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Transcript

(References included below)

Kate Lahey [KL]: That’s sort of the role that Weary has played in my practice, is being able to sort of narrate and externalize the stories that have been the most difficult to tell otherwise.

[Music: Ascending, bright, twinkly, uplifting, electronic]

Coco Nielsen [CN]: This is On Being Ill, a show about creativity, disability and identity. I'm your host, Coco Nielsen.

[Music rises then fades]

Today I’m excited to share a conversation I had with writer, musician and educator Kate Lahey who fronts the Newfoundland band Weary. During our conversation we talked about the importance of mentorship within the music scene, Kate’s academic research into memory and intergenerational trauma, and about hope – not as in willful ignorance or toxic positivity but just as just a feeling that we are capable of holding alongside all our other big, messy, scary feelings. Here’s that conversation.

CN: Kate, welcome to On Being Ill. Thanks so much for sitting down with me today.

KL: Thanks for having me.

CN: I was hoping that you could start just by introducing yourself—anything that strikes you as important off the top by way of an introduction.

KL: Well my name is Kate Lahey. And I was just laughing at the question because before we started, I was saying, like, my pride and joy is being a good sleeper. So I’m like, I guess that’s really important now, in some professional context. But yeah, I am a musician. I front a band called Weary. I'm also an academic. And that shows up as being…I’m a postdoc fellow now at Memorial University here in Newfoundland. And I'm also a course instructor and do some supervising and stuff like that. I've also done lots of community organizing in the past, although
not so much anymore, but I am still really proud and happy to be a board member for Girls Rock NL. Yeah, that's me.

CN: Awesome. So you mentioned Weary. So I was hoping we could start by talking about Weary. I know that you released two albums now—the first one Feeling Things came out in 2017, and Hush just last year in 2022. What role does Weary play in your life? And what has it been like to sort of be in that band or co-create that band with your fellow bandmates over the years? Tell me a bit about Weary.

KL: Yeah, Weary started in my early 20s. I had always loved listening to music and music was a big part of like soothing and coping. And it was like a really big emotional regulation space for me as a kid, and especially as a teenager, but I never played music, I found it, like, awkward and difficult. And I just didn't think about it. No one ever said, “Come do this.” So I didn't. And then in my early 20s, I had a bunch of people who said, “Come try this.” And I said, “Okay.” And one of those people was my partner, Chris Meyers, who plays in Weary. And another of those was my best friend, Joanna Barker, who I met through Chris, who's also his best friend. And they played in projects together in the past. And music continued to be a part of me wrestling with emotion in my life, but in a new way. And that was really in an externalizing way. Whereas I think, as a listener, it was a lot of the time, me and my room, lying in bed, staring at the wall, listening to my Walkman, or whatever. And now all of a sudden, it became a place of poetry and self expression, and all of these kinds of things where I started sort of narrating my experience, rather than just feeling witnessed by other people's stories. And so that became transformational for me in a whole ton of ways and has continued to do so over the last 5, 6, 7…however many years it's been of the project. And not just creating music, recording and releasing music, performing music, connecting with people who listen to your music, grappling with working with people—which is not familiar to me, and it has been at times really hard—and travelling and negotiating and doing admin things. And, you know, it's a whole...I've had a whole slew of experiences which have been transformational in their own ways, but sort of at the core of it, I like to think that that's sort of the role that Weary has played for me in my practice is sort of a place of emotional release and emotional storytelling and being able to sort of narrate and externalize the stories that have always been the most difficult for me to tell otherwise.

CN: Mmmm. I like what you said about just that gesture of “Come try this.” So many cherished things in my life have come to me because someone said, “Come try this” And I've always been very invested, I think like you, in being like that person who says, “Come try this’ to someone else. So I'm interested in why that's important to you and what role mentorship plays in your life.

KL: Yeah, you know, the community that I was in, is like, every…it felt like everyone around me had been playing music their whole life and was really proficient or technical in some capacity at what they did. I didn't have any of that. But within a year of writing music, I was performing music, and then I released our first album, like a year and a half or something after. So it was all really fast. And then we were you know, travelling and performing and doing all sorts of stuff. So the at that time, you know, I was immediately doing mentorships stuff, which I think was so funny because mentorship was so essential…like my first show happened because my best
friend Joanna Barker was like, “Open for me at this show.” And I was like, “Oh my God.” And me and Chris played it. Chris is a really seasoned performer. So it wasn’t, it wasn’t new for him. But I had him there with me and Joanna. And like, I remember I rehearsed, like, every day. And this was before I used any tools to help me—which I do now. But I think I had like a lot of my own stigma and stories. Like I wouldn't bring lyrics onstage because the culture is just that you don't do that. And like, now, I am like a little iPad baby, and I have my iPad on the stage with me, and do whatever I need to do to sort of feel comfortable. So I put a lot of pressure on myself. And I was so encouraged. And so many of my friends from the arts community came out and I just felt so loved and proud of myself and encouraged, I guess, is the word. And Joanna is a mentor to so many people. She wound up becoming a music teacher in Natuashish for the past many years. And I feel like—I've had so many great mentors throughout my life—but Joanna was the mentor through music, for me, that also really taught me values around reciprocity, and…and joy. And at that time, I was like starting my teaching career. And then my partner Chris was starting his teaching career. And like all of this stuff was kind of circling around. And Girls Rock Camp had just started like the same year, or the year after, or the year before…something around that time—a lot was changing in St. John's. And there were tons of amazing women and non-binary folks who were creating community, like sort of what felt like, out of thin air, although it wasn't out of thin air. But it felt really at the same time…I was like, “Whoa, this is happening around me like at this time!” But I had just kind of came in. And so I was just in this moment. So there also was opportunity there, I guess is what I'm saying. There was opportunity for that mentorship that I received to be extended elsewhere. And it just felt so good. You know, it just felt really good. And me and Joanna wound up doing so much work together: we founded an organization together; we were doing Girls Rock stuff together; and then we were doing a ton of community organizing—we were doing music programming in the women's correctional facility here with Safe Harbour Outreach Program, which provides programming for sex workers in the city; for St. John's Women's Center; for women's shelters; and transitional housing. So it was like a time really for me where all of community work and the energy that was being given to me, it was definitely like cycling through me as well. But I also got really burnt out. But that's not really to do with mentorship, really, I guess mentorship is what sustained me but it's everything around that I guess became really hard.

CN: 8:05
Yeah, I feel like that's a critical part of that story is...I mean, I appreciate what you said about reciprocity and learning that from your friend, and then, you know, really embodying that by giving back. And then coming to a point where you can't give so much anymore. So I am curious about that transition. It sounds like this has been like a very dense many years of your life. You've been doing so much including this work as a musician, and as a mentor. What did that look like to kind of transition out a little bit of being heavy into community organizing and mentorship? And, and where are you at now?

KL: 8:42
I mean, you know, sadly, it took my body breaking down in various capacities for...like that was such a defining part of the transition for me, was prioritizing my well being because I had to. Which makes me actually quite sad in retrospect, because I think so much of what I work to
prioritize now, in my practice, and in my life, is listening to myself. And in my early 20s, you know, I was just coming out of so much intense trauma, and there was a lot of energy around that, you know, like the release of that. So there was like so much energy in the freedom of movement that I felt. But at the same time, I didn't have really good filters up. And I didn't have really, obviously, a strong sense of self, you know, especially for me when I was 22, 23, 24. And I didn't have a lot of experience working with people and people in music, which can be the wildest group of people. So, you know, it really took some emotional crises and physical crises to draw my attention. But luckily, I eventually listened when I had to, and you know, was able to sort of make shifts and changes that I needed to. But Joanna Barker is still my very best friend; Chris Meyers is still my partner. So I feel gratitude, because the best parts of those experiences are still the best parts of my life now. There just became like these additional sort of swamps I had to navigate through that were really really challenging and unfamiliar for me.

**CN:** It sounds like your sense of contribution, reciprocity, productivity, has been crippled in a sense, and, yeah...I'm just thinking about how—speaking for myself—how much self compassion I've had to have, when I have had decreased capacity because I live with chronic pain. And I'm curious, kind of, what your relationship is to productivity and kind of where you're at now?

**KL:** Yeah, I am definitely, you know, I'm a recovering workaholic, for one. At that same time in my life in my early 20s, like, I was just finishing a master's degree that had a really traumatic subject matter. And I continuously used productivity and energy output to, I think, in so many ways, mask and avoid complex feelings. I think so often, I really thought I was aware of my needs. And in retrospect, you know, I really wasn't. And, you know, I was the person who my laptop was always next to my bed, and the second my eyes opened, I mean, I was literally grabbing my computer and opening it. And that extended to community organizing for me, because there were sort of like this administrative component that I could do that you can sort of just do on your computer, you're like firing off emails, and you're doing this and you're doing that, and there's sort of like busy work that can be made from that. And that's also part of what became unsustainable to me. Like mentorship where I got to connect with youth especially, like, that's endlessly fulfilling and sustainable to me. What's not is like, the bazillion emails that you have to do in order to like, to sustain that work, you know. So for me, at various times, this really compulsive and sort of unrestrained, picking up my computer and working all of the time, bopping around from music stuff, to community organizing stuff, to academic stuff, to whatever I was doing was, of course, like, wildly unsustainable to me. And, you know, starting my PhD shifted things to a degree. You know, all of a sudden, you're focusing on this, like, huge mountain, you know, this project that you've never done before, and it's on a scale that you've never approached before. So it really is a reorientation and a reprioritization. So, you know, so much of my focus and energy had to go to that. So that, in a way, was helpful for me in reorienting a little bit towards, not just doing too much of the things I was doing, but like doing too many things at once, as well. They went hand in hand for me with using productivity to really avoid, but also in that way, sort of harm myself, you know, and it was just maladaptive. You know, it wasn't functional, sustainable, or sort of, healthy for me. And for me, now, you know, I have multiple chronic illnesses. And I was diagnosed with a permanent disability a couple of
years ago. So all of that knowledge has also shifted the way that I prioritize my time. And the level of self awareness that I have. You know, I look back to like symptoms that I had…one of my chronic illnesses is an autoimmune disease, and I was diagnosed with it like 10 or 15 years ago, and I never…I just ignored it. Like it was there, and I would just ignore it. And then all of a sudden, on top of everything else, it became really unignorable. And all of a sudden it was really demanding prioritization for my basic day-to-day function at various times. And listening became a necessity and at first was sort of forced upon me, you know, because my body was screaming really loudly. And now my goal is that that doesn't have to happen, that such a loud volume doesn't have to be reached for my mental or physical or emotional well being to be listened to. But that's super new for me—really really new for me. And I feel like I'm learning a new language that I just truly didn't have before. So thinking about productivity completely differently, for me, has been a part of that listening practice where the priorities of what I consider productive or what I aim to accomplish, what I use my energy towards—if I could call that productivity—is different now. So that was like a key shifting piece for me, was perspective and priority. And there's been a lot of ways I haven't chosen what those priorities are. But I also have, of course, and I just feel like I'm quite at the beginning, you know, of a process of having different sort of priorities and different perspectives that all that energy of what I consider productive goes towards. It's not like accomplishments, or it's not when I say accomplishments, I mean, like externalized accomplishments or, you know, just random material goals or something like that. It's shifted to something much more like feeling-based and sensate-based and embodied-based for me. Yeah.

**CN:** I mean, we're bombarded with ableist, capitalist rhetoric all the time that says that we should be not only doing more, but wanting to do more, every single day, perpetually, more and more. And that rest is unproductive, that even tending to our own health is unproductive, that only in moments of total crises do we perhaps get a break. So yeah, I hear what you're saying that it was…you didn't choose to reprioritize; it kind of happened to you in some ways. But did you find that when you did kind of—and I hear you're saying you're kind of at the beginning of that transition of reprioritizing and sort of focusing on more a feelings-based or like a sense-based or embodied-based gauge of how you're doing—but who do you look to? Or what resources did you look to, to sort of help guide you…because it's so much something you have to carve out for yourself. Because it's not what we see or hear; it's not what's out there. Where did you go to figure that out a little bit?

**KL:** You know, I'm a chronic researcher. You know, research is a soothing tool for me, but if I take it too far, it becomes the opposite. So there's a sweet spot there. But um, social media, like tick tock and other platforms...But then of course, for me, like reading the internet, and then of course, I look to like literary streams and stuff like that. And so you know, looking to Disability Justice, reading books...like I read so many books in the last couple of years that pertain to like my particular permanent disability or like my particular chronic illnesses, and really was, like, craving stories. Because I think a lot of the time I was overwhelmed navigating…and I looked for opportunities. Like Rae Spoon put together like a great workshop—it was a series of workshops—last year, I think it was. And it was for musicians with disabilities, and we all came together, and it was so great. And they guided us through like a bunch of their knowledge, which
they're, like, so generous with. So I was just craving, like, connection, to not feel sort of alone. And, yeah, I was just really wanting to hear other stories. And I was really wanting to see my experiences in stories. And as you sort of referenced, I wasn't inheriting those stories, predominantly growing up, and I certainly wasn't given them in my family system or internalized, you know. And then culturally, as a Newfoundlander, like there's a lot of shame around...well, everything, but also, you know, like resting and just definitely a lot of pride in go-go-going. And so that was a big thing for me, was just starting to hear other stories, like learn new language, you know, discovering community and resources, and then also like tools and strategies that became really practical in my life. And then of course, working with a much broader medical team as well, of course, for me was a part of that because I could access resources, which just gave me access to, you know, if I need an occupational therapy, than an occupational therapist that come to my house and X, Y, and Z. So all of those sort of sort of went hand in hand for me.

CN: Mmm. I know that in your academic work, you do study memory and the past. I'm curious about what you've learned from that, that does—if it does—shed light on kind of...on your present ideas you're wrestling with.

KL: Yeah, I mean, at the core of how I think about and have approached memory through my academic work, through my creative work, has been through the lens of like trauma theories and through the lens of intergenerational trauma. So much of my life has been shaped by intergenerational trauma and particularly, you know, in my 20s, like, I went away for school and I was living abroad, and I came back to Newfoundland. And that's when I started making music. So there was like this really, a lot of reckoning with my identity, and my experiences, my family life...all sorts of things. And at the center of my family life, and for me, particularly my cultural identity as a Newfoundlander, was my maternal nan—grandmother. And she grew up in a really particular way. She grew up in outport Newfoundland, without electricity, you know, was born pre-Confederation and had a lot of trauma in her home, and poverty, and was really a compass for me in life—for my values, for my sense of self, and, you know, really drove the core questions that I wanted to ask the world, you know. Whether that be academically, whether that be emotionally in my relationships, you know—I still ask those questions that she's given to me all of the time. And all of my work academically and artistically, they often center around the same questions, they just approach that exploration of them in really different ways. So, you know, memory, I started studying in my master's degree, and I was being really drawn to in artworks. And, you know, one of the ways I knew that that was of interest to me was because I grew up around storytelling so intensely. So I grew up with so much imagery about my nan's childhood, and a place and a time in Newfoundland, that was rich, and complicated, and filled with secrets that were really palpable to me. You know, a story I tell in my dissertation is, when my mom would walk into my nan's house, there was a photo of a family member that she would turn around every time she'd walk in the house. So the backward face, right? So you know, there was all of these really complicated moments of tension where there was the stories that were being shared with me, and there was all these silences that were really loud, that were happening and gestures like that, and all sorts of moments, but also in listening to adult conversations, and all sorts of moments, right? So that became like, the fodder for my curiosity with memory, and trauma, and secrets, and shame. And the darker things, you know. I've
always liked—I shouldn’t say liked—but been drawn to the darker parts of my family stories and my own stories, and have just felt them quite deeply. And so they became a really big focus for my academic research, which then evolved into my doctoral dissertation, which is called At the Mouth of the River. And it’s about intergenerational trauma, secrecy, and shame in Newfoundland. And while I was doing that work, of course, I was making artwork at the same time, that was also grappling with similar questions. And I’m certainly not the only…one of my colleagues, Casey Mecija, who teaches at York now, she made Psychic Materials, which is an amazing album at the same time as making her dissertation. So there’s, you know…I think a lot of artists are using their art practice to explore topics that they’re, they’re exploring elsewhere, whether that’s emotionally, mentally, in relationships, academically, professionally, like whatever parts of your life, you know…to dedicate that amount of time and energy to a singular project or question, you kind of have to be the type of person who’s quite fixated and immersed in those questions. And artists certainly often get quite immersed in, as does academic research. So for me, they came together to explore that question in different ways.

**CN:** That makes total sense. We sort of are always ruminating—or more positively—thinking about, the same themes, or the same events, or the same topics, or the same questions. We do just tend to circle back...or a lot of us do. One other topic that comes up in some of your creative work is about resource extraction and industry in Newfoundland, and I’m curious about connecting it back to your Nan’s way of life and also how you wrestle with that in your creative work—in Weary.

**KL:** Yeah, resource extraction is central to contemporary Newfoundland. I mean, as a sort of nationalistic colonial project, like Newfoundland, historically was established entirely around the resource extraction of fish. And my nan’s life was a part of that, you know. Her father was a planter, which is a super low rung in the cod fishing industry. And every community like hers was a settlement that was littered around the edge of Newfoundland. You know, we have so so many communities. And that was all you know, people fishing and drying fish and fueling a project of empire, you know. And there’s been so many wonderful artists who have thought about this, I’m thinking about Camille Turner—I write about her work in my dissertation. She has an awesome project called the Afronautic Future Lab, which came to Newfoundland and looked at the relationship between boatbuilding and fisheries and the slave trade, and has really interesting work about that. So does Sonya Boone [who] wrote a great review of that work. And Bushra Junaid curated a show on the same theme that included Afronautic Future Lab. So, historically, resource extraction is the driving force behind what we know of as Newfoundland today. You know, that’s the history. And the big transition there is to the oil industry. So we took all of the fish out of the water. And then we turned to oil. And that means Newfoundlanders, like, leaving Newfoundland en masse to live in Alberta. But it also has come with cultural shifts. And it’s also come with relational shifts here, you know, it’s really disruptive for families, obviously, to do rotational work, and so many do. So there’s been a big sort of shift there and one of my favourite visual artists—and she made the album artwork for Hush—is Tanea Hynes. And Tanea’s from Labrador city. She’s like a fourth generation iron ore miner, from Lab City and she has been making incredible multimedia, but also primarily photographic works, about mining in Newfoundland and Labrador. And she has a project called Workhorse. It's a beautiful book of
photography that came out. And I love how her work speaks to sort of the complexity of settler colonialism, and resource extraction, and memory, and family, and intergenerationality, and identity, and belonging, and pain and suffering. You know, mental health has been a huge crises around these industries, as has physical safety. And Tanea’s work alludes to that beautifully, particularly addictions. There’s like a huge rise in drug use that was associated with like an influx of money that came along with the oil industry and all this stuff. So there’s interconnections that I see between the minut scale of like individual experiences physically, mentally, in families, as connected to mega things like resource extraction and industry. And in Newfoundland, those two things have always been tied together through identity and through community and through labour. So that's sort of a little bit about how resource extraction sort of shows up in my in my world.

**CN:** Mmm hmm. And then you transform that or you metabolize that a little bit in your creative practice. Can you talk a little bit about that, like, as far as how that translates into your songwriting.

**KL:** Songwriting for me is so emotional. And, like, a lot of the time, I find my lyric writing really, like, harnesses personal stories. Like I don't try and tell the story of everyone. And there are some people who are, like, really gifted at that. Like Joanna is really good at that. She has a song called “Enough” and it's about her experience with Indigenous identity. And she's like, able to speak to like a shared experience for that community. You know, there's tons of Newfoundland songwriters who are like really gifted at this. But I'm just not one of them. I think I really have always focused on the specifics of my stories, and where emotion has come from, like, very directly from, like, various experiences. So a lot of the time, my songwriting is sort of, like really connected to, like heartbreak, or, you know, I'll talk about experiences with trauma or loss or grief. Like I'm thinking about songs like “Bruise” on our first album, or, you know, songs like “Trust” on *Hush*, like…that was a song about, you know, me feeling, like, claustrophobic and scared in relationships and having a tendency to be avoidant. And songs like “Big Love,” are about a close person to me, like, struggling with mental illness and sort of me talking to them about my love for them. And so, you know, there's like, really intimate, specific like stories and people to me. But I try and write in a sort of broad way, like in a bit of like a pop-oriented way, where I think you can tell a story that people can connect to emotionally, but they don't have to know all the details of. And I think my hope is that that story is connected to bigger shared stories. So I don't have to tell that story. But I can connect and harness, sort of, the emotion and the energy of those stories for people. You know, there's definitely songs that I've tried to do that on more than others. You know, songs like “Order” is a really specific song about how trauma lives in the mind. And obviously, I'm able to write lyrics and make music in a sonic world around that experience that I think, tells that story. But at the same time, it's like, it's also a really broad and accessible—like lyrically and musically—song that so many people could relate to. You know, it's not like a very precise story that you had to go through, you know, it's like, if you ever you've experienced the feelings that I'm describing, which, you know, lyrically in that song, is like, you know, the end is like, “Am I a real person? Am I a whole person? Am I a good person?” Those are the questions that trauma makes us ask of ourselves that are really painful. And that can be individual, but that can also be, you know, collective trauma. So that's kind of how I
approach songwriting and like a creative practice that invites consideration for, like, various scales of experience. And I think that's also how I speak to political issues and social change has always just been through my own experience. Like, I'm so afraid to speak on anyone else's behalf, like, because I think, you know, it's really hard to do justice to someone else's story. And I just, I don't even have mine down yet, you know. And so, I think I've really just tried to, like you said, metabolize bigger human themes through my story, but in such a way that they can then also be metabolized by others through there's. Yeah.

**CN:** Mmm hmm. I wanted to ask you a question that is maybe a bit more future-thinking or visionary. I'm reading the book right now The Future is Disabled by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. And in that book, she writes, "What would a world radically shaped by disabled knowledge, culture, love and connection be like? Have we ever imagined this not just as a cautionary tale or a scary story, but as a dream?" So I was just curious about your thoughts on that quote, and what that future could look like?

**KL:** I love this question. And I...you know, it's a question I pose a lot as well in the classroom, and that I also pose in panels and events like that. For my work, it's so funny, because memory, you know, to me is how our minds and imaginations can take us to the past. And dreaming is a way that that same sort of mechanism takes us to the future. And they're so not linear, and they're so not as categorical as you think. I think that's something that I've been learning, is you don't just go to memory and go to the past, and you get some perfect snapshot of exactly what reality was like then. And you don't imagine a world and then that's tomorrow, you know, imagine that, right? It's like, there are things that happen in the between spaces. And a lot of those are process-based, you know. When we're returning to the past that's being gestated through a filter of who we are now, and through our experiences, through our bodies, through our minds—what we allow ourselves to access, what we don't allow ourselves to access, and all sorts of other filters. It's a really complex, imperfect process, and it's a very human process. And there's, there can be empowerment in that; there can also be a lot of disempowerment in that. And, you know, I think dreaming is really tied to hope, which often gets squashed under oppressive circumstances. And trauma certainly takes the future from us so often, you know. And that's a prime tenant of trauma theory—I'm thinking of the work of Cathy Caruth who talks about trauma as sort of a missed experience, you know, a break in time that we then return to over and over and over again, in flashbacks, in relational patterns, in our bodies, all sorts of ways. Because we're trying to understand something that's evaded comprehension to us, right, that's broken our trust in ourselves in the world around us, in people, in a sense of world order. And trying to build hope and trust from that place where an orientation towards the future is so often taken from us and we're sort of non consensually swept back to the past over and over again, is really painful and frustrating. And I think a really big shift in my life has been the ability to slowly start to heal and to reclaim an orientation towards future-making, which includes hope. Which a lot of the time I find actually really terrifying. Like, I find it really scary to hope and dream. And I often like don't let myself because you know, trauma can lock us in an orientation towards the past, and take hope away from us and make anything oriented towards the future super, super scary because we've been in something that our mind perceives as as really, really
deeply life threatening and deeply restructuring to our orientation to self and other and the world around us. And a part for me of sort of working through my own healing but then also theoretically and in my work has been to think about dreaming and future building and hope. And my supervisor, Dina Georges writes so beautifully about radical hope and has really challenged me through my doctoral process to not be trapped in that orientation and create room for more—not to turn away from it either. And sort of delude myself and fantasy, but to bring some harmony between those various parts of who you are, which is all that you've been, and how it shapes you and all that you will be, and how that will reshape the past. And so, you know, like, hope isn't not being afraid, hope isn't not being depressed, hope isn't not being sad or grief-stricken or terrified, you know. Hope is actually the thing that can only occur in those emotional environments. So really, allowing room for the contradictions has been really helpful for me. Like to be hopeful, you don't have to be positive, it's the opposite actually—it's just more akin to like bravery or something, right, where there's just something else, you know. And sometimes it's like a little tiny kernel. And it just sort of chafes at the story of, you know, oneness that you might repeat to yourself, you know. So for me, it's really, you know, making space for that contradiction of, I'm super scared right now. But also...and those two things contradict each other, sometimes, you know. And especially with other people, like, “Oh, my God, they're such an asshole right now...but they're also having the worst day of their lives,” I don't know. So sort of trying to create some space where the pipeline from hope to empathy is open, and the two can kind of be fueling each other a little bit, you know. So really, for me, I don't have like a tangible, you know, vision or dream. But I think for me, I really think about a feeling and I think that that feeling would be hopefulness, which is so vulnerable and require so much like trust, and it's just really scary, but you know, is to have an orientation towards hope that then could refill itself, you know, that could be replenishing. Because when you hope you can sort of take more risks, and create things and then you can be a little bit more empowered or a little bit more connected than you might hope a little bit more, you know, and it's really contagious in that way. And sometimes it's other people, right, who sometimes before we're ready to be vulnerable, to hope, there's like this wonderful, amazing human survival part of us that always does, you know, to some degree, wants to connect and others sometimes give us that seed of hope, even when we don't have it for ourselves. So hope.

[Music: Ascending, bright, twinkly, uplifting, electronic]

**CN:** Our guest today was Kate Lahey. You can find out more about Kate at [KateLaheyCreative.com](http://KateLaheyCreative.com). And go ahead and follow Weary on Instagram [@WearyBand](http://@WearyBand). To listen to Weary’s music [head to bandcamp](http://head to bandcamp) or wherever you stream music.

*On Being Ill* is researched, recorded and produced on the traditional, unceded and treaty lands of Indigenous peoples across what is now contemporary Canada where each of us on the show is grateful to live and work. Please visit our website to learn more about our relationships with the lands and the peoples who live on them.

This show is produced by me, Coco Nielsen, alongside Emily Blyth. And executive produced by Emilia Nielsen.
Prince Shima creates all of the music you hear on our show. You can find him on bandcamp @PrinceShima.

If you liked this episode, check out more at EmiliaNielsen.com or wherever you listen to podcasts.

If you’d like to get in touch with us, please write to OnBeingIIPodcast@gmail.com. We’d love to hear from you.

And finally, a big thank you to SSHRC, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and York University who fund this work through a Knowledge Mobilization grant.

Until next time, let’s create, converse, and crip the system together!

[Music rises in crescendo then fades out]

[End of transcript]

References

