make it more sustainable? The conversation always ends up coming back to guaranteed universal income is literally the only solution we can come up with to make the creation of art viable in the context of late capitalism. Like everything about capitalism is the enemy of art and it is increasingly like, it's just, you know, as capitalism gets more entrenched and more horrifying, it becomes increasingly the case that there's just like no sustainable models for making art. And we just need like really, really robust socialist responses.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:44:16](#) Yeah. Yeah. Because like I wrote five books in six years, I published five books in six years,

Hannah McGregor: [00:44:21](#) You're wildly productive as a writer.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:44:23](#) But it took me a long time to write them. And a lot of that was because I'd come out of grad school not that long before, so I had some writing from that time. But then I also was unemployed for a whole year and I literally applied for so many jobs, unsurprisingly, very bad in interviews cause I always get interviewed and then I get in there and I'm like, Hmm, Oh you were too much yourself, you fucking ruined this again.

Hannah McGregor: [00:44:47](#) Did you start screaming about dicks?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:44:48](#) The whole time. I was like, no one wants to get down on your dick. Just yelling at this like, person in a cheap suit. I'm just yelling.

Hannah McGregor: [00:44:58](#) It's so surprising to me that you're bad at interviews cause you're so charismatic.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:45:01](#) I agree. I always am like I feel confident. I feel good. And then it was always the thing that killed me. No, people don't want charisma. That's the problem.

Hannah McGregor: [00:45:10](#) Oh that is true.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:45:10](#) People are not drawn to it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:45:12](#) That's why people like giving me jobs.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:45:13](#) You're very charismatic.

Hannah McGregor: [00:45:14](#) Not.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:45:15](#) Okay. Well I'm very drawn to you. We're touching hands right now. But that was because I had time to write and I had time to write because I didn't have a job. Y.

Hannah McGregor: [00:45:25](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:45:26](#) And I love, I don't love telling people that, but I want people to know that like the reason I was able to complete projects was because I literally had time. And then after that I did some freelance work for a bit and for long periods of time I wasn't working as much. Now I'm working a lot in the last couple years, and I've hardly written anything new because I just don't have time, energy, space. So now I'm struggling with what to do with this cause I have projects that I'm trying to work on and it's just taking a really long time to even just get like a little bit out.

Hannah McGregor: [00:45:57](#) Yup. Yup.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:45:58](#) I also let a person know that when I do sit down I write a lot at once because.

Hannah McGregor: [00:46:03](#) So you just need a weekend.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:46:03](#) I don't self-censor.

Hannah McGregor: [00:46:05](#) Okay.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:46:05](#) I'm just like, who cares if this is terrible? And then I'm just like, go, go, go, go, go. I'm a slower editor but I'll like hammer these drafts out cause I'm like, who cares? This is a piece of shit. Like it doesn't matter only I'm seeing it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:46:18](#) I'll fix it in post.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:46:21](#) But yeah, I just, I seems like I published a lot at once and I did.

Hannah McGregor: [00:46:26](#) You did! That's a lot of books.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:46:28](#) You know the fiction book I worked on, it took me 16 years to get it to the place that it was when it was published.

Hannah McGregor: [00:46:33](#) Wow.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:46:34](#) And it was just that's because some of the stories were that old and I completely reworked them. Like the title story of the book was completely written from a different perspective and then,

Hannah McGregor: [00:46:42](#) Say the name of the book.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:46:43](#) It's called Don't Tell Me What To Do. And originally it was written from a male character's perspective and then, I know! I was young and I thought I had to like write male characters to get published. Right?

Hannah McGregor: [00:46:53](#) That's fair. All evidence would say that.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:46:55](#) And then when I changed it I was like, Oh everything else. It became the biggest story in the book. It blew up into this whole other thing that was more meaningful, interesting to me. Whereas before it was just like a little joke of a story. So that's the other thing, like things take time. Some things are going to be faster or some things are going to be not so fast and that's fine.

Hannah McGregor: [00:47:12](#) Yeah. This is a conversation I have had recently over text with our mutual friend Amy, about reading books that were, so we both read Jia Tolentino new book Trick Mirror.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:47:22](#) I read it too.

Hannah McGregor: [00:47:22](#) Which I have now mentioned like 17 episodes in a row, so I don't know if you had the same impression, but,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:47:29](#) I had a fever when I read it so I feel like, I didn't follow along sometimes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:47:34](#) Fair enough! Amy's read event, which I think we've really accurate was that it felt really rushed to press because Tolentino's work in The New Yorker is always so carefully argued and like succinct and like doing exactly what it needs to do and the book just felt messy and not quite thought through. And like there were multiple essays where she just really needed somebody to like push her harder on ideas and it was like cool, she's like a big figure right now, this is going to be a big bestselling book. It just felt like it was rushed to press as quickly as possible because like it's expensive and like let somebody sit on a book.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:48:13](#) And in the intro to the book, she literally writes, I wrote this book between this time and this time, and it was like, I don't know, 14 months or something, which to me, I'm always in awe of anyone who's writing nonfiction of this type because I feel like they have to do things a lot more quickly overall. But usually you're just working on one piece and you're working with an editor or some, hope, I would hope.

Hannah McGregor: [00:48:33](#) Yeah. Well, with The New Yorker, you're definitely working with an editor.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:48:35](#) Yeah for sure. And so when, but this happens all the time, like with nonfiction, you gotta pitch, it's not the same as fiction. Like I literally had to finish all those stories over 16 years to a degree where someone would look at it and be like, this is good, we can publish it. You don't have, with nonfiction you can just be like, yeah, I want to write a thing, and it's all these things. It doesn't mean it's not hard. But like you don't have to have a finished product to sell that.

Hannah McGregor: [00:48:58](#) Oh that's interesting. Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:48:59](#) You are doing it afterwards. And this always blows my mind to this day cause I'm like, well that's unfair. I have lots of great ideas. If someone paid me in advance to write, then I would have time to write.

Hannah McGregor: [00:49:09](#) Well, but then also they do, if your first book sold well enough, right? So then it becomes this whole,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:49:15](#) But you still have to have enough of something that's good enough for them instead of.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:49:19](#) Sometimes. That's what the Quill & Quire profile of Cherie Dimaline was talking about.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:49:24](#) Oh yeah that's true.

Hannah McGregor: [00:49:24](#) About how after *The Marrow Thieves* was such a like a wild breakout success, she got like a four book deal with Penguin Random House and there's no way like, I believe *Empire of Wild* was probably started, but there's no way all of the books she got signing deals for.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:49:38](#) No, no, no, no, no. And that also was way more rare. Like it used to be really common for there to be at least two book deal that people would be getting. And now a lot of it's, and again please correct me if I'm incorrect, but I think there's a lot of someone gets a book deal and then in your contract they get first right of refusal as opposed to signing you to an actual two-book deal.

Hannah McGregor: [00:50:00](#) Well I feel like we had this weird period where a lot of those big publishers were giving people like million dollar advances because there was a lot of like, Oh this is going to be the book of the century.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:50:09](#) That kept happening!

Hannah McGregor: [00:50:10](#) It kept happening and then those books kept being busts. Like they kept falling through and I think like there was this period when, you know, the big publishers had gotten so big that they had access to this unprecedented amount of money and they were like, Oh this is going to be like movie making, if we put enough money into it upfront we'll be guaranteed to get most of that money back. And then it was like, Oh that's not how book publishing works. Like it is, you know, there's lots of lots of sort of strong forces that drive a book success or non-success that do have to do with things like who your agent is and who your publisher is, but at the end of the day there's this weird crapshoot aspect to publishing that's like a book that has every opportunity for success can end up just disappearing.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:50:55](#) But I think you're right too. Even in terms of those types of books, I think those types of books are also still not being edited properly. Like they're literally just bleeding money from those types of deals or you have also influenced our culture. Like I never stopped thinking about Caroline Calloway, obviously like a normal adult.

Hannah McGregor: [00:51:13](#) Okay. I don't know anything about Caroline Calloway. Will you explain that story to me?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:51:16](#) Oh it's so much.

Hannah McGregor: [00:51:17](#) Just in, just quickly.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:51:18](#) She just literally started posting on Instagram, somehow became an influencer. She's just like the most basic looking thin white woman, young and she ends up getting a book deal because of her Instagram posts.

Hannah McGregor: [00:51:31](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:51:32](#) And then she got this huge advance. The book was never written.

Hannah McGregor: [00:51:36](#) Oh.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:51:36](#) She ended up having to give the advance back. She left the internet for a period of time. She came back about a year ago and was going to start doing some kind of creativity workshops.

Hannah McGregor: [00:51:46](#) I was going to say was her next plan to do like fucking retreats that people paid to go to? Influencers love that shit.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:51:50](#) Yes. Because the other day my Facebook memory was me talking about Caroline Calloway because I was complaining about there being no good venues in Vancouver to host events. And then I said I hope that, and I'd been talking about it for multiple days in a row and asking people for advice and everyone just giving me the same advice and I was like, you are treating me like a person who has never planned an event, which is funny to me because,

Hannah McGregor: [00:52:11](#) You've planned every event.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:52:11](#) But continue. And then I said something like, I hope that this Caroline Calloway situation has just proven to everyone that creating an event is a lot more complicated than just ordering hundreds of mason jars to your home and posting on your Instagram stories. So that's what ended up happening. She was going to do this big thing. It did not work out at all. She ended up, she did order all these mason jars. What they were for? Still not clear. It also was a bit of like a mini Fyre Festival because she was

going to feed people and they paid all this money up front for the workshops.

- Hannah McGregor: [00:52:41](#) That's what they were for, the mason jars were going to have salads in them.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:52:43](#) But then there also I think were sandwiches, which also made me think of the Fyre Festival, but I don't remember what was in them, but I think they ended up being, salads were involved somehow, but she kept talking about cooking salads, which is also funny. I love it. I love it so much.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:52:57](#) She's just a scammer.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:52:58](#) Yeah, so then that didn't really work out. She was supposed to do a tour of events and then she canceled them all. It was unclear at the time if she had given the money back to people originally that had paid and then she just did it in like her Brooklyn loft and crammed all these people into it instead of having it in some other space.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:15](#) Great.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:16](#) But then this fall, an article came out by her friend.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:19](#) Yeah!
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:19](#) Did you read this?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:20](#) No.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:21](#) Oh okay. But I'm very fascinated by this.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:23](#) So that's the first I'd ever heard of her.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:25](#) This is the kind of stuff that I'm extremely intuitive, also Who Weekly talks about...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:28](#) Yeah. But I don't think I started listening to Who Weekly until after,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:31](#) Okay.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:31](#) The Caroline Calloway stuff had happened and so I just missed...
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:34](#) The Mason Jar Gate was the first big thing.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:39](#) I rely on Who Weekly to explain,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:40](#) No, I need them,

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:41](#) Influencers to me.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:41](#) They have not explained who Chloë Sevigny's boyfriend is and that is offensive to me.

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:45](#) Well, call in to them.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:45](#) I gotta call in.

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:46](#) Yeah. Who is this person?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:48](#) So anyway, then her friend wrote this article about how she had co-written all of this stuff and.

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:55](#) Like the Instagram captions?

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:53:55](#) A bunch of the Instagram captions and then she had also helped start write the draft of the book.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:00](#) Gotcha.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:01](#) Anyway, it just, it to me, I got interested because of the publishing aspect at first. Then of course the mason jars.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:07](#) Yep.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:07](#) I was very onboard for following that train. But those kinds of things are what happened. Publishing is like, ooh, we see a thing, this person can kind of write, this is a vibe. We know, again, going back to Rupi Kaur, we know people like Instagram writing.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:21](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:21](#) So let's pull that into this realm. I don't know.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:27](#) This is what happened with Kristen Roupenian's first book.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:29](#) Yes. Yes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:30](#) That Cat Person,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:31](#) The woman who wrote Cat Person.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:32](#) Was such a massive momentary,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:35](#) It was a viral piece fiction, which never happens, except a bunch of people called an article, which I fucking do not support.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:42](#) A lot of people did not know it was fiction. Even though it is written in the third person.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:47](#) And it said if you looked at the thing New Yorker Fiction.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:50](#) Oh yeah, for sure.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:51](#) There's no denying what it was.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:53](#) But it was deliberately written in the tone of a lot of sort of tell-all personal narratives. So like I get it.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:54:59](#) That was part of its cleverness and appeal.

Hannah McGregor: [00:55:02](#) But her first book came out and it,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:55:04](#) It was barely a book for sure.

Hannah McGregor: [00:55:05](#) Nothing. Right? I'm following right now those sort of responses to American Dirt.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:55:12](#) Oh me too.

Hannah McGregor: [00:55:13](#) Have you? Yeah. Which was supposed to be this like again, they put a ton of money into it. It was supposed to be a breakout hit like people were calling it the Grapes of Wrath for our time. Like it's about a Mexican woman having to cross the border into the U.S. And it was supposed to be like the book that like brings to life the border crisis and the reviews like the book came out and the reviews are like wildly negative, like wildly across the board, negative. It is getting dragged and it is one of those moments where you're like, okay, how does this happen? Like how does so much money and time and professional expertise get put into making a book? And then the book comes out into the world and everybody is like, no thank you.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:56:01](#) Yeah. Yeah. I also, it was interesting to me cause I had just read Valeria Luiselli's Lost Children Archives,

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:07](#) Which is fucking incredible.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:56:09](#) It is incredible. She's an incredible writer. I loved The Story of My Teeth. She's doing really cool shit. She knows about art and she incorporates like visual aesthetic and writing about that in such a, she's just a really interesting writer, really like her.

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:24](#) She's very cool.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:56:25](#) But that book was doing for me what this other book wanted to do and it did get attention like it did, but it did not get the level.

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:35](#) It was listed for the Booker.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:56:35](#) It was I think on the shortlist for the National Book Award, but still it's more of a sleeper. Like this other book was hyped and again, why does that happen? Because people in marketing were pushing it. People were, you know, pitching it at probably a different level and.

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:51](#) Well in that sense, too like they're definitely like middlebrow realistic fiction, which *Lost Children*. *Archives* is not.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:56:56](#) It's not at all.

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:57](#) No.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:56:58](#) Even though it's an extremely accomplished narrative book.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:02](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:57:02](#) 100% anyway. No, that shit happens too much.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:07](#) So much.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:57:08](#) So much when the books come out around the same subject.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:11](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:57:11](#) And you're like, that's fine. That happens all the time. But one will end up getting, maybe not necessarily accolades, but more attention. Again, this is, you're talking to a person who hated *My Brilliant Friend* and talks about it extensively. So like if you love *My Brilliant Friend*, you don't have to take my opinion seriously right now. But I have a lot of negative things to say about it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:31](#) Just don't get why people, I just don't get what people liked about it.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:57:34](#) I literally felt unhappy the entire time.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:38](#) It was fine.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:57:38](#) It made me angry and unhappy and I just got through. It made me want to rate an intergen- hilarious intergenerational book about Italians cause I was like, this is too dour for my fucking vibes and I am not interested.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:50](#) Write a hilarious intergenerational book about Italians.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:57:53](#) I am going to.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:54](#) Do it!

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:57:54](#) It's one of my projects that's never going to get done. It's going to be one book. I'm not going to get greedy like Ferrante.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:00](#) Yeah, no, I mean book three. Book one, Poems About Ghosts.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:58:04](#) Poems About Ghosts.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:04](#) Book two, Farts, Poems, Metaphors: a Collection of Essays About the Creative Process. Book three,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:58:09](#) Hilarious Intergenerational Italian. Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:12](#) Yeah. This has just been a pitch meeting. So we're doing great. You're doing great.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:58:16](#) But that kind of book too, while I didn't enjoy it, I actually really respect the way that it became popular because it happened somewhat more organically than other types of fiction. Like very often translated fiction is not popular and Europa is not the biggest imprint. But you know they end up doing a couple books like this. Like the same thing happened with Elegance of the Hedgehog, which they also published that I think they probably thought would be this little sleeper hit and then it became a bit, did you read this?

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:47](#) No.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:58:47](#) It's great. It's a great novel about an old woman and a little girl who wants to kill herself cause she's tired of everything but it's a comedic book.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:55](#) Oh good. Good.

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:58:57](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:57](#) I feel like if we can't break away from the publishing logic of comp titles,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:59:05](#) Yes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:05](#) And trend pieces,

Dina Del Bucchia: [00:59:07](#) Keep going.

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:07](#) And just publishing stuff based on what has already been popular, which is the whole logic right? Publishing is just based on these systems of like observation and repetition and conservatism and it's inherently adverse to risk. So if like we can't break away from that,

at least we can like see how these unexpected hits open up space for people who haven't had space.

- Dina Del Bucchia: [00:59:28](#) I agree.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:59:28](#) Elena Ferrante's breakout, wild, unpredictable success meant that like a bunch of Italian women writers are getting their work translated where previously it was like only male writers were getting their work translated and like even though the narratives around something like *The Marrow Thieves*, like while breakout success absolutely were like tokenistic and troubling in a lot of ways that then becomes like, you know, authors look at indigenous YA writing and are like, Oh yeah we got a lot of money make off this. And it's like that's all really fucked up. But is it going to mean publishing deals for people who weren't going to get publishing deals?
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:00:03](#) Yeah! Maybe. And I mean I hope, I hope that some of those people are listening like to what the problems are and are considering how to make those things better. Like, not everyone is going to change, we all know this of course, but I'm also hopeful that some people are moving forward in a way that is less harmful and shitty and that hopefully, you know, more editors, more acquisition editors will be hired who are not all just white people and that are making better choices. And just all of them.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:38](#) Yeah.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:00:39](#) Like it's a huge, it's a huge change.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:40](#) Though. I mean the whole industry needs massive amounts of change and it's...
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:00:45](#) Shake it like a fucking snow globe.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:46](#) Right? And it's not an industry that changes quickly because we'll get into their positions as like acquisitions editors and then they stay there for 80 years.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:00:54](#) Yep. Well, and the thing, I mean, small presses always make change first.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:58](#) Yep.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:00:58](#) That's been very, very consistent.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:00](#) Yeah.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:01:00](#) Especially in this country where they're the ones getting funding and so they have to, they have to rely on that. You know, they're

not as much of a capitalist structure as the big multinationals are. They're making different choices, I think sometimes because they want to, they're excited about something or they're interested or,

- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:20](#) Well, they've got an explicitly cultural mesh.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:01:21](#) They do!
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:22](#) And so they can,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:01:23](#) It doesn't mean that everyone is doing that.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:25](#) Well, no, and I think publishers in Canada that have like a more clear and specific cultural mission than just like, we're just going to publish some good stuff, like tend to do an even better job. Like look at Arsenal,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:01:39](#) I was going to say Arsenal,
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:39](#) Which is not just a Canadian press, but as a Canadian press with like a really clear mission of like publishing people like queer and trans and racialized writers who like have not been treated well by other presses, are not considered sellable because the press has a mission of championing those voices and those stories, they do an extra good job of like knowing what they're looking for and it's like, those like those really specific like we see where people are not getting heard and we are going to intervene there and publish stuff that's getting ignored but is great.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:02:17](#) Yes! No, I agree. Yeah. I mean a lot of times what happens is then bigger presses see that success,
- Hannah McGregor: [01:02:25](#) They steal those writers.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:02:25](#) Which, it's not that I don't want writers to have more money, but my concern is always like, how do indies keep discovering new talents? That's more work for a more overworked workforce. And also I want, I hope those writers are still cared for in a way at a bigger press than they would be at a smaller press. And again, sometimes I think that is the case and I think sometimes it's not and it's just, it's a complicated industry. It's a complicated thing people are doing when they're sharing their work. Do I think every industry and everyone who has power over other people in the workforce should be more fucking compassionate and understanding? 100% like,
- Hannah McGregor: [01:03:03](#) Sounds fake.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:03:03](#) I know we're talking,

Hannah McGregor: [01:03:04](#) I think every industry should be worse.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:03:07](#) Let's go back to mining. Mining standards from the 1800's only. That's where we're going to go. Get in the mine with the canary.

Hannah McGregor: [01:03:17](#) When I was really early on in this job. I was like trying to express to my department chair how most people don't care who academics are or what we're doing and like most of us like don't know what our jobs are, aren't interested, aren't impressed. Like, within the world of academia, everybody feels like, Oh we've got a star system, but like you take one step to the left and people are like, who is that? Nobody's ever heard of them. Nobody cares. And as I was trying to express this to him and he was like, you know, like most academics are just like fucking working away in the mines. And he was like, no, absolutely not. No, for sure you don't get to use mining for this incredibly cushy, white collar job. I was like, yeah, okay, that's fair.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:04:00](#) That's fair. Well I mean

Hannah McGregor: [01:04:02](#) The point stands, yeah. Nobody gives a fuck who we are or what we're doing, but it's not hard physical labor.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:04:08](#) So I work at the bookstore, at the university bookstore where I also teach because I can't quit that job because that's how I have benefits and.

Hannah McGregor: [01:04:17](#) Dental.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:04:17](#) I have the worst teeth known to humans.

Hannah McGregor: [01:04:20](#) They look great.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:04:21](#) They look fine, but on the softest, this vegan cheese.

Hannah McGregor: [01:04:26](#) You just put your finger, right?

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:04:28](#) It's not great.

Hannah McGregor: [01:04:28](#) Did you do that with your teeth.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:04:29](#) I did break a tooth once on cookie dough. So anyway, things are great,

Hannah McGregor: [01:04:34](#) Your body's a shambling mess. But your hair is so shiny.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:04:39](#) Yeah, but so I'm literally around and students will see me that I am supposed to be edgy, which again doesn't, it doesn't even bother me anymore because I'm like, these are the two things that I can do. They're close together. They're easy. I don't know how to make

other better choices right now. I'm tired. But it's funny to realize like, yeah, literally this is how important your instructor is. Like this is my other job.

- Hannah McGregor: [01:05:07](#) Yeah, right?
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:05:08](#) In retail right here.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:05:08](#) This is not glamorous. Nobody, nobody is impressed.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:05:11](#) Yes. It reminds me of in mean girls when they see Tina Fey working at the mall. Same. Like I'm working ostensibly as an instructor but also this is my other life.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:05:24](#) Well yeah, and this is what like academia and publishing are doing the same thing in the sense of like increasing precarity. The increasing like a very, very small number of people could have a huge amount of success and money and then everybody else has to share nothing.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:05:36](#) But like, it doesn't matter how many stark reviews I have gotten or how many good reviews I have received.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:05:43](#) Well because it's all self-perpetuating. Like, I had, right at the beginning of my like structure of the book publishing industry class last semester, I asked my students what they think are some of the structural challenges in Canadian publishing and one student sort of like joked that we just needed to clone Margaret Atwood because then we would have an unlimited supply of brilliant writers and then there would be like so much success in Canadian publishing and I was like, Oh, what a great unintentional reproduction of the logics of like,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:06:16](#) Well, publishing!
- Hannah McGregor: [01:06:16](#) Celebrity and status in publishing which is just like, we don't want anybody new. We don't want anything interesting. We just want to clone Margaret Atwood forever and reproduce the same. Literally she's just writing the same book and then everybody buys it and then everybody says that it's bad,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:06:32](#) And then it wins the Booker Prize.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:06:32](#) And then it wins the Booker!
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:06:35](#) Alongside Bernardine Evaristo who is writing is writing way more interesting work.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:06:41](#) And then when Atwood's next book comes out, everybody's going to still buy it.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:06:45](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [01:06:45](#) Because she's, that's how celebrity works, right? Like at this point she is too established a figure for people to be like, Oh yeah, she used to be good, but her books are bad now. It's like Margaret Atwood means good books, so you just put her name on a book and people will be like, it's a good book!

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:07:00](#) And academia reinforces that.

Hannah McGregor: [01:07:03](#) 100%! They teach it.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:07:03](#) Because they teach it. Exactly. Everyone's had to read it. High school, university, whatever, whatever, whatever. They make an Hulu show out of it. Things just become so pervasive.

Hannah McGregor: [01:07:13](#) Yeah. So like is there a way to get, you know, you teach young people and you teach young people comedy, like in the world of comedy, which is very similar in the sense of the small, rarefied group of people who like get all of the attention are treated as geniuses and then there's like everybody else doing actually interesting stuff. Do you feel like you can get the students that you're teaching engaged with that other material? Like can you get people on board with the weird stuff?

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:07:41](#) I think you can. And I think comedy is an interesting example because I think, unlike literature, students have more access to it and are more well versed in it and it's easier for them to just find it, cause you can share a link or, you know, send someone a DM of someone's Instagram story if they have something on there. So I think the idea of comedy has broadened in a way because it's imminently more shareable than reading a whole text. So on that front, I think that actually really helps overall. And so yes, because I can ask a student to watch a weirder, more interesting, more, I don't know, diverse than their experience, video, because it's only gonna take two to five minutes instead of multiple days to read a book. So I actually think,

Hannah McGregor: [01:08:32](#) And it's free.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:08:33](#) And it's free. Yeah. So I actually think, yes. And I do think I'm over time, hopefully getting better at doing this, but getting engagement that's different than I was getting. Like I really tried to ask a lot of craft questions because people know what they think is funny, but they don't know why and they don't know how they're getting there. Right?

Hannah McGregor: [01:08:51](#) Do you know how things are funny?

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:08:53](#) Sometimes. Yeah. And so that, I mean that's what I'm supposed to be doing, right?

Hannah McGregor: [01:08:57](#) I guess that is your job.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:00](#) And so unpacking it from a craft angle, I think helps. And the first class I just talk about the difference between what's funny and what's comedy.

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:09](#) Whats the difference between what's funny and what's comedy?

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:09](#) For the whole class. Well what's funny could be anything. It could be mean like, it could be your cat falling over, but it's not comedy cause your cat didn't create that as a piece of art that they intentionally were being funny.

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:19](#) Gotcha.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:20](#) Right?

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:20](#) All right. So does a funny thing become comedy when it's been reframed?

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:26](#) I think it can.

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:27](#) Are America's funniest home videos comedy?

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:29](#) I don't think they are.

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:30](#) Okay.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:31](#) Even though the framing of the show is trying to pretend that they are, I think that, ah see your cat's creating comedy right now. Knocking stuff over.

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:40](#) Could you get off the fucking counter? They're absolute nightmares.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:41](#) But I think this is the type of question that I don't necessarily, I don't need to have like a definitive answer.

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:47](#) Yeah, you can just be like what an interesting question, discuss.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:49](#) Right.

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:50](#) Yeah.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:50](#) And I agree with you that yes it is reframed and so it is something.

Hannah McGregor: [01:09:57](#) It's definitely...something.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:09:57](#) And maybe it's like a subculture of comedy, right? Like I'm also comfortable with that, like the way we break down comedy has tons of different sub genres. So, but just thinking about comedy, trying to think about it as an art form because when we see, especially standups, it looks effortless.

Hannah McGregor: [01:10:14](#) Yes.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:10:14](#) They get up, they,

Hannah McGregor: [01:10:16](#) It looks like they're just chatting.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:10:17](#) Yes. When of course they've spent hours and hours writing and then getting up and bombing or doing whatever else

Hannah McGregor: [01:10:24](#) Yeah! Crafting and refining that material.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:10:26](#) And so to make that more understood as well.

Hannah McGregor: [01:10:29](#) Rather than recommending books, cause I feel like in this podcast we recommend books all the time, can you recommend some comedy?

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:10:36](#) Oh

Hannah McGregor: [01:10:36](#) What would, if people are like, I like funny things but I don't know where they are.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:10:49](#) I mean, it is hard. Okay. I can think of a couple of things.

Hannah McGregor: [01:10:51](#) Great.

Dina Del Bucchia: [01:10:52](#) I just watched New Eden on crave and it is a mockumentary about an all-women's cult from the seventies and eighties that's set in the Oakanagan. It was such a wonderful piece to me again, comedy piece of art, like amazing storytelling. It's so different from so many things. I really hope people watch it. The structure of it is beautiful. It really does beautiful things with the aesthetic of media at the time. So there's fake found footage but then also like media, like yeah, newscasters, all sorts of types of media. But then yes, there are testimonials and interviews and stuff. It's so, I loved it. I can't stop talking about it. I've been talking about it for days. But if you haven't already watched it, Black Lady Sketch Show on HBO. I really like that networks and streaming services are taking on more risky, interesting stuff like New Eden was a bit like American Vandal, but it improved upon many of the things that I loved about American Vandal. I don't know if you watched American Vandal, it's a mockumentary, set it a high school where the crime is that someone drew some dicks on the teachers cars, and these students, film students, are doing like a true crime documentary

about trying to find out who drew the dicks. So this is the kind of stuff I'm into. I mean Fleabag of course that to me is a comedy. Great. There was another great show, it was on Showtime, called Back to Life I think is what it was called, about this woman who just gets out of jail and has to move back in with her parents.

- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:12:25](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:12:25](#) Yeah. Amazing.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:12:26](#) Yeah. So like I love these weird dark comedic shit. Like that's what I'm into.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:12:31](#) So all of this seems like it's all art that is telling stories that is using comedy to tell its stories.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:12:37](#) Yes.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:12:38](#) So like what is it about art that is dark but funny that draws you?
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:12:43](#) I think because, and again, this is something that I believe and I teach my students, but if you don't have emotional stakes and emotional weight in your work, it's not gonna be as impactful. And that's what it is.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:12:57](#) But the flip side,
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:12:59](#) It's not that I don't like,
- Hannah McGregor: [01:13:00](#) Why do you like the stuff to also be funny cause there's lots of stuff that has high stakes but is not...
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:13:02](#) Because you want to have, because you get the, it's like two types of release.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:13:06](#) Okay.
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:13:07](#) Right? You have like the emotional release, but then you also have that release of laughter, like the joyful release. So I think that's why I like both of those things together. You're combining two types of, I don't know, like letting go.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:13:23](#) So it's just like farting again?
- Dina Del Bucchia: [01:13:24](#) It's, everything is like fucking farting. Alright?
- Hannah McGregor: [01:13:48](#) If you want to learn more about Dina, you can check her out online at finadelbucchia.com. That's D I N A D E L B U C C H I A.com. And you can find out more about her podcast at cantlit.ca. That's C A N ' T L I T .ca. You should definitely follow Dina on

Twitter. She's @DelBauchery and you know what, I'm tired of spelling things. So all of these links are in the show notes. Just go click on them. There's also links to Dina's many wonderful books and you should click on those too and then buy them. Dina's also going to be at the Growing Room Feminist Literary Festival in March, and you know what? So am I. So if you are anywhere near Vancouver, come to this festival. It's March 11th to 15th and it's going to be incredible.

So those show notes I just mentioned, you can find those and the rest of the episodes of Secret Feminist Agenda on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter @HKPMcGregor, where you're going to get a lot more menstrual feelings content and you can tweet about how much you like that content using the #secretfeministagenda and you can also rate and review the show. There's a new review this week from taralovesthepoopemoji in Canada. Thank you so much, especially for the beauty of that username.

The podcast theme song is Mesh Shirt by Mom Jeans, off their album, Chub Rub. You can download the entire album on freemusicarchive.org or follow them on Facebook. And Dina's theme song was Disappear by Mazzy Star.

This episode was recorded on the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam, the Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations where I'm grateful to live and work.

This has been Secret Feminist Agenda. Pass it on