

# S2E10 Centering the Bodily Experience in Creative Practice: A Conversation with Writer and Teacher Molly Caro May

[00:00:00] **Molly:** Like probably five years ago, I remember saying to my husband, I just. I wish there was, and I'm sure this exists actually now, but I wish there was some sort of machine where I could attach like keyboard to my limbs or something. And I could literally like learn to type differently, but through my body so that the writing was actually a physical dance instead of just my fingers dancing.

It was my whole body dancing. Cause I felt like I wanted to project onto my wall, like a big screen that was huge. And then that I could like. Punch it out or flow it out and, and right. And anyway, we've laughed a lot about that, but that's what I'm talking about. I, I want to feel my body, not just my sensations in my body, but feel my body in motion as I am writing.

And so a lot of what I do, and even what I did when I was writing my last two books is walking. And recording myself and writing [00:01:00] with my voice and feeling what that feels like to have it come from my pelvis and up my voice and not necessarily through my hand initially. So I'm really curious about oral storytelling and what it means to have words move through my body.

[00:01:20] **Kaitlin:** I'm your host, Kaitlin Solimine, and this is the Postpartum Production Podcast. Here, we hold conversations about the intersection of caregiving, creative practice, and capitalist production, as well as what it means to be producing art while also being a parent in modern society. Find out more at [www.postpartumproduction.com](http://www.postpartumproduction.com), where you can also sign up for our newsletter.

Today, I'm excited to share this conversation with you with Molly Carrow May. [00:02:00] Molly's the author of two books, *A Teacher* and *a Holder of Space*. For over 13 years, she's facilitated personal story workshops for more than hundreds of people across the globe. She's trained in somatic experiencing and focuses on where language and voice and the animal body meet each other.

Her mission is to democratize expression and explore, in good company, the healing alchemy between story and the nervous system. I first came to Molly's work, *Body Full of Stars*, when I was postpartum with my second child and I actually decided to read her book aloud as bedtime reading to my eldest daughter, which was probably not the best parenting decision, but it actually turned out to be a beautiful experience as Molly and I will shortly discuss.

I'm really enjoying that so much that we discuss in this upcoming episode resonates with many of our other episodes this season. I was especially thinking of the conversation that I had with Dr. Darsha Narvaez. And the work that she does in the *Evolved Nest* and how so much of [00:03:00] that rests as a backbone to the creative work Molly has already brought into this world and will continue to bring.

So I'm excited to share this conversation with you today.

[00:03:08] **Molly:** I

[00:03:23] **Kaitlin:** am just really excited to speak with you because I think so much of your work overlaps with personally my interests and also. The community that we're building through this podcast and the conversations that we're having and the writers and the activists that we're speaking to. And so I'm really excited to hear from you, your journey, your story, where you're at.

So I like to kind of just start and check in, where are we finding you today? Like, where are you landing right

[00:03:51] **Molly:** now? Where am I landing? I, I'm in a space of transition, you know, like my kids are out of school next week and we transitioned to [00:04:00] summer and what that all means. And so I'm really examining my rhythms and like setting some intentions and.

noticing how much more comfortable I actually am in the mess than I used to be. You know, like that's, that's something right?

[00:04:18] **Kaitlin:** Yeah. How old are they right now?

[00:04:20] **Molly:** They're 10 and six. So it's a lot less messy than it used to be. But in terms of the massive, all the work pieces, plus all the family pieces, plus my own body pieces, you know,

[00:04:33] **Kaitlin:** Yeah, let's, I mean, we're going to dive deep real quick now.

Yes, we are.

[00:04:37] **Molly:** Let's

[00:04:38] **Kaitlin:** go. Let's do it. Let's go. Okay. So tell me, because I think of you as someone that, especially through your work, that I can turn to and say, okay, Molly's got this figured out. How, how does Molly do it? Not to put any pressure on you. No, I would love to hear that. How do you find that?

equilibrium in the times of transition, because I think that obviously the times [00:05:00] of relative stability are those when we can, I hope we can find some grounding, but I know that you do a lot of somatic work in your creative spaces. And I'm really curious what that looks like from a practical standpoint, but also how you got there from a philosophical standpoint, as well as how you've built a life that sits in spaces that really don't fit, I think, in so many facets of the structures and the systems in which we are forced into by way of being born in this country in this moment.

Yeah,

[00:05:33] **Molly:** absolutely. That's so many things. And I'll just start where I'm starting. My, I've always, since I was little, been interested in what it means to be in a body. Like I loved being in a body. I loved climbing trees as a girl, you know, I've just loved it. And my postpartum journey invited me into a lot of health crisis and which has been a 10 year journey, my oldest is [00:06:00] 10.

And though I'm emerging in, in all sorts of exciting ways, just recently, really in the last year or two, and that pressure, I say pressure because it's felt like a squeeze around like, like this, you know, I often use sound effects, but that's the feeling, just sure people can relate to around, oh, I actually have no other choice than to like, pause actually, and be in, you know, Some sort of relationship with this Soma, with this body, because if I don't, the whole ship is going to sink.

And so it has taken me many moments like that to then reorganize and reprioritize and re rhythmize. If that's, that's not even a word, I just made that up, but I love the word rhythm as opposed to schedule. I use that with my kids and my family because I, having a rhythm really settles me. and allows me to listen and not be overwhelmed by the noise.

I think I've really come to a place now where I feel [00:07:00] like, you know what, of course I'm overwhelmed by the noise. You would be unusual not to be overwhelmed by the noise that we all need to deal with every day, or we're

expected to deal with. And so. I feel like I've intentionally sort of taken myself out of some spaces that people would expect me to be in like social media spaces or even having to answer emails at a certain time, you know, all that kind of stuff.

Just saying absolutely not, not only because I don't want to, and it actually doesn't support me or my family to do that, but I don't want to even model that for people. I don't even want to support other people having to do that. And I'm not. Not in a place of trying to glorify a past way of being there's, you know, we can't glorify something that was hard for everyone.

Also, you know, life is difficult and has challenges, but I'm just interested in this, the spaces that are open and unscheduled and unplanned for the creative birthing [00:08:00] that is, and I don't mean birthing babies. So that's one kind of birthing, um, but just the creative birthing of anything that our world needs.

And I'm just seeing attention so fractured and feeling like, how are we ever going to come up with all the creative ideas we need to be the people we need to be in this time, if there is no pause or listening within. So I feel really devoted to that. I don't even, you had so many great questions there and I don't even know what I just answered, but that's where I went because I think about that a lot.

I don't have anything figured out though. I feel way more in tune with, and, and very clear actually about this. I will do, and this I will not do. And I know I'm supposed to. Build a massive following on Instagram and blah, blah, blah. And do all this stuff. And I get it. I understand the value of that. I'm not going to do it.

I'm just not because I want to be living my life so fully and like tactically. And I am, [00:09:00] and that feels rich to me, but it comes with consequences and I just have to be okay with those consequences. I am more okay with the consequences of that. Then the consequences of being on my phone all day and missing my life.

So, you know, it's just a choice. Like what, which consequences do I want? Thank you.

[00:09:22] **Kaitlin:** Um, I, no, I, I really appreciate hearing that. And I also weirdly was just thinking, so we took our kids to their first baseball game yesterday. We live in San Francisco and I grew up a baseball fan. I was. I don't know what this is.

This is related. I swear. So I didn't know that, for example, I don't know. Have you ever been to a baseball game?

[00:09:46] **Molly:** I'm not like a professional baseball game, but you know, yeah.

[00:09:49] **Kaitlin:** So. In the past, I guess, pitchers could just take their time, they could, like, there was no time limit, and often there [00:10:00] have been baseball games, right, that have gone on, like, days, where they've been in a, right, it's just, there's no, like, you have a hockey game, you have quarters, you have time, and so baseball never had that, like, an inning could take longer than anything else, because it's determined by the nature of the game, which is cool, right?

It's cool, that is cool. And interestingly, to your point about, The way in which we live now and the attachment to schedules, to phones, to efficiencies. They've changed that slightly where now there's a pitch count on the pitcher. And so they have a defined amount of time that the pitcher can take between pitches.

And at the game yesterday, I remarked to my husband that it felt so different. And it actually felt this different sense of speed. in the experience of the game for the first time. And I have to admit, I didn't like it. And it also felt, I don't want to say comfortable because it wasn't comfortable, but it felt like it fit within the [00:11:00] pace of our world and our frenetic state of being and disappointing.

But it reminded me as you were talking about stepping outside of that, that this game that historically was one that had this amorphous nature now is. Is fitting. Something. Structure. Yeah. Slightly off topic and yet it just really struck me as you were talking about the experience of the body in that moment that I think that I've taken from your work as well of just recognizing how that impacted.

My physical experience of that space and of that game and of where we were sitting but on to other non baseball related topics Have to admit as I trip up on the title of body full of stars because I think I told you I read it to my Daughter, which was a felt like a really good idea. I think it was a good idea.

She was six at the time She loved it Wait, you read the book to her? I read your book to her. [00:12:00] Yes. Wow. At the time. Wow. There were parts that I was like, okay, I think, okay, I'm just going to go with this. And she was okay with it. And she calls it stars in my body, which I love. I was like, you know, that's not the title, right?

She's like, I know, but it's just how it feels to me. It's really cute. And the other day I was telling her, I'm going to talk to the author. And I said, do you have any questions? And she was like. No, and I was like, what was your experience like of the book? And she said, I just really, I said, why did you like, she was, we were talking about why she enjoyed it.

And she said, I loved, she could like picture all the characters. She was like, I was picturing the child and the mother. And she was defining just like her experience of listening to the stories. It was a very, it was a very unlikely, I'd say. way of entering your work. I know that for a lot of us who have been in those transitional spaces, that having works like yours, [00:13:00] to me, wasn't didactic.

It wasn't a how to. It was really just a way of sitting with someone else's body in that moment. And I would love to know what the experience was like for you of writing that book and what it's been, where you are now, what you're working on now, and how those things have transitioned as you and your body have also, as you mentioned, you're 10 years out from that particular postpartum journey.

And I'd love to hear about.

[00:13:28] **Molly:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. First of all, your daughter might be the only six year old.

My daughter at age eight, like opened it when she was really reading and started to read it. And I sort of went, okay, read the first page, how fun. And then we'll move on, but yeah. So writing that book was like a medicine for me. I wrote the first draft of it in 12 days. I went away on a writing retreat. I got a, I got a residency [00:14:00] and I went away for 12 days and my daughter stayed with my husband and it was the only way I could write it at that time.

She was little two or something, and I needed full space and I just boom, 5, 000 words a day just went. And I really felt like it was a very connected experience. Cause I, I could feel my audience calling it up and out of me. Now, these weren't like specific people I was imagining. It was more like a chorus of women in particular, just like literally bringing it out of my pelvis up and out through my hands and mouth.

And that's what, what it was. And and then of course I went back and did eight drafts later on and all of that. But the first draft was that and it was profound, essential for me, essential for my own healing. And since then, of course, my relationship to that story has evolved as. It always does with all stories.

And so I, it's the same story. It's the same facts, but I see things, I have [00:15:00] more perspective. My husband and I are now in this really sweet and tender and oftentimes painful renegotiation around his part of that experience, where he is voicing a lot more now that now that he feels more safety now that I'm more settled than I was.

And the experience of that book and I have a different understanding of rage now that I've trained in nervous system. So I've spent three years learning about nervous systems and how to work with them. And so I understand more of what was happening for me there in terms of. How nutrient depleted I was for my pregnancy and how that led to mental health issues.

And then also I was blasting out a freeze in a lot of ways. I just have a bigger perspective on what that was and ways I might've supported myself differently if I'd had the resources or even known. Plus when I wrote that book, no one was really talking about rage, actually, to be like, that wasn't, I couldn't have Googled in like mom rage and [00:16:00] had it even really come up with anything.

And now that's way more out there. Thank goodness. And like, it's just part of the conversation, the zeitgeist really. So. Maybe I would have related to it differently if I'd had others around me talking about it more freely. But for me, that chapter feels complete and I am now in a space of my kids are older, I'm in a space of, of still writing, but doing other sorts of creative acts that are not professional.

Like I do a lot of dancing and I sing and, and things like that, that aren't. I'm not doing that for people. I'm just doing that for me, and for my own expression, and working very loosely, very loosely on a third book, but really waiting to see what that's going to become. I'm not as interested right now, or haven't been in the last few years, in writing about myself so much.

I feel like I've wrote two memoirs. I've really plumbed those depths. I'm sure I will want to write about myself another time, [00:17:00] but maybe not, actually. I don't know. So, so I feel very like open in the creative spaces and I still get emails all the time from people who've read body full of stars who have said, you know, talked about his impact and yeah, I think mostly I have a new.

relationship to rage. And that I thought that so much of it was about expressing it out and like getting it out of my system. Like, just like, get it out, say the thing, da, da, da, da, the more I express, the more it'll get out. And that's true on



some level, but I was also cycling actually. And I was just re traumatizing myself.

I didn't know that at the time. And so I, I'm way more grounded now in what feels good so that I can metabolize what is still stuck in me.[00:18:00]

[00:18:04] **Kaitlin:** I know that community is a big part of your work and I'm curious how you intersect with that and how that feeds you or not and how you navigate. that space because I think there are positive things that come of those virtual communities and I find that myself a challenging space and I'm sure a lot of writers do, right?

Because we want to connect with the people that we're connecting with in our writing and also We're often introspective people as well. So how do you balance that? I like

[00:18:37] **Molly:** to put it into two little containers. One is if I'm in a process of teaching or facilitating, I want to be in relationship. I want to be in relationship with everything in my life.

I want to be in relationship with the ground I'm walking on, with the people I'm with. I'm not interested. And robots, AI, or [00:19:00] faceless people I have no awareness of in terms of facilitating. Now writing a book, like yeah, there are a bunch of people who've read that book, I will never see them or know them.

But writing a book is also really a private experience that's your own, and then you sort of gift it. And there it is, you know, and I do have those people, as I mentioned, in mind, or when I'm writing, like, not always, but in that book, in particular, I was aware of who was calling this up and out of me.

However, in terms of teaching or facilitating, I want to be either in a room with people, I teach a lot virtually, I have a whole community of people online, and I have relationship with those people, whether they share or not, whether they show up or not, depending on where they show up. And I feel really invested in that relationship.

That said, I am very present when I'm present. And when I am not, when I'm away doing my things, I am not making breakfast for my kids and checking people's posts. I have really dedicated times for [00:20:00] that. Um, I learned this the hard way where I sit down on usually as a Tuesday and a Sunday, and I go, this is my, you know, hour or two to.



Respond to people and I will do it then. And I'm not going to check it otherwise, because it infiltrates into my, I just want to be present. I just want to, it sounds so cliché to say that, but it's, that hasn't even come from an idea that has just come from a lived experience of when I'm making scrambled eggs for my kids, I want to be freaking making scrambled eggs for my kids.

You know, and everything is pulling me not to everything is pulling all of us not to and so one thing that I have found is that facilitating or teaching really lights me up, and it aligns me in a way that everything else in my life can feel like it's it's messy and falling apart on some level. And once I'm in that space, and it doesn't feel artificial, it doesn't feel like I'm hiding anything.

So I'm very honest with the people I'm working with. I feel like, oh, Here I go, shoop, and here I am, and I'm focused, and I, it's like being an alchemist, [00:21:00] you know, we all have those spaces where we are that, and it feels that way for me, it's really nourishing for me. If it ever becomes something that is not nourishing for me, then I will pivot.

How did you

[00:21:12] **Kaitlin:** come to... of the work that you had done previously. You hold a lot of spaces and your body is full of stars as we all seem to have a lot of facets in there. I'm curious even how that transition happened for you coming from writing a

[00:21:30] **Molly:** creative space. I lived in New York in my twenties for three years or so.

And at that time I was trying to decide, I mean, I was working and then also trying to decide, am I going to go to naturopathic medical school? Or am I going to, because I love bodies and that kind of thing. Am I going to try and become a writer? Which felt really amorphous. I'm like, how does anyone do that?

Or am I going to basically work with young people [00:22:00] learning how to be themselves? I mean, whatever, or a conflict resolution, right? Among people of different backgrounds. And I applied to all those things, actually, I was like, I'm going to go to conflict resolution school or go to medical school, all those.

And then I was lying on my apartment floor, feeling like. Oh, well, if I go do this and that, I'll write on the side. And I wasn't saying to myself, if I'm a writer,

I'll like doctor on the side or I'll, I, and so I felt like I can't, this is, it was just in me. So I, I don't know, I took the leap to do that. I started on a book.

Once I moved to Montana, not knowing what my backup plan was, but I did start teaching. I put up a flyer. I mean, this sounds so old school. I put up a flyer in my town for facilitating a writing class on place based narrative. No one signed up. I was like, so sad. And then the next spring, I mean, this is before I was like a published person or anything.

And then the next spring I put up more flyers and I knew more people and word spread and literally in my town, it just boom, boom, boom, boom, [00:23:00] boom. And then I had a pretty like robust teaching schedule with no formal credentials. I didn't have an MFA. I'd worked in book publishing, but you know, that's all I had.

And then from there, I guess my first book came out and then I started some online classes, so I don't know. It just sort of built, but I will say that I do want to credit my parents the way that they raised my brothers and me to really not subscribe to like one path. You know, I grew up in multiple foreign countries.

My dad grew up all over the world. There were no straight paths. There are no straight paths in life, but there was no idea that a straight path was even a thing. And so they encouraged me to like, you can build your own thing out of, you can build your own thing, essentially. You don't have to be credentialed in all these different ways.

If you can find other ways to find it. And, you know, that isn't true in all careers, obviously. So I feel like that foundation was important [00:24:00] for me to trust. Like, okay, I can figure this out.

[00:24:05] **Kaitlin:** Yeah. That's really, I was going to say lucky. It shouldn't be lucky. I think we should live each live in a world in which we are seen as.

just human rather than what do you do? And that's one facet and one huge facet, especially now when so much of our work outside of the home consumes us, as you said, like you're making eggs and you're working like there's, there's no shut down mechanism of like, I am inaccessible and somehow being inaccessible is seen as such a.

Not just defiant, but it's like a, it's an aggressive, but it's an aggressive act, right? Yeah. Like my shutdown, my out of work, my email, you know, I'm not gonna respond to email or whatever. It's like, how dare you be inaccessible to me that

the world just constantly wants that intrusion. And then the world being, I think our capitalist.

consumer culture. Where I'm going with this [00:25:00] is, it's interesting. You said maybe, and maybe I'm going to be a little pushy here. You said you didn't want to be a writer on the side, but you started with saying where you are now is sort of writer on this. It felt like it was sort of writer on the side. So let's unpack that a little

[00:25:17] **Molly:** bit.

Yeah. I love this question. So I am so much a writer on the side right now. I'm not like actively publishing anything. I'm working on this third book and. I actually feel really comfortable with that because for me, the writer impulse is actually a creator. It's not even just writer. Right. And so I think probably what I was feeling as a 26 year old was I don't want to be just creator on the side.

I want that to fuel my lifeblood. I want it to be how I organize my life. And I remember saying to some friends. Maybe five years ago, I said, I feel like I'm going to be the 70 year old lady who like doesn't use words anymore, but as a writer, I'm like, what does that, I don't even know what that means. I just feel like my body's going to be writing [00:26:00] somehow.

And they were all laughing. I'm like, I don't, I actually don't know what I'm, what premonition this is, but I feel like at some point I'm going to be tired of words. And I don't know if that will, that will be, you know, I still love words. I love how they rub up against each other. I love the power of.

Disrupting language and remaking language and all of that. And yet, I am in a place right now where I'm really interested in physicality. And I want to be moving a lot. I do want to be moving, put it that way. I want to be up and about. And so, I, again, I feel open to that. I don't know what that's going to look like.

I also want to support other people's words. Not only my own, that feels important too. I feel like a lot of my words have been heard. And so what does it mean to support other people's words being heard? So we'll see. We'll see. And maybe this, maybe I'm speaking this from a place of someone who's published two books, and so I feel like I can say like, okay, I, I like, I met that, like I [00:27:00] experienced that.

And so now there's less heat. You know, when someone's wanting to first have their first worker, there's so much heat, there's so much heat and wanting to

move towards something. And I don't feel that as much. I don't feel like I must publish something.

[00:27:15] **Kaitlin:** How do you think that the care work that you do for your body and for the people that you love for their bodies right now is impacting that trajectory?

[00:27:25] **Molly:** It's a good question. I was just thinking about this morning, actually. I think it's a, Big piece, not so much at this point, the care work for my little ones because they are self sufficient in their bodies. Do you know what I mean? I'm not changing diapers and like teaching them how to sleep, you know, but I'm doing all the other things for them.

But in terms of caring for my own body, that has been a very full time situation and I've had to make it a priority. I, I like that. I'm like, I don't, fine. You know, I am better off for it. My family's better off for it. [00:28:00] And I, I thank the message for my body for that. Cause honestly, I don't know that I would have changed anything if I hadn't had such strong messages.

Last year, I had an emergency blood transfusion, and I mean, there are all these things that happened even prior to that, and I have had to really live authentically into what it means to care for myself. Has that changed? Yeah, I'm not as fast. I'm not up till midnight working, which I was. I took like four different projects, you know, all these projects off my list.

I am, I don't know, I feel better. And if anything impacts my creative output, it would be more, less the caring for myself and actually more my teaching and facilitation, right? Because that's my work and that's my bread and butter. And that's where I put a lot of my energy. And I have to do that and create a different container for my [00:29:00] own creative output.

Cause that's creative in and of itself. Like I'm creating curriculum and, but it's, that's different. And so sometimes I have to set that aside to say, okay, I'm going to now just be in my own creative artist self.

[00:29:15] **Kaitlin:** I can feel in your work, how much you love words, which. I also share. There are books that center themselves more on story that there's like this, this really tight relationship to story and then there are books that have story and also I think just are so meticulous and thoughtful with the word choice and the way in which language can be such an integral part of a story.

And so I think that's what drew me so much to your work. I would love to pick a part of, of *Body Full of Stars*, for example, read a piece of it, or if there's anything that you feel that you've recently written or worked with in terms of words or read. It doesn't have to be your own work, I [00:30:00] guess, but just where language felt really present and integrated into your body in a

[00:30:06] **Molly:** way.

You could read something from *Body Full of Stars* if there's something there for you.

[00:30:09] **Kaitlin:** Um, Oh, here's one. It sort of does both. It's both language and it's talking about language. It's from page 42. You're talking about pudenda. Am I saying that correctly? It says Pudenda means the external genital organs, especially those of the female.

This Latin word means shame. Language reflects what we value and what we don't. There is a mass disconnect from a part of us so essential to well being. Our power source is on lockdown. A secret underused. What if, early on, girls learned about the pelvic bowl as a place to care for, a place to ask questions of?

I am interested in body fluency. Imagine if the world was made up of people fluent in their own bodies. I mean, there's a lot happening in that section, but I think there was so much in your work where you're sort of, it's [00:31:00] helpful to know that you wrote it in that sense of urgency. Like there's this fluidity, like I'm there in your thoughts as you're unpacking and wrestling with pudenda.

I didn't know it means shame, but you're not telling me that I'm, it feels like I'm flowing through you into my own pelvic floor and then sitting with that. imagining that world made up of people fluent in my own body through the fluency that one has. With these terms even in themselves. But you did it in a way that, again, didn't feel like a medical textbook or some sort of how to guide, but really with curiosity and without, I think a sense of, of an answer, which I really appreciate.

Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . But yeah, I think that's, when I think about why I felt so comfortable in your work and that I felt a, that relationship as well, I think that's a key facet. I would hate to think that there isn't more writing coming from you, and also appreciate [00:32:00] that there is some sense of pause now. I also love the sense that writing isn't always something that comes Out of words on a page, like, and what that, what that could look like.

That feels radical to me. I'd love to hear more about what that means from that perspective of what that pushes, what's that bristling against, like where that comes from, but what that, what the possibilities are for that

[00:32:31] **Molly:** in your mind.

You're like probably five years ago. I remember saying to my husband, I just. And I'm sure this exists actually now, but I wish there was some sort of machine where I could attach like keyboard to my limbs or something. And I could literally like move, like learn to type differently, but through my body so that the writing was actually a physical.

Dance [00:33:00] instead of just my fingers dancing. It was my whole body dancing. Cause I felt like I wanted to project onto my wall, like a big screen that was huge. And then that I could like, like punch it out or flow it out and, and right. And anyway, we've laughed a lot about that, but that's what I'm talking about.

I, I want to feel. My body, not just my sensations in my body, but feel my body in motion as I am writing. And so a lot of what I do and even what I did when I was writing my last two books is walking and recording myself and writing with my voice and feeling what that feels like to have it come from my pelvis and up my voice and not necessarily through my hand initially.

Writing with a hand feels very, well, A, it's not oral history, it's written history, so we can think about history in that way, like who was creating written history versus oral history, right? It's written history. It doesn't [00:34:00] necessitate voice. Mm hmm. And computers are, this is a different thing than this, even we know with our brains, right?

And so, and this is great because I can edit all I want. I don't even know how people wrote books before there were computers. I don't even understand how they edited anything ever when they were writing on paper. So I'm really curious about oral storytelling and what it means to have words move through my body.

And so I practiced that in a lot of different ways, but I don't know what that's going to look like. It doesn't mean I won't write. I also like writing on my computer. I write in my journal still, all those things. I don't know. I'm in the mystery of it. I'm in the like, I have no, I'm in the curious, mysterious place and very committed to being an animal.

And that's, you know, that's what good writing is. It's sensory and it's animalistic. Like, and we all know that, you know, all the writers know that. That's what. makes something come alive.

[00:34:57] **Kaitlin:** Did you ever feel like when you've been working on [00:35:00] projects that are required in a sense to have a book form that that was, like, did you ever consider other forms?

[00:35:08] **Molly:** I didn't then because I think I was comfortable in that form then, you know, I did do a TEDx talk sort of about Body Full of Stars and that I really enjoyed, um, but it's different because it's That's more of a performance, you know, and I, and again, I love, I love visually seeing words on a page. I really like that.

I may be curious about what the process is. I would, I would love to do something more oral storytelling oriented. I'm also curious about how the words get on the page. Do I have to be sitting at my computer typing them or can I be walking through the woods speaking them? And then something translates it for me onto the page.

And then I look at them and then I play around and call it good. Like. Maybe it's that, I don't know. Yeah. And that's just very specific to my physical physiological response to technology. I feel like a little bit of an outlier. I feel it very deeply [00:36:00] and I, I don't like the feeling. I don't like it. And I felt it before there, when there were even flip phones, I remember saying to my friends, you know, I don't, this thing feels hot against my head.

And everyone's like, Oh Molly, you're so dramatic. And then like, you know, a couple of years later, they discover like holding a cell phone against your face creates problems. So I feel a little bit like canary in the coal mine around that. And yeah, I just, I'm, I want to be in the world, not on my screen.

[00:36:26] **Kaitlin:** Yeah. It's interesting. Cause as you're saying that I was thinking about early writing advice that I got was completely antithetical to that. It's always getting your butt in the chair and it's like staying. I remember one, I'm not going to call out the writer who's I'd read this, but it was like, stay in the room.

Like if you're on the thing and I'll often feel that, like I'll be. I'll be working on something and I'm like, I want to leave. I want to leave this. And I don't know, like it's hard to know is that impulse because you're uncomfortable with



something that's happening or you can't get through something and you're just supposed to push through it.

But maybe [00:37:00] that pushing doesn't have to happen. In that bodily moment, right? Like that pushing can happen elsewhere. And maybe that's a very, I, I don't know, it feels like a sort of more masculine approach to a more patriarchal kind of like idea of tough it out, sit in the chair and get through it and muscle through it so that you can.

[00:37:22] **Molly:** Here's the distinction I think is that if someone is knowingly distracting themselves, like with intention, like, wow, I feel overwhelmed by this idea. I don't know where to go next. I'm sort of a stopgap. Okay, so I'm going to get up and I'm going to walk and I'm going to walk the block with a question.

What the hell am I trying to say here is my question. Let me walk the block. You're going to get an answer. If you sit in your chair and stare at a blank screen. I Maybe you'll get an answer, but that's a real override right there of the nervous system. And so I also learned that to sit down and like do the three hour blocks and dah, dah, dah, all this.

And, and I wrote my [00:38:00] first book that way. And my second book was way more cyclical because I was way more aligned with my own cycle, my menstrual cycle, but also just the cycle of life. And I think actually that is super powerful. I know it is powerful. And this is part of what I. Facilitate with people is trusting the impulse within like this week.

Maybe I have a ton of energy for a creative impulse and drive. So I'm going to maximize it. And maybe I will stay up late for it, or maybe I will do this. And next week I don't because of X, Y, and Z that's okay. But it's all held within the containment of I desire creative expression. And so I'm going to make space for it.

I wouldn't call it spontaneous or random, actually. I think that's different. I would call it cyclical in terms of the bigger picture, knowing your own cycles, like all the cycles of when you have energy, maybe for some people it's the morning, maybe for some people it's the night, maybe it's this week versus that week.

And then in terms of the [00:39:00] blocks, like writing blocks, some people get them. I think why moving is essential. It's like, even if you don't leave the room, get up and move somehow. It's, it feels so essential and it is absolutely

masculine to say, and there's so much benefit to masculine. I'm not dogging masculine, but that particular thing, like sit down and don't move, I don't think has much function personally.

Let me just add one thing to that. Unless, unless there is. So much movement in a system where someone is so frenetic and they're so movie that actually a squeeze, a gentle squeeze or holding and saying like, I'm actually not going to move. And I'm going to feel what's happening inside of me and then see what happens.

So that for me has also been powerful, but separate from creative practice to, to still my body. And then I feel so much inside and then something organically starts to move, right? So different ways.[00:40:00]

I wanted to take

[00:40:00] **Kaitlin:** a pause here and check in with our listeners. Where are you right now? Are you sitting, driving, walking, making a meal? This conversation with Molly resonated with me for quite some time. I think so much of what we're told is creative production clearly doesn't happen. In with a pen or a paintbrush or a violin bow in hand, or with our proverbial butt in the chair, our bodies hold more stories and creative impulses.

And while yes, we need to sit in the chair, sometimes I think that discounting the time and the energy we spend outside of the chair often, for me at least, feels like capitalism just seeping in even deeper. So I'm really curious how this conversation and this particular point in the conversation resonates with you.

Find us on social media, which feels. Ridiculous to say, given what we're talking about here, but yeah, find us on social media on Instagram at [00:41:00] postpartum production, or send us an email at hello at postpartum production. com. And tell us how you wrestle with this idea of productive time in creative pursuits.

We'd love to share your thoughts if you're open to it on an. coming episode. And more than anything, we just love to hear where and how you found us and where you're listening to this conversation today. Thanks so much. And back to the conversation now.

To the earlier point of sitting and movement, you had me just thinking of birth. I mean, I was just thinking of how the Western medical model of childbirth requires. Being in one particular position and how that is completely antithetical

to how we are meant to move that my mother, for example, talks about when she was in labor.

She was actually in labor on Mother's Day. The nurses at the hospital where she was were saying like, get up and walk because that's how you're gonna get this baby out first because you get the [00:42:00] newspaper spread if you had the baby born on Mother's Day. So it's like, get up, walk, walk, walk, and I just remember that story, but it's true.

The more you learn about birth and physiological birth, you also learn. How important movement, not just movement and stillness, movement and still, right? Like you said, these rhythms that an external viewer or holder can't even define, right? For that person who's in that body. So I think again, intuitively knowing now is the time I need to sit versus now is the time or now I do need to keep my butt in the chair right now, but not because someone else is telling me that's what you do as a writer there rather, right?

There it is. Yeah.

[00:42:36] **Molly:** Yeah. And that, that actually feels worth celebrating. I do this a lot with the folks that are in my classes, especially the ones where it's a long term situation. If someone Um, Like the other night, someone was in a class and we were going to go into breakout rooms and she said, actually, I really need to go to sleep.

And I said, we're celebrating you for that. Like you that and said, I'm going to stay and do [00:43:00] the right thing and finish the class. And what I'm trying to support in myself, but also in others is literally listening to your impulse. And then. I'm saying, okay, I am thirsty. I am hungry. I need to go to sleep. I want to run whatever it is.

I want to say no to this person. I want to say yes to this person. We have been so socialized out of that. And so it feels like trying to return home to remember it. So each time that happens, I it's a celebration for me, for sure.

[00:43:30] **Kaitlin:** Early on, you were talking about conflict resolution and youth. You're talking about naturopathic medicine.

I was thinking about. how the writing world in many ways historically, right, has had a very particular path for writers, whether it's doing the MFA or not, or gatekeeping and publishing and how. reformatting what writing is and what it looks like is actually democratizing who can write, right? Like if, [00:44:00] if

only those who can sit at a desk with a certain, you know, technologically adapted device to write, then that's like pathologically creating such inequities, I think, you know, clearly.

And so if we are able to, like you said, celebrate the moments of turning away or even, and I will do a lot of work in this podcast around, you know, how we can value care work as well as other work. I'm curious long term what the impact is on creative spaces and on who controls creative

[00:44:38] **Molly:** spaces. Yeah. Yeah.

You know, in some ways that's one of the deepest gifts of technology, right? Is that there is a way to share creations with lots of people, as opposed to needing to live in New York and sit at a desk and, you know, whatever it is. [00:45:00] And so I value that for that. And there's so much, I mean, I just want to be clear whenever I talk about social media and such, I see the value in it.

I absolutely understand the value of it for that, that, that right there, creating social movements and also. People expressing themselves and finding outlets and all the ways. So that feels really positive to me, but yes, the access piece is huge. And it feels like we're actually in an exciting moment for that.

It could, or I'll orient to that, say this, this feels like a really good time to be alive and to be a creative person who wants to reach the world.

[00:45:32] **Kaitlin:** Yeah, that's a hopeful moment. There's a lot going on in the world right now that is hard to process, especially as a highly sensitive person, as I think a lot of creatives are.

And yet I've been really grateful for these conversations because the individuals like you that I've been able to speak with are finding The rub where there's the friction for the fire that actually is a really nourishing fire. And so it's really helpful. Yeah. To feel that. And I know that our listeners are really [00:46:00] grateful for that too.

Cause I think that just like your community, like we're just so hungry for. a sense of connection that we've lost historically for so many different reasons as a species. So I really appreciate the work that you do in doing that in your writing and in your community and in your facilitations and everything that that you're doing.

So there's a moment in *Body Full of Stars* where you talk about a postpartum awakening and it feels like you're in that and it also feels like you're in like another awakening now. I'm curious how you would define where you're at. And what's motivating that and also where you're sitting now and what that looks like.

I don't know. I

[00:46:39] **Molly:** don't know. Speaking

[00:46:40] **Kaitlin:** of words, I don't know where like this gesture. Maybe we do need the video.

[00:46:47] **Molly:** I like, I like the gesturing. Well, I should say I'm turning 44 in July. Yay. And so that's important to name because I'm in that life stage. It's different. Right. And I, and what [00:47:00] I know now. And I'm sure I will continue to learn is that there are very appropriate and ancient passages we go through at certain life stages.

It makes sense. I was just gathered with some of my other friends who are in their mid forties, and they were talking about how something is changing inside of them. And I'm sure it's physiological and hormonal and all those things, but it's also archetypal. Like there's something changing around, like, I'm not going to fight that fight.

I'm actually not gonna bust my ass to do this thing. I will for the things I care about, but I'm not, I'm not going to do that anymore. And in different ways in different iterations. And that feels, it feels age appropriate. It feels like, yes, that makes sense. And. So where I am now in terms of an awakening in my postpartum awakening, I was so like, what the fuck?

That's that was my awakening. What the hell just happened? Why aren't people talking about this? I, I gotta stand on the top of a building and scream this from the rooftops [00:48:00] because this needs to be known and acknowledged by all the men in particular, and it needs to be just like known. I couldn't believe it.

And I heard, I've heard that from a lot of women who will say they give birth and they walk out on the streets and they're like, what? A lot of these women have done this and no one, you know, and, um. It wasn't even just the birthing part. It was just the whole thing for me, especially the postpartum. And so now I'm in more of the space of how do I want to live this life?

And I'm being lulled and pulled by so we all are by so many other things, telling us to live it in this certain way. And I have friends my age who are dying. You know, literally that's very real around me. And so it's, it's like that Mary Oliver quote, you know, what do you, I want to do and I want to, what precious life or whatever, whatever her quote is.

It's that, which again, sounds so cliché, but it's real. And how can I be the most tactile and the most listening, like tactile, literally with the things in front of me and the [00:49:00] most listening to my own self and to others around me, how can I be the most supreme listener? And then align to that and, and not only to people, but to nature, to my environment, to the planet, all of that.

And that requires not having some things. And we've all been told like, you can have all the things, or at least our generation has been told you can have a certain part, certain parts of our generation, right? Privileged parts. You can have all the things. No, you, you actually can't. Have all the things and we're maybe not meant to have all the things and I don't mean that in a pessimistic way.

I mean that in a really beautiful way. There's contraction and expansion and where contraction is part of life and. When something contracts, something else expands. And so, yeah, I'm, I'm interested in living with the consequences because there will always be consequences and choosing my consequences and, and being, uh, it's, it's very, I'll say it in three sentences.

I just want to be my, the most alive person I can be for myself. I had a real [00:50:00] scare a year ago where I. I had almost no blood left in my body and like, that was very real viscerally, but also emotionally at all the levels. And like, I want that lifeblood. I want to feel it coursing through me and I want to support that in other people.

There's a lot pulling us away from that. And so my intention is to like reroute and come back to it. Yeah. Thank you. Yeah.

[00:50:25] **Kaitlin:** You did it. You did it. You used, you got the words, you picked the words that said the thing. Because I feel it in my body, so it's all good. Thank you. Perfect. And it can go across now.

It can just, you know, cross the social media ether and whatever that is. And if it doesn't... It was set in this part of the universe in this day at this moment. And that's as important, if not obviously very much more so. So thank you. I really appreciate you taking the time today and [00:51:00] sitting in the chair with me.

I'm sorry. We could have gone for a walk. Maybe that's what I should do. The walking podcast

[00:51:05] **Molly:** conversations.

[00:51:10] **Kaitlin:** Well,

[00:51:10] **Molly:** thank you, Molly. Thank you so much.

[00:51:18] **Kaitlin:** I'm your host, Caitlin Sini, and this is the Postpartum Production Podcast. If you like what you've heard today, please subscribe wherever you get your podcast and give us a rating which will help us reach more listeners like you. For regular updates, visit our website, [www.postpartumproduction.com](http://www.postpartumproduction.com). Follow us on Instagram at Postpartum Production podcast and subscribe to our CK newsletter.

Thank you for listening today. And being a valuable part of this community of caregivers and artists who are redefining the work that we do and pushing forward with a new system in which art and caregiving are increasingly valued and supported.[00:52:00]