How are you?
Thanks for coming.
Today we're going to talk about monsters and ghosts.
We should have candle lights and darkness, but it's very getting in spring, so we cannot do anything about it.
So let's do it like this with the light.
So we're going to talk about monsters and ghosts.
Now the bats are coming and the spider webs and stuff.
So we're going to talk about Latin American contemporary monsters and ghosts and the wave of women writers who are writing about it.
So we're going to talk also about fears, because monsters and ghosts are made of fear.
And I wanted to start this conversation or talk or whatever, asking you about your fears.
Whatever you can think of.
It can be something very personal, something social fears, like just say random things that scares you.
For example, I can start.
I'm really scared of flying.
That's a big fear that I have.
The death of a beloved one.
Yeah, that's a very scary one for sure.
Others.
Darkness.
Okay, yeah.
The ancient human fear of darkness.
That is related to death also.
What else?
Nuclear disaster.
Of course.
A very sadly, very urgent theme, no?
That is with us.
That has been with us since the '50s and now it's back again in full force.
What else?
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
The daily life things that can make a disaster of our days, right?
Something else.
Losing control over things.
Yeah, yeah.
That is, yeah, it's something like that, no?
When little things can blow in your face.
One more.
The climate crisis.
That's another one that is very also relevant.
Not so new, we can think that it's very like from these days, but it has been with us for decades, no?
But it's getting worse every day.
So fears, no, they can be very personal and particular fears.
They can be social fears or like the nuclear disaster, war, no?
Economic crisis.
Trump, whatever, no?
Or ancient fears as darkness or death.
They are a very human thing to have and we tend to transform these fears in monsters, no?
That is what a lot of writers and artists do.
And even us in our daily lives, we take a fear or someone that scares us and we from that make a monster or a ghost that haunts us.
So today we're going to talk about these writers and their fears and how they are built, monsters and ghosts with that.
Monsters are very Latin American, but somehow also connect with the crisis that we have all over the world right now in this global life that we have.
So a little bit of context before starting this story of horror or horror story.

Very briefly, I'm not an expert on the horror as a literary genre, but I would like to remind you and tell you that it was born as a modern literary genre in the 18th century.
It was an answer to the Enlightenment and all this faith in the rational and the horror and its relative, the Gothic, came to be a space for the rational, for the hidden desires and impulses.
Now where to put the fears that we had at the moment where everything seemed to be so rational and calculated and logic, what happened with everything that we couldn't explain?
Let's put it here in the horror story.
So in those years where in Europe was the horror and the Gothic was coming to be, Latin America was not still Latin America, no?
Was part of the Spanish empire, the Portuguese empire.
So it was until the 19th century that when Latin America started becoming a region and this group of very different and independent new countries that were trying to define what made us a country, a nation, communities, and they were fighting over what defined them and how to organize these new countries.
That time where it was, of course, a lot of fights, hate, disagreement, blood, fears.
And then the first stories with ghosts, Latin American ghosts, started to appear.
Very isolated, very few.
One of the first one was a woman, Juana Manuela Gorriti, Argentinian, who wrote about this ghost that appeared in the period of the independence wars, no?
In the first breaths of the country.
But I don't want to dwell so much in the past because I want to come to the present days, but I want to stop in the middle of the 20th century first to talk a little bit, very briefly, about what is maybe our foundational ghost story in Latin America.
It is a novel from 1955 called Pedro Páramo by Juan Rulfo.
I don't know if somebody has heard about it.
Yeah.
We have Mexico here.
Mexican amazing writer who wrote this novel about this town that is called Comala, about a son who is looking for a father in this town.
And it turns out that everybody, almost everybody in this town is a ghost.
He doesn't know.
Meeting people, asking for his father.
And everybody's dead.
He also dies, crushed by the weight of all the abandonment and death that surrounds him.
And Rulfo wrote this coming with the weight and the hairy touch of the violence that came after the, with and after the Mexican Revolution.
So it was a response to history, the history of the country, and also his personal history, how his personal life was pierced by this violence.
So it's also, again, this collective violence, social violence, like going through personal lives becoming ghost monsters.
An answer to that.
How can I transform this and do something with this?
But Rulfo was an exception.
This ghost story was an exception.
In the middle of the 19th century, the horror and the Gothic were considered foreign.
It was not well received.
And they were considered also like the B side of literature.
Like when you have this, I always say the cassette, the B side with the songs that nobody wants to listen.
No, it was low culture.
It was popular.
So it was despised by the literary intelligentsia in Latin America.
There were a few very well-known authors that wrote the fantastic, no, fantastic stories or some maybe science fiction, very, very initial science fiction, and they crossed to horror, no?
They grace the horror.
But they could do it because they were already well-established authors, very well-known for writing in other genres that were more accepted.
Maybe there are people who like to read Borges, Casares, Elvino Campo, a bunch of other writers

very respected now in the Gothic key.
But they will say that they were writing the fantastic, not horror.
They despised horror.
They didn't like it.
But that changed a few years ago.
I want to say almost a decade ago with one woman, an Argentinian writer called Mariana Enriquez, who in 2016 published a book that is called Las Cosas que Perdimos en el Fuego, Things that We Lost in the Fire.
Actually she started writing horror way before, when she was 21, like in the '90s.
But then nobody paid so much attention.
She was well-received in Argentina, but she didn't spread around, not even in Latin America so much.
With this book, for 2016, that it was a collection of short stories, all very horrific, she became a sensation.
She was called the Queen of Terror.
She actually was called the Queen of Terror.
Then she started doing these readings in theaters that she would dress very Gothic, like super beautiful and with dim lights and candles and telling stories of horror.
Her own stories.
So this book gained a super wide critical acclaim.
It was very well-received by the public as well, and it was translated to many languages.
Actually it is in Norwegian as well.
I don't remember the title.
It's almost the same.
So that was a first crack in this idea that the horror was like a minor genre, just for people who didn't like to read good literature.
It was very good literature, what she did and what others had done before.
Very good literature.
So once in an interview, a journalist told her that it was amazing what she did, turning the everyday little things of life in horror.
And she was like, but this is not new, and this is not even mine.
Stephen King has done this for years and years, and just to mention one.
So Marian Enriquez has always been a fan of Stephen King.
She has always said that Stephen King should be the next Nobel Prize.
That is really, really good literature, that he really changes minds and influences people and writers as well.
So she started promoting this idea of this absurdity of the division between low culture and high culture, and low literature and good literature.
And she started doing this, talking about the daily things of life, poverty, the fears of the middle class, always in the brink of collapsing into poverty, especially in a country like Argentina that collapses every so often.
But she also had a very specific theme that came once and again into her tales.
And this was the horror of the last dictatorship in Argentina that went from 1976 to 1983, when she was a girl.
She was a little girl.
She was barely a teenager when the dictatorship ended.
So she grew up with that fear.
One that is also very familiar for me, I'm from Chile.
I grew up in dictatorship.
I was a teenager when the dictatorship ended.
But then the transition, the so-called democratic transitions, are long processes, full of fear.
And when there are words at the beginning that you cannot mention, concepts that you cannot talk about, and you remember the songs that you couldn't play, things that were dangerous,
like were forbidden, or you couldn't say or do or read.
No, because they were saying, no, no, no.
Nobody can see you reading that.
So that fear that maybe for many people wasn't so physically violent, but it was this very low humming violence that stayed with us for years and years.
And I wanted to read the quote that is in your handout.

There is a first quote by Enriquez.
It's from an interview.
And I think it's very telling about the way she processes this fear.
So OK, I'm going to read it.
It says, "I think political violence leaves scars, like a national PTSD.
The military here launched a staff of nightmares.
They disappeared people, dug common graves, left thousands of bones unidentified.
People were thrown from planes.
Children were kidnapped from their parents and given to other families.
There's something about the scale of the cruelty and political violence from the state that always seems like the blackest magic to me.
Of course, this happened a long time ago.
But there is still a shadow, and the shadow has many forms."
So with these shadows, she has made fantastic, amazing horror.
She has created these ghosts and these monsters, a monster that can be your neighbor, a monster
that can be even yourself.
There is one particular story that I love, that I usually ask the students in my class to read, La Casa de Adela, or Adela's House, which is a very classical horror story.
It's the first, I think it's the one that opens the things that we lost in the fire.
With a haunted house, children, no?
The horror that you feel when you read or watch movies where children are being hurt or are getting, well, it's a terrifying, terrifying short story.
So good.
I really recommend it.
Actually, you can find it online, translated into English and in Spanish for free.
And I just wanted to read the beginning of the short story to talk a little bit about how she constructs the monster and what is the monster and what is the fear that she's working with.
So this is the second quote.
It's the beginning, no?
It says, "Every day I think about Adela.
And if during the day the memory of her, the freckles, the yellow teeth, the too thin blonde hair, the stamp on her shoulder, her sweat boots doesn't appear, she always comes back at night in dreams.
Adela's dreams are all different, but the rain is never absent.
There are my brother and I, the two of us standing in front of the abandoned house with our yellow rain jackets, watching the cops in the garden, talking quietly to our parents."
I love this first paragraph because it packs so much on it, no?
It's just the beginning of the story and we have already kids telling us about a dream that comes back once and again about a girl.
We know that nothing good happened here, no?
That something happened to this girl who is a particular girl, no?
She describes the freckles, the too thin hair, way too thin.
She has a stamp.
She was the friend of the narrator.
It's a girl that was a monster for the other kids because she didn't have a full arm, but for the narrator and her brother it was the friend, the very dear friend.
We already know with reading just the first paragraph that it's someone who comes at night, appears and appears again.
We know about a night when it was raining and the other kids, the narrator and her brother, are in a backyard and the cops are there, the police.
What happened in the story is there is a haunted house.
This is situated in a middle class neighborhood and there is this haunted house that the kids get obsessed with.
At the same time, they are becoming fans of horror movies.
So they're watching horror movies, they're talking about the movies and also they're seeing this house and they're like, "Of course, we need to get into the house."
But the house is not just a house.
The house, they say, vibrates, hums, it seems alive.

It is a house that doesn't, how do you say this in English?
Tapiada.
Like all the doors and the windows are blocked.
I mean, there is no way that the light comes in.
Nobody can go in or out.
But the grass is always short, like somebody cut it, but there is no one there ever.
But it's also a grass that is dead, yellow, dry.
So finally they enter in the house and in the house they see the traces of torture.
I mean, they see shelves.
She doesn't mention the word torture, she doesn't mention the word violence, but the kids see the shelves in a room that has light and there is no source for the light.
It's light, but there is no lamps, no light bulbs, anything, just light and shelves with nails with teeth.
And then the lights go off.
And they get scared, of course, they panic.
There's a flashlight that they try to turn on and escape.
But then they see that the girl with just one piece of the arm, she's standing in another room and she waves to them and the door closes from that room.
And they cannot open the door.
There is no way to open the door.
And they go outside, they ask for help.
People come and it's a disaster because the house is empty.
The police and the parents, they all say, "There is nothing here.
There are no walls.
I mean, no doors.
What room are you talking about?"
So there is a house that eats, I don't know if it eats children, but ate this girl somehow, swallowed it.
The girl disappeared.
And of course, there is a very, it's impossible not to relate this to the disappearance, no?
They disappear people.
The way the dictatorship in Argentina and also in the southern continent in general, they were killing people and disposing of bodies in such a way so you could never find them again.
So it is the horror story that doesn't mention the politics at all, but it's all about a trauma that is personal and it's also national.
So that's a fear that is very clear in Mariana Enriquez.
But there are more fears of dictatorship in this wave of Latin American women writers writing right now.
And you mentioned the collapse.
I mean, you mentioned climate change.
And that's another very, very big topic right now in the horror being written right now by especially women, mostly women, which is an important thing.
I'm going to make a pause here because for decades, our literary publishing world was dominated by male writers.
So it's very important that this last wave is very clearly guided by women.
They are being heard, they're being promoted, translated, and there are many, there are many.
Maybe in some years, we're going to have the space and the time to say, okay, this is what is best because there are many being produced right now, but I think it's totally worth it and it's amazing that finally there are so many voices of women being heard and published.
So climate change is another very big topic right now.
The pollution of rivers, the disappearance of forests, also how we are breaking the bonds between communities and nature.
Of course, there is also a tradition of horror, very isolated, that there were some other authors that wrote about this confrontation between man and progress and nature at the beginning of the 20th century.
But you have one here, one there, and now there is this wave of women doing this.
I would say that one of the first ones was another Argentinian, Samantha Schrebel, then we're going to leave the Argentinians and we're going to go to the other parts of the

continent.
But there was this Argentinian called Samantha Schrebel who wrote "Distancia, rescate" or "Fever Dream" that is all about the soya production, the destruction that the soya production brings to the fields.
This one is specifically to the Pampas, like the fields around Buenos Aires.
And so also, with barely mention the soya is here, there you see some glimpses of it.
She creates this horror story about deformed children, lost souls, migration of the souls, like it has this fantastic element also in there.
But it's very clear how she shows us this fear of how we are breaking this relationship between nature and humanity.
And this is also a novel about motherhood at the same time, because that's the other thing.
I mean, we put labels because it's easy to classify and to talk about, okay, this is the horror of a dictatorship, this is the climate change, this is about gender violence, so on and so forth.
But most of them mix many subjects in between.
So this story is also about motherhood.
So this combination that Samantha Schweblin does, it has been done for others, no?
There are many subjects that cross, that intersect.
And I wanted to tell you about other of my favorites, which is a Bolivian writer who lives in the US.
She's called Liliana Colanzi.
Hopefully she will be translated soon to Norwegian.
She is translated into English.
And she has been writing horror, discourse between the horror and the fantastic for a few years already.
But she published a book in 2021, not '22, that is called "Ustedes brillan en lo oscuro," like "You shine in the dark," and it's amazing.
If you can get your hands on it, please read it, because it's an amazing, beautiful book.
And there is one short story that I love that is the first one that is called "La Cueva," the cave.
And it's a short story written in nine fragments, set always in the same place, a cave.
So there's always the cave there.
And you have different characters, human and no human, that go through the cave in different times.
It's a multispatial, I mean, no multispatial, multi-time story.
And I just wanted to read a fragment with you, which is the second one.
But I wanted to tell you first about the first fragment, so you know what I'm talking about.
So the story starts with this very young cavewoman who is running, chasing a rabbit, because she's hungry.
And she is also heavily pregnant.
So she's trying to run to get the rabbit.
She gets the rabbit.
And she falls on a very sharp rock.
And she goes into labor.
So she's like, "Okay, what a pain."
She finds the cave.
So she goes inside the cave to deliver the baby.
And in the meantime, she thinks, "Why did I leave the tribe?
I shouldn't be there, but I'm so bored, mainly, because I cannot move, I cannot hunt.
But I need to hunt, because it's the only way to survive.
I need to be strong to survive."
So she finally delivers twins.
And in her tribe, twins were a very bad thing to have.
She remembers these stories.
And of course, we can think for a cavewoman, twins, it was really a burden.
She was running through fields, I mean, trying to hunt.
How can you do that with two babies?
And she looks at the babies in a very detached way.
There is no maternal instinct whatsoever.

She's like, "What is this?"
And she thinks about hunting, about surviving, about how she needs to be strong and fit.
And she slits the throats of the two babies.
And she does the same with the rabbit first.
And it's like, for her, it's almost the same.
It's a way of surviving.
And before doing that, with her hand covering blood from the delivery, she marks the cave.
And she puts also the feet of the babies.
And then she leaves.
She goes running again.
Running and seeing, "OK, what do I have to do next?"
And she leaves the babies there.
And now we have the second part, the second fragment that we're going to read.
So "One night, a 22-year-old food worker by the name of Shotsly Salazar got lost in a thunderstorm on the way back to her village after working at a mall stand in Huelahuetza. Disoriented in the darkness and terrified by the lighting bolts zigzagging across the sky like varicose veins, she ended up in the cave.
From there, she tried to call her boyfriend, who hadn't wanted her to work at that fiesta. There was no signal on her cell phone, but the blue glow of the flashlight app dispersed the hungry shadows.
What she saw imprinted itself on her retina.
The wall at the back was covered with rudimentary paintings composing a complicated prehistoric
fresco.
The images were superimposed.
It was clear that they had been added by different artists over the centuries.
They scared her.
The set of figures revealed a forbidden order, a heresy.
The animals were out of proportion with the humans.
Some were as big as a hippopotamus or an elephant, although no one had ever seen a hippopotamus
or an elephant in Oaxaca.
And the posters of the human figures suggested scenes of, she crossed herself twice, group sex.
She placed her hand on the print that another hand had left on the rock.
The shape of her palm exactly matched the outline.
It was almost down by the time the rain stopped and Jocely Salazar was able to make her way home across the fields in her wet, muddy dress with the news of her discovery.
But she didn't get the chance to say a word.
Her boyfriend, sick with jealousy, was waiting behind the door with a baseball bat.
She hardly felt the blow.
She fell to the ground face up with her forehead caved in and the image of those strange animals fixing her pupils.
Okay.
This is a translation by Chris Andrews, a fantastic translator.
So you see she finds the palm.
She puts her palm on the other palm that was already imprinted in the cave for thousands of years.
And this is a woman of the cell phone era.
But she's caught in a cyclical violence that comes from, I mean, that comes for women specifically
in this tale once and again through different times of history.
So the short story goes like that.
It goes through time and violence comes, appear and appear again.
Violence and death, but also life because there is a cycle.
We start again.
We die.
We start again.
We start again.
In human form, I mean, not human forms.

And I'm sorry I'm putting so many spoilers, but I hope you're going to read them anyway.
At the end, we see just dust from the cave.
I mean, there is not even the cave anymore.
The cave transformed.
But we're seeing the human race also evolving through the violence, trying to improve, failing, coming back again, maybe disappearing.
We don't know.
We don't know because we just see that piece of land, that cave.
But from there we can just think and fear, but also hope.
I like that of this story.
That is somehow sad, somehow terrible.
But at the same time, there is also, you say, well, there is something that is always going to survive no matter what.
And now I'm going to go to another Bolivian in the diaspora.
She also lives in the US.
She's called Giovanna Rivero.
And she has also written this cross intersection between the fantastic, a little bit of science fiction here and some horror.
Of course, it changes from story to story.
There are some that are more like straightforward horror.
Some of them very gore.
I don't like the gore that much.
But there is a lot of gore also in these new writers.
I didn't choose gore today because I don't feel-- yeah, no.
I want to sleep well tonight.
But she has this amazing short story that is called Hermano Ciervo, or Kindred Deer, which puts human in relation to nature, specifically to animals.
And she makes this connection between the dispossessed, I mean, the immigrant poor people and the animals who are being hunted.
So this is a part-- this is about a couple that lives somewhere in the US, I think close to Ithaca, upstate New York.
They are educated immigrants, but they are poor.
They're studying, but they don't have money to go buy.
So they decide together that the man of the couple who is studying medicine is going to rent his body for medical experiments.
So they are trying a new vaccine for a virus, something on him.
And he's getting very, very sick.
So the wife, who starts telling this part of the story, is looking at him and seeing that he's not doing great.
So she says, "I run my hand along his ribs because that is what the touch gives me under his parched skin.
Too much vitamin A has turned his epidermis to mush.
He still has to avoid the sun.
I remember this, and I'm not quite convinced by the black ghost curtains I got from the leftover Halloween items at the Walmart sale.
A gloom dimmed by the gothic ghost covers us, insistent and damaging nonetheless.
What happens if you get too much daylight?
Do you turn into a vampire or what?
I have already explained to you, the liver.
Chemical hepatitis could be triggered.
In the previous experiment, they had such a case.
The lawsuit was very high.
That's why we signed Clause 27.
No lawsuits, no sunshine, no children.
We will give birth to little monsters."
So here she's taking some of the topics of the gothic and some horror now, vampires, monsters, almost as a joke, almost to try to name what she cannot name, that he's possibly dying because they needed the money, because they thought it was a good idea to rent out his body to survive.
And while all this is happening, while he's getting sick and she's questioning all the

choices that they have made as a couple, they're seeing the body of a female deer that was shot and abandoned a few meters of the house.
Now, it has been days and he has started to smell.
And at some point in one night when she thinks that he is not going to make it, she goes out and approaches the carcass and sits there with it and feels this immense compassion, tenderness, and also the recognition, like the weak links of the chain, nature, the animals, and the poor people who are out of the system somehow, a system that was not made for them but made for others.
And this thing about the others is a big thing in horror in general, no?
Monsters are also the others.
What are we afraid of?
We put them there.
We make the monsters.
It's easy to deal with the fear in that way.
We can point, we can scry, we can run away all the time from a monster.
Some other times in this tales, nature is the monster.
There is this novel by a Cuban called El Aine Milar Madrugada.
And there is no quote with this because it's a huge novel.
And she wrote this novel that is called El Cielo de la Selva, the Sky of the Jungle, I guess.
I don't know.
It's not translated into English yet.
And here, nature is represented by this jungle that is hungry, that is literally eating kids, that they ask for a sacrifice to protect women inside the jungle, but they need to deliver their babies to feed the jungle.
So it's also about women's bodies being disposable, no?
They are important because while they can produce, while they cannot produce more babies, they are in danger.
They are ready to be discarded.
So this novel is about nature and about women.
Women here are the dispossessed, no?
And it's also about, yeah, a metaphor about gender violence that is another big topic of this wave of writing that has been appearing lately.
There is a few authors that are very well known now for writing this.
One of the labels that have been appearing right now is the Gothic from the Andes, no?
The Gothic from the Andes.
And one of the main writers in this trend is a woman from Ecuador named Monica Ojeda, who wrote this book that is called Las Voladoras, The Ones That Flight, no?
And she mixes folklore from the Andes, myths from the Andes, with the landscape so imposing of the Cordillera, one of the high plateaus there, to talk about gender violence, especially against girls, young girls, and also about the teenage angst and how do you live, how you deal with teenage angst while you are surrounded by a very hostile environment in terms of landscape, in terms of customs, no?
In terms of the way that is the gender relations are seen traditionally in these parts of the region, no?
Latin America in general is a very machista culture, very, and many times it's worse in very rural landscapes, no?
And she brings all this to these tales.
They are really, really, really horrific.
They are very well written.
She's very Baroque in a way, but she's very graphic in a way.
And with her you have this other Argentinian that is called Dolores Reyes, who wrote Come Tierra, or Your Moon, which was translated into Nubian by Camino, la editorial Camino.
You can find them, and you can find her novel here.
And it's about this woman who can eat soil from different parts of the country, and when she eats the soil she can see what happened to girls and women who disappeared, no?
That they were victims of gender violence.
So she goes through the novel eating soil because people are coming to her to ask her, "Can you please, I brought you soil.
Can you tell me where my sister is?"

For example.
It's a very, very hard novel to read, but it's an amazing story.
So there has been many labels going around all these narratives right now.
I told you about the Gothic from the Andes.
There is also the tropical Gothic, the horror from South America.
The labels are many.
And I don't think it matters so much, the specific label that you put.
I think what matters is that, as I said before, there are women are writing about their fears in Latin America a lot, no?
And they are in relation to one another, no?
It's almost like a community.
They really share the space.
They promote each other also.
So I think it has also a lot to do with the last feminist waves in Latin America.
Ni una menos, las tesis.
Many feminist movements that have been strong and alive there for the past years.
And a lot of this horror has also this quality that I already described in Liliana Colanzi.
In the middle of all these terrible things, because they're terrible, there are some lights here and there.
Not in all the tales, no?
Not in all of them.
But there are many, there are, even in their own twisted way.
And I think I would like to read the last one, the last piece, because I want to open this.
Yeah.
That is a little fragment.
It's the end of a very short story by Maria Fernanda Ampuero.
She's another writer from Ecuador who lives in Spain.
The diaspora is another huge thing going on right now between Latin American writers and everybody.
So this short story is called Freaks.
It's from a book that is called Sacrificios Humanos, like Human Sacrifices, which has some very graphic horror stories too.
This one is not that graphic.
But this one is about a little kid, a little boy, who lives in a family somewhere by the sea.
And the family is formed by the father and a few brothers who are very traditionally machistas and very homophobic and very, like, attached to those aspects of the Latin American way of being a man.
And with women, a mother and a grandmother, who are sweet and compassionate, but weak and submissive.
No?
They have no strength to oppose this man.
And the little kid is in between all of this.
And he's queer.
So he's not having a great time in the family.
He's, like, abused and persecuted by the brothers all the time.
The dad despised him.
But he goes.
He enjoys the sun.
He enjoys the beach.
He has this little bright energy.
And one day, they take him to the circus, a very poor circus around where he lives.
And he meets-- I mean, he meets-- he sees this exhibit there with the pigs in a-- how you call the pigster?
There is, in between the pigs, there is this little boy with a big, big head, who is clearly deformed.
And as part of the exhibition of the circus, the little kid is around the pigs.
And he feels sad.
He feels compassion.

And also, he recognized something in this little boy.
So he goes home.
He starts, like, being, like, pranked and terrorized by his brothers.
And he decides to go back to the circus.
No?
And this is the last part of the short story.
And it's all in the infinitive.
Infinitive, you say?
Yeah.
The linguistic here.
So he says-- he's, like, describing what is he doing.
He says, "To run away from the drunk who shouts at him, asking what is he doing with the monster"--
the monster is the other little kid-- "that if he wants to do anything to him, he has to pay more.
To go out into the sun again with the big-headed boy in his arms, like a mother proud of her child.
To walk away from the circus and the drunk who is shouting for the others to stop the little faggot who is stealing the big-headed kid.
To run towards the cliff, whispering that everything is going to be all right, that they are going to be all right, that all this is going to end.
The ugly, the pigs, the disgusted looks of the people, the slaps, the fear.
To reach the top with the circus people at their heels, shouting, 'What are you doing, you stupid faggot?'
To look at the big-headed boy smiling with his toothless mouth and his shiny fish eyes and say it without speaking, 'Brother, brother.'
To throw yourself into the sea, feeling that during the fall the legs join into one and that a tail grows, fast and violent.
And when it hits the water, it raises an iridescent foam, blinding because of how beautiful it is."
So I know it's terrible, but at the same time I think it's beautiful.
I mean, they don't have escape, but they do.
And in this thing that if you look at it in a realistic way, I mean, they are dying, but for him they are transforming into something more beautiful and bright and then getting away of all that shit that is eating them.
So I wanted to finish with this because between all the fear and all the horror, there is some lights here and there that make the readings a little bit lighter, that you can breathe in between because they are heavy readings, but you can breathe in between.
And that can make you think that maybe there is a way to get out of all this crisis that we have done before and that there are always going to be fear and monsters and ghosts, but that maybe we can do something with them.
So they're not that scary, so maybe we can confront them and look at them in the eye.
So just maybe we can go home and think about the fears that we just talked about at the beginning and think about them, what monsters we can build with them and what, I don't know, brighter twist we can give them to sleep a bit better.
That's it.
Thank you.
[applause]
[music]
[music]