Podcast: On Being Ill
Season #: 3
Executive Producer: Emilia Nielsen
Producer(s): Emily Blyth and Coco Nielsen
Episode Title: Bending Into So Much More
Guest: Tea Gerbeza
Release Date: October 2023
Website: https://emilianielsen.com/

Transcript

(References included below)

Tea Gerbeza [TG]: Paper quilling isn't as accessible an art form because it's quite dexterous. But in its slowness, it does feel like a particularly crip art form. Like for myself, the long poem, that I often find myself working in.

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

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

[Music rises then fades]

EN: Today, I'm excited to share a conversation I had with Tea Gerbeza – a queer, disabled, and neurodivergent poet, writer, and multimedia artist creating in Treaty 4 territory and on the Homeland of the Métis. During our conversation we talked about Tea’s visual arts practice in paper quilling and scanography; her writing practice which explores—among other things—themes of disabled selfhood, the complexities of pain and care as well as the Bosnian diaspora; and the process of bridging both practices—poetry and visual arts—in her multimodal book How I bend into More. Here’s that conversation.

EN: Welcome Tea. Thank you so much for joining us. It would be great if you could start off the top by introducing yourself...anything else that strikes you as important to say off the top as an introduction to you.

TG: Thank you so much, Emilia. I'm delighted to be here. Hi, everyone. I'm Tea Gerbeza. I'm a writer and artist creating in Treaty 4 territory. I love lists, so here's one of the recurring topics and themes of my work, both writing and visual, that I currently focus on: reclaiming disabled ill identity and selfhood; Disability Justice; disabled, ill and queer joy; queer identity; the Bosnian diaspora; friendship; the complexities of care and intimacy; memory; trauma; and the complexities of pain. Oh, and I'm fascinated by beds and thinking about them. Them as spaces especially as like disabled and ill people and how they're spaces have complex things like joy and intimacy but also like pain and sickness and comfort but then also discomfort. So yeah.
EN: Beds, you know, I have to respond because I’ve found that…I mean, it's a fascination for me as well under the same terms. You know, I often think about Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha’s line about “we can create from bed”…like the solidarity of crip, disabled, chronically ill creation—organizing from bed. And I think about how that for me has also been a recurring theme that I found in some crip poetry and poetics. So that's…I love that that's on your list, even though at first I was like bed? What do you mean? Garden beds? That’s what I must be thinking about right now…which also are a place of creation. Let's start talking about your book of poetry, How I Bend into More, which will be published by Palimpsest Press in 2025. Huge congrats on this! This is so exciting! And what a fabulous press to have this book come out with. Most books, most projects, have a kind of origin story—a beginning, a why this, why now. I'm so curious about how your manuscript, I guess first, before it became a book, how or why it first came into existence?

TG: Great question. And I hope my answer isn't too long, because it's been in the works for a very long time in different ways. And funny enough, beds come up in it as well, but more visually. To start, I guess the book began from like my first teenage tumblr post on scoliosis and identity. And then later, when I found that I had a knack for poetry, which was actually in my undergrad, it took like a long time to get my poetic voice. I realized that I kept writing about my body and my scoliosis experience, but also the experience of my parents and myself during the Yugoslavian Civil War, also known as the Bosnian war that happened in the 1990s. And I was born into that war. So there’s a lot of those themes in my work. So there’s this echo throughout the book of each of my parents at different points telling me that my sort of spinal fusion surgery was worse for them, psychologically, than this war was, and that in itself has stuck with me, since they’ve said that and it's raised questions that I don't know how to answer, still, even though I've written a lot about that complex statement. So I spent a lot of time thinking about that, first in my Master's at the University of Regina, where my thesis focused more on that war and exploring postmemory, which I will define in just a second, and my sort of liminal space within that sort of definition-concept. So postmemory was coined by Marianne Hirsch. And postmemory is a sort of recent concept in the study of atrocity that engages with how people that have suffered trauma pass on the memories of this original trauma to their children, and then essentially become the child’s memories as well. And so the way that I complicate this is because I’m both a survivor of this war, but also a child of survivors. And the reason this is important for How I Bend Into More’s sort of origin story, is because the book also echoes some of these events from this original sort of manuscript. I took some pieces from it, and added it to How I Bend Into More. So I think the two projects in their sort of long term, once I actually go back to this family project, will have echoes across books. But I think it was important for me to write about this difficult sort of family narrative as my first full length project, because it sort of introduced me to the thinking that I needed to do that would fill a larger project. And so after doing that, there was still something that felt important that I wasn't getting onto the page. And so I was like, what is that? So then I was exploring more about the body. And then in my undergrad, I was introduced to language around disability studies and ableism. And then I finally…something clicked. I was like, oh, there's a language, there's a community, there's a sort of cannon that I haven't been introduced to yet. And then that first master's, there wasn't enough
space within that family project to let me really explore that. So that sort of propelled me into really focusing in on my disabled experience and sort of bringing my sort of experience from the margins to the center. And then finally, sort of going through and writing poems about understanding the way that my body works, and sort of a process of unlearning a lot of that ableism that persisted throughout my childhood and adolescence. So then I did an MFA to sort of have time to dig into all that, you know…

**EN:** Because one Master’s isn't enough—you need at least two, right?!

**TG:** I know, I know, it was just wild. All this to say is that, in this long ramble about how *How I Bend Into More* started, I guess we can just boil it down to thank you Tumblr for existing for my teenage self.

**EN:** You're not the first person that I have heard say that. There was something about the community, especially I think, the crip disabled queer communities that found space in that particular platform that I don't think people really say with as much enthusiasm being replicated elsewhere. You know, I don’t know what it is. But perhaps it was the time, perhaps it was the place, perhaps it was the kind of rudimentary nature of it…not as someone that was on it, really in any way at all, just kind of looking, what are you up to, what are other people doing? But we need that community to both sort of get ourselves going, but also to see what other people are doing to have that kind of mobilizing, that collective mobilizing.

**TG:** Totally, totally. And that website, I think, was the first place that I found other people that shared my experience with scoliosis. And that was like, it was just so amazing to be like, “Oh, I'm not the only one!” Because in literature, there isn't a lot. So it was like, finally I can like see myself and like, talk about my experience with at least one other person.

**EN:** Yes, exactly. So unlike others I have had the privilege of reading your manuscript before it became a book, or is in the process of becoming a book. I’m curious about if anything’s shifting or changing. There's always a process it seems where either it's too long and your editor asked you to cut it down or it's too short, could you add in something? And I think when I think about your manuscript, I think that there's probably particular challenges and going to the page in certain ways. Maybe you could talk about what how it's forming, or how you're envisioning it to sort of find its place as a book.

**TG:** Yeah, I've thought about this a lot. And you know, maybe it will need to be printed to the side because of the spinal aspects of it. And in terms of it changing, since you've seen it, Emilia, it's sort of been shortened a bit. So part of that changing process was, I recorded myself reading it from cover to cover, and then listened back to it and picked out some spots where maybe things could be tightened a little bit, or perhaps there was a section or a few that just didn't fit anymore with how things were sort of working together. And I've combined some things. And then I sort of thought about how the visual aspect of it…So for listeners that might need some context for this is—so my book is multimodal, it involves verse text, but also it has visual poems
that involve scanner photography and paper quilling, and then also portraits that I've taken of myself. So it has a few different modalities in it. So some of the poetry I found…found ways to incorporate into the visual to then also shorten it. But in terms of working with my editor, Jim Johnstone, like I haven't gotten edits back yet. So I'm really excited to see what he has to say, because it's been so cool to read what other people have thought, because the manuscript has been through so many people. And since I graduated, the MFA, a couple of my poet friends who are also disabled, and ill went through it. And they also had a few like, patterns that they noticed that either wasn't working or could be tweaked a little bit. And I was like, wow, this is so cool! So I'm really grateful for all the insights that helped this manuscript come to be. And I keep going back to it, and there's like little things that I want to change then I'm like “No, I have to wait, I'm gonna wait!”

EN: Well, I mean, it sounds amazing. And I think, yeah, what I was sort of thinking about was that how to get it on the page, right, that how to preserve the sort of energy of that multimodal presentation. And of course, I've seen it in an electronic form, but in a book, there are certain kinds of opportunities. So it sounds like it's all very exciting and in process, including if there is a slanted page. We're going to talk a little bit in a moment about the specifics of paper quilling and scanography—if I'm saying that correctly—scanning photography. But first, maybe we could just hear a poem, it would be amazing if you could choose something from the manuscript. And if it needs to be set up at all, I'm sure our audience members would appreciate that, as would I. Yeah, I'm so curious what you might choose.

TG: I think the best way into the book is the beginning. Mostly because, I will still have a little bit of a setup, but I think that it will be the best way not to have to stop in a lot of places to explain things. And it also introduces a lot of tensions and questions that the manuscript sort of deals with. So just something to describe before I get into it: so the book starts with this visual motif of a vertical line that goes down the center of the page that's composed of hyphens. And then at the beginning of the book, that sort of vertical line has an X at the top, and then the X comes in, in different ways throughout the book. But when you see the horizontal line throughout the middle of the book, it doesn't have the X in it. So this introduction sort of teaches the reader how to read and understand the different ways this vertical line is read and understood throughout the book, which you will hear in a moment. And then this sort of segment is connected with wavering one line stanzas that introduce the reader to questions of the book and topics that are in tension with each other and trying to navigate and answer or not answer. So I'm happy with how I've set that up. So I will just go and read now.

[The following text has been included in its original formatting as it appears in How I Bend into More by Tea Gerbeza]
a cut line
a fold line
a stitching
a thread
a surgical trace line
a suture
a scar

a spine
(12 AM on the ninth anniversary of my spinal fusion)

naked on my bed

my whole body be

nt

scalene

in my forty-five degrees

measure my dark room

eyes closed

my fingertips my mirrors

trace the crescent

overlap of skin over

skin: an unsolved space
curled from knees to child pose I lengthen
to learn the parentheticals of curves

my body’s rotational dynamics another language

wanting to be opened
to belong to me

I make a pact: use touch for answers

feel how soft skin is even calloused patches shimmer are stars flaking

into air

how have I not noticed this before
my own quilled shape a half-moon

my coiled fingertips stroke

papery edges toes swollen berries

at my own pace

build a circuitry for repair

for what my body remembers

how do I grasp my uneven pressures

what my body has
to tell me

[End reading]

EN: Mmmm, that was great. It's lovely to hear your work again. I think it makes sense that your book, your creative writing practice, would be informed by your other artistic practices. As soon as we hear something like multimodal it's like, oh, many things are going on! Multiple things are going on! This book is going to look differently than perhaps other books. We often have expectations of poetry is that, you know, poetry looks a certain way. And actually, there's a great diversity of the ways that poetry can be represented on the page. But you're someone that has both a creative writing practice and a visual art practice. And you primarily work with paper, as I gestured to earlier, and I kind of feel like you work with paper in somewhat surprising ways, which is delightful. I'm curious about what drew you to these two different mediums.

TG: I think my writing practice and visual art practice are quite intertwined. Often, my visual work sort of involves poetry in some kind. So whether it becomes a visual poem, or there are lines of poetry embedded in the work. But other times, I also have an idea for a project or this sort of abstract concept. And I'm just like, I don't know how a poem will fit this, like I don't even know how to approach writing something. So then I sort of think of it in a visual way, and then it sort of snaps together. So then it's like my interests are sort of being met by these different forms, but then still sort of talking together. So to sort of go back to our conversation about beds, I haven't found a way to poetically explore that with words. But I'm doing this sort of visual bed scapes project where I'm creating quilled paper beds that have different sort of meanings. And I've only created one so far, because it's such a slow art form. But I love that because I work on queer crip time, so...And I think another thing that I'd like to say about this is that another way that they connect is also as like a revision, or a problem solving strategy. So sometimes if I'm stuck on a poem, or a story, I go and paper quill, and just let that sort of sensory memory take over and just like let my brain sort of wander and think about whatever it is I'm trying to solve. And often just those repetitive motions that I don't have to think about in the same way as thinking like just “does this comma really need to go here?” It just sort of unleashes something. And then so it just helps me get inspired or dive back into the topic with freshness. Or I'll like literally cut up a poem. I did that for my manuscript as like an editing thing, and then rearrange it, or I quilled some of the lines on like, my quilling comb, so it's just this sort of metal comb with different size prongs. And then it like revealed a different poem. And that helped me sort of cut things down and illuminate some of the lines in really interesting ways. And then I also think that there's just so much poetic possibility with paper and then cutting and rolling it and the language around those sort of mechanical steps, particularly about the body. So it lends itself so much to metaphor and with paper quilling because it's an art of rolling and pinching individual strips of paper and then combining those small shapes into a larger shapes, it's quite different than maybe painting because I sort of have to like, make all these shapes and then hope that what I think is going to happen, happens. And then like fix, you know...if you make a mistake, fixing it sometimes takes a whole different, like...oh, I have to make another leaf to make this like
actually come together or something like that. So it's a really slow process. But I think while paper quilling isn't as accessible in art form, because it's quite dexterous, in its slowness, it does feel like a particularly cript art form, just like for myself, the long poem that I often find myself working in, because it ebbs and flows, so much. So like a quilting project might take me months. You know, one month might be making like small circles that will then make a bed. So one day maybe I'll write an essay about that.

EN: Now, I'm really sort of making the connection between the long poem and the paper quilling process. And I think, for anyone listening that's like, oh, I think I'm starting to form a visual picture in my mind about what paper quilling is, right: the strips of paper, the rolling and the pinching. This seems to be both something that people have probably always done with paper, but also not something that people commonly do in this moment with paper. Who introduced you to this? Or how did you find this art form?

TG: So in 2018, I was writing my MA thesis, and I could do that anywhere. And my partner was going to Trent University for his MA. And so I was living with him in Peterborough in this small attic apartment, and it was really hot. And I was, I don't know, I think I was on Pinterest. And I was wanting to make some origami roses. And I was like looking up….I had made some before, and I was trying to remind myself how to do it. And then I stumbled upon, I can't remember what the paper quilled piece was. But it was just so beautiful. I was like what is this, like, this is not origami, it's something different. So then I sort of, I think I did a reverse image search. And then I watched someone…a YouTube video of just rolling like a circle. And I was like, oh, I'm gonna go try this. And then I promptly went to the craft store that same day. And, you know, I've never seen Michaels have this slotted tool that I bought that day ever again. But I found it and I tried some and made these really simple sort of…an open spiral. So you just sort of roll it on the slotted tool, which is a tool that has….how do I describe it? It has a slot in this little metal part. And then you just sort of use it to roll the strip and then you let the strip sort of expand. And that's the sort of basis shape for most of the other shapes that you can make. And so then, when I first did it, it just sort of felt like a memory awakened in my hands, even though I've never done this art form before. And then I just kept going. And so now, both poetry and paper quilling feel one in the same even though they're quite different. Because whenever I'm creating a paper quilled piece, whether it's a bed or some jewelry, which is what I've been doing a lot of, it feels like I'm constructing a poem, because I'm still figuring out the ways the individual pieces work, which is similar to how I think about words in a poem. And so there's a lot of moving pieces and guesswork at play. And I have to say that I'm really grateful to one of my mentors, Jennifer Still, because she was the one that encouraged me to bridge the gap between the paper quilling and the poetry and to make them connect and sort of do poetic work together. And that's sort of…my brain, like, exploded.

EN: Amazing. I mean, I can see also you know, what makes poetry different from prose, perhaps, is that not only is each word important, but that you know, each line in a sense, should be able to stand alone with intention. And then each line forms a stanza which should be able to stand alone in its own kind of certainty and then adding those things up becomes the poem which in its whole is one thing but each part is important. When I hear you with the comb,
curling this first spiral well that is one building block but it also, you know, in its jewel-like complexity, must be right before you can add on to these other things. It's unlike incidental words in a line of prose or one brushstroke that maybe could be taken away. It sounds like the whole bed would fall apart if that one little spiral wasn't there, for example, when you're building this piece. So if folks go to your website, and that's where I first saw this visual series, Painscapes, here, you're doing something quite intentional, right with putting all of these things we've been talking about into kind of one thing. Well, first, before I assume too much, maybe you could describe to us what this series is about. Again, the title's Painscapes. I'm curious about the preoccupations that you're working with here, but I'm also interested in how both paper quilling, which we've been talking about, but also scanography, which is a different modality that you use, come together in this series called Painscapes.

TG: Yes, so to explain what scanography is...so it also can be called scanner photography. So it's basically an image that's taken on the bed of a scanner after you lay some objects on it. And so it can be anything, you know, you can scan a document, which is what people usually do with their scanners. But I have put, you know, crushed up makeup, I've put flowers...but for this particular project, objects are paper quilled S and C scrolls and different sized circles. So similar to my book that's coming out, the S and C the scrolls, sort of stand in for my scoliosis and scoliosis-related disability, mostly because curvatures are typically referred to with letters. So two curvatures on the spine is usually an S curve. And a C curve is usually one curve of the spine. And it's usually when it's curved to the right. And then the circles for this project appear in a lot of my visual work, mostly because I'm fascinated with the metaphor of circles and their sort of endlessness and constant movement. And so that constant movement feels like my experience of pain. And then because of the slotted tool, there's often like a little little tiny hole in the middle if the circle is quite tightly woven. And so that sort of makes a little point, or like a puncture, or a pain point, or even a place that light can sort of escape from. So all of these things are great metaphors for pain. And so what I was thinking with this project is that pain has different landscapes. And so what does that sort of mean and manifest for me in different either points of the day or different ways that my body experiences pain. So what I did with this was I scanned objects and then I would edit them very briefly in Photoshop, just to sort of adjust the black background to make it look almost sort of liquid in depth. And so where this sort of project began was while I was writing How I Bend Into More—this part didn't make it into the final manuscript, but it was this sort of very fuzzy memory of post-surgery Tea on the bed, telling my mom to like check an x-ray for my pain. Like I don't know if that was real or not. But I was kind of stuck on that idea of like you know, what would she see if pain was actually tangible in an x-ray? And what would that look like? And so I started thinking about how an x-ray machine is so technical, and then the scanner is also really quite technical. So I thought that that seemed a sort of very good marriage of these like technical sort of machines that then are scanning for deeper meaning. And then on top of all of that, I was also thinking about, you know, the ableism that comes with pain. So how people if they can't see it, they don't, they never believed me that I was in as much pain as like, I would say I was in. You know, I'd get responses, like, “is it really that bad?” Or like, “it can't be that bad if you're doing this other thing.” And I feel like people that I've spoken to with similar experiences with chronic pain, it's like, we can work and do things while in copious amounts of pain, because that's sort of what our lives are like. But it is grounds
for ablest thinking of like, we're making it all up to get out of, you know, gym class, or like to get out of lifting a 50 pound flour bag. No. So in a way, the series is also sort of challenging those types of things. And that kind of ableism.

**EN:** It's still, like, disarming for me to hear, you know, such a common and damaging occurrence when other people contest what a disabled or chronically ill person is saying about their experience and what they can and cannot do...like being very clear both their boundaries. Pain is that strange one of "it could it possibly," “but how but." I think when I think about it, I think, wouldn't it be so miraculous if instead the lens was flipped to "Wow, it's amazing how much you can do despite the pain? Wow, isn't it amazing how productive you are, when I know you live with chronic pain.” But instead, right, we're still caught into this pretty rudimentary and yet very painfully damaging kind of dialogue. When I look at your *Painscapes* series, I also just think about the texture and complexity of any experience including pain, right, that there are different registers, there's different tonalities, to the landscape and to pain itself. So I love this series, for that reason. And also, it kind of reveals the process of making meaning out of one's experience, right? Not letting pain be one thing. Pain is multiple things, including individual. I'm curious then, Tea, about this process of making in *Painscapes* as a series. We've had a chance already to talk about the meaning-making involved, but the process of creation.

**TG:** Yes. One other thing that I was trying to do with *Painscapes* was also to sort of connect with and recontextualize my own sort of complicated relationship with pain. And so I wanted to sort of reimagine how it made a home in me, and sort of how it's irreparably part of my identity, and how I create alongside it, and with it, and its echoes throughout my day. And so the process of making these images might interest some folks because I feel like the process of creating the images was also a pain process in so much as how pain functions and how I manage my chronic pain. So those are the kinds of things I was thinking about. But the steps in creation was especially fun, because for scanography, the final image was completely unknown to me until I was done scanning. So the room to get that sort of depth and sort of liquid quality of the deep background, I had to create completely in the dark, I could barely see the scanner bed. So I was trusting my hands to just sort of do whatever they wanted. And I sort of felt that that process felt to me as if, like, my pain and body was just working together without my visual eye. That process of just trusting like what my body's doing was more intuitive. And then once I saw what the image was, I was usually surprised and then was like cool, and then I would just sort of adjust the contrast just to sort of liquify that background a little bit more and see what that did. And then I would do that with the image really zoomed in and so when I zoomed out, they all sort of somehow became these wonderful landscapes of pain. And then I was like thinking about how the steps of managing my pain...the final result of doing so is never like an un-pained existence. As great poet and also guest of this podcast Travis Chi Wing Lau says, there's a sort of kinship with pain, and his writing has really inspired the ways that I think about conceptualizing pain.

**EN:** Mmm, oh I love the two of you in conversation across the ether. I would love to ask you about your jewelry. I think I popped onto Instagram—I don't use my own account—but I got on just enough time to see some of your beautiful pieces...paper quilling pieces. And I think you're
so busy now you can't even take any commissions. But what are you doing there in that process? It looks fun, it looks beautiful, which are two necessary things to have in the world. How did the paper quilling turn into jewelry pieces and other kinds of decorative pieces, if that's the right word for it.

**TG:** So when I first started paper quilling, I was just sort of practicing shapes. And then I was making these sort of canvas pieces that had floral. And then I was like, I really want to wear these. And so I was like, I wonder if I could do that. And so then I just experimented with...I can't remember what my first paper jewelry was, I think it was very simple like a circle that was just glued on to like a post. And then I started getting more courageous and did some more floral pieces. But then I started thinking about how jewelry is such an expression of individuality and experience. So I wanted to do something within that as well. And so by creating these pieces that people might be excited to wear and express themselves is really kind of cool. And then also I've been doing a little bit of reading of sort of like floral motifs and like queer identity and queerness. So I'm sort of thinking about that and using these pretty jewelry pieces, but also as a way to sort of like, continue to come into my own queer identity as well. Yeah, I really love creating pretty things that people can wear. And it was also a sort of process of figuring out like, what sealant should I use, and I found something that works really well. It's this glue sealant duo. It's called perfect paper adhesive. So it like sinks into the paper instead of just like hardening on top like regular glue. So it makes it quite durable. Because people are kind of scared sometimes of the paper jewelry. They're like, it's so delicate. I'm like no, no, I've like worn it in the rain. It's fine...

**EN:** Especially with this sealant, I guess.

**TG:** Yeah, and it protects it against the sun and everything. Of course, like treat it like fine jewelry, don't wear it in the swimming pool.

**EN:** That seems like a logical one. So if we were going to go to your Instagram, then we would see leaves and floral motifs and different kinds of beautiful paper jewelry. This might seem like a silly question, what is your source for the paper? Can you use any types of paper? Or are there specific papers that work better for this process? For example, I couldn't get so meta and say, Could you do a poetic piece with a book of poetry? But then I'd be destroying the book of poetry...but you know what I mean, those type of... could manuscripts be, you know, recycled manuscripts be used for this? Or do you need a very particular type of paper to execute the jewelry, for example?

**TG:** Short answer: anything can be used. And I have used anything from book pages to my own manuscript. But I guess like if I'm making a particular piece of jewelry, a thicker GSM, which is like what they measure the thickness of the paper, is better because it's harder, but I just did a wedding hair clip, using someone's favorite copy of Beowulf, for example. So I could make it all happen. But don't give me a piece of paper that's like sort of really, really thin, like that really thin sort of paper, you'd find like in a Bible, I'd have to cut those strips myself. And then the paper cutter that I have would just rip it. But depending on how much my hands hurts. I also source pre
cut strips for a lot of my work. And unfortunately, that can only be found online from not Canada, but I really like to use recycled book pages and I try to use anything that I can roll basically. Hmm.

**EN:** Mmm. I'm sure you've noticed this, but I feel like I saw one of your poems included in a crip series in the United States. Do you know what I'm talking about? Tell me what big thing happened recently?!

**TG:** Yes, the crip poetics collection at the Poetry Foundation in partnership with Zoeglossia put together. So Zoeglossia is a nonprofit literary organization that is strictly for disabled poets. And their vision is to have a community and build a community of disabled poets and then also have mentorship opportunities. And then they also hold an annual retreat. So I got a fellowship from Zoeglossia last year—I was a 2022 fellow. The best part of it was meeting more disabled poets, ILL poets, Deaf poets, mad poets, in one space and connecting online. And then it was also just this amazing space of everyone’s access needs were being checked. That was like one of the only places where I was asked for like digital accessibility because we were meeting over zoom. And that’s been really awesome to just see the many ways that we can actually practice more accessibility.

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

**EN:** Our guest today was Tea Gerbeza. You can find her at [TeaGerbeza.com](http://TeaGerbeza.com). She’s on Instagram [@poetgerby](https://www.instagram.com/poetgerby), and you can find her paper quilling work on Instagram [@teaandpaperdesigns](https://www.instagram.com/beaandpaperdesigns/).

*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 Emily Blyth and Coco Nielsen, and executive produced by me – Emilia Nielsen.

Prince Shima creates all of the music you hear on our show. You can find him on Bandcamp [@PrinceShima](https://bandcamp.com/PrinceShima).

If you liked this episode, check out more at [EmiliaNielsen.com](http://EmiliaNielsen.com) or wherever you listen to podcasts.

If you’d like to get in touch with us, please write to [OnBeingIllPodcast@gmail.com](mailto:OnBeingIllPodcast@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
