

## Interview with Jenny Offill

[00:00:10] **Kendra** Hello, I'm Kendra Winchester. And this is Reading Women, a podcast inviting you to reclaim the bookshelf and read the world. Today, I'm talking to Jenny Offill about her latest novel, WEATHER, which is out now in paperback from Vintage. You can find a complete transcript of our conversation over on our website, [readingwomenpodcast.com](http://readingwomenpodcast.com). And don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss a single episode.

[00:00:36] **Kendra** So before I jump into today's episode, I want to talk a little bit about our Patreon. As you know, this podcast is funded by Patreon. And while we do have ads, that doesn't cover all of our expenses. And so we love our patrons. They make this podcast possible. Especially last year, that is the group of people that kept us going. And we are so forever grateful. Our patron of the day is Cozette Thomas. So thank you so much, Cozette, for being one of our patrons and for supporting us. We really appreciate it. Over on our Patreon page, starting at one dollar, you can join our book club where this quarter we're talking about DEATH BY DUMPLING. And it is a cozy mystery book, which we are all very excited to read. It seems like the perfect book to just settle down in this snowy winter and read. And, ugh, just delightful. I mean, as delightful as a cozy mystery all about murder and like, you know, whatnot can be. So if you would like to join our Patreon, check out the link in the show notes. And you can join us for also extra podcasts, weekly updates, and all sorts of things.

[00:01:56] **Kendra** All right, so today I am talking to Jenny Offill about her book, WEATHER, which is about a woman named Lizzie who works at a library. And she observes people going back and forth. And this book definitely gave me major MRS. DALLOWAY vibes. And actually, I had no idea that Jenny had written this intro for a new edition of MRS. DALLOWAY. And so during our conversation, you know, I mention it. And she talks about this new edition that I had no idea. And it was really funny because, I mean, her writing does give you those Dalloway vibes of this woman just doing daily tasks but having really deep thoughts. And it brings up really deep questions about the world around her that she's living in. In particular, this book is about weather and the climate crisis and all sorts of different things. It's written in this beautiful stream-of-consciousness style that I am in love with. I will definitely be picking up other books by Jenny Offill. I've never actually read DEPT. OF SPECULATION. I feel like I'm one of the last book nerds on the planet that has not picked up that book. But reading this book definitely made me want to go and read her other work.

[00:03:09] **Kendra** So a little bit about the author before we jump in. So Jenny Offill is the author of the novels LAST THINGS (a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year and a finalist for the *L.A. Times* First Book Award); the DEPT. OF SPECULATION, which was shortlisted for the Folio Prize, the PEN Faulkner Award, and the International Dublin Award; and most recently, WEATHER, an instant *New York Times* bestseller. She lives in upstate New York and teaches at Bard College. Okay, so without further ado, here is my conversation with Jenny Offill.

[00:03:46] **Kendra** Well, welcome to the podcast, Jenny. I'm so excited to have you on.

[00:03:49] **Jenny** Thank you for having me.

[00:03:50] **Kendra** I feel like I am the last human on earth who hasn't read the DEPT. OF SPECULATION. And so I was very excited to be able to read your work. And I might be

one of the only people who starts with WEATHER, but I really enjoyed it. And so now I definitely am going to go backwards. But I really enjoyed your book.

[00:04:12] **Jenny** Oh, thank you. That's great that you haven't read the others. I'm a bit of a slow writer. So when people say, "What else do you have?" I can point to two others, but not a ton.

[00:04:22] **Kendra** Well, I will have to space them out then, so that, you know, until you come out with your fourth book, I'll have something to read in the meantime. But I am very excited that WEATHER is now coming out in paperback. How is a paperback release different for you than a hardback release?

[00:04:42] **Jenny** Well, I think the best thing about paperbacks, I mean, I know this has always been the case with me over the years of of buying books is it can be sort of daunting to shell out as much money as a hardcover requires. And so I think paperback is a little more accessible financially. I also like to be able to stick my book in my pocket. In the old days, when we were on trains and buses and things, I always found that it was kind of nice to have something that you could have with you when you were walking around. It's really. . . . So I think I like paperbacks for that reason too.

[00:05:22] **Kendra** I really love the—I guess, maybe "cute" isn't the right word—but cute trim size of your books. And so the paperback is equally adorable. And there's matching covers for your previous two books. And I'm all here for matching covers as well. So it's one of the things that I love about paperbacks. And plus, they're easier to annotate as well.

[00:05:45] **Jenny** Oh, that's a good point. Yeah. I think, you know, a lot of books, a lot of European books and Japanese books are this smaller size. And I've always loved when I get them because I just . . . I don't know. There's something to me about the size is just very esthetically pleasing. So I'm happy that they decided to not bulk out my book in some way with the way they did it so that they could keep it this size.

[00:06:10] **Kendra** America definitely needs to catch on to this trend.

[00:06:12] **Jenny** I think so. Lead the way.

[00:06:16] **Kendra** So this book, WEATHER, is your third novel. Is that correct?

[00:06:20] **Jenny** Yep! MmHmm..

[00:06:21] **Kendra** And I read somewhere that you enjoy challenging yourself with each new book. What was something that you wanted to challenge yourself with with WEATHER?

[00:06:32] **Jenny** With WEATHER, I wanted to write about something that I myself had only recently become interested in, which was these questions about climate change and how bad it would be. But I also wanted to think about the fact that for many years—although I believed, of course, in climate change—I found it very boring to read about, very terrifying to read about. And the challenge was, is there any way to write a book that tackles this kind of dread and fear but is also funny? And sometimes I do something sort of odd, which is I tell myself there's one emotion that is not allowed in this book. And for this book, it was self-righteousness. So I felt like in a book that tackles some environmental

issues, it would be interesting to have a character who was not already really on board with all of that yet.

[00:07:25] **Kendra** That's really interesting. You know, when I picked up the book and read that it was about climate change—and I try not to read too much of the blurb because I don't want to have too much info going in—I was like, wow, this is such a concise book dealing with such a large topic. Was that task kind of daunting going in?

[00:07:47] **Jenny** Well, I think that that's just part of, I guess, what interests me as a writer, is this idea of like how much can be distilled into a small space. I think we have an idea, especially in America, that, you know, an ambitious novel is a sprawling, huge novel. But I also think that it's quite interesting to me to see how much can you kind of show in a glancing way. You know, how much can you show the way that often in our real lives we take in information, which is that we might take in something that is, you know, something that is a huge existential crisis for the world. But then a moment later, you know, we're helping our kids get ready for school. Or we're talking to a neighbor. Or we're realizing our car doesn't start. And the way that we kind of move between these calibrations of emergency and everydayness was something that I wanted to try to capture in WEATHER.

[00:08:45] **Kendra** I definitely felt that throughout the book, whether Lizzie, our protagonist, is playing fetch with her dog and having these internal thoughts about, you know, chaos or big questions of the world or whether she's taking her son to school and thinking about, et cetera. And I feel like that definitely reflects the way that people often live their everyday lives. They're concerned with, "When on earth is the pizza going to get here?" But they're also concerned about climate change and what's going to happen with that. And I think that you hit that square on the nose there.

[00:09:19] **Jenny** Well, I think a lot of. . . . I mean, I had read some interesting novels that were so-called climate-change novels. But a lot of them exist in a post-apocalyptic world. So in a weird way, they're reassuring because they're not our world yet. And so, you know, the scrambles for resources and the sort of inability to feel safe on the ground you stand on—a lot of us in the Western world, at least a lot of the time, still don't feel those effects. But in other places, what we think of as apocalyptic has already arrived. And I think in the West as well, with the fires we've seen in California and in Australia, I think there's a sense of a kind of rolling and strangely intermittent disaster that we're starting to take in and have. I thought—when I was writing the book—I thought, this is a book about, you know, anticipatory dread and what to do about it.

[00:10:13] **Kendra** I definitely found this book interesting in the discussions that Lizzie has in her mind about climate change, but also other aspects of the world around her. And I found Lizzie such a captivating character in the way that we are able to inhabit her mind. And she just seems so. . . . She's . . . she is so fleshed out. And so, like, you could tell that you knew way more about Lizzie than you were ever going to tell the reader. How did her character development work for you? I mean, how much did you have to write to figure out who she is before you could start getting to this core information about her that would work for the novel?

[00:10:53] **Jenny** Well, I knew from the beginning that I wanted her to be one of these sort of hyper-empathetic, almost . . . almost punishingly empathetic people that ends up taking in the stories of the people around her. She works in a library, and so she ends up sort of knowing the problems of all the patrons. And in her neighborhood, you know, she might know what's going on with the bodega man or the homeless lady on the street. She's very

porous. And in some ways, that can be a good thing. I think it makes you connected to the world and perhaps more caring about the world. But in another way, it's overwhelming.

[00:11:31] **Jenny** And so I took that part of Lizzie from my own life because I feel like I'm very porous. And if I hadn't been a writer, I'm not sure where I would have put all of that. I know in the years that I didn't write, you know, I was always on the phone talking someone off the ledge that I knew lately or keeping up with everyone else's problems and maybe neglecting my own life and those around me in a way. So I was interested in showing a caretaker person, which I think so many women are. And then also, well, what does it mean when you extend your sphere of care? That's why Lizzie is somewhat resistant to her mentor, who is a climate-change podcaster. She's a little bit resistant at first to this idea that she has to care about the rest of, you know, even more of the world, the non-human world.

[00:12:27] **Kendra** I love you mentioned her mentor, who has a podcast. Obviously, we're talking on a podcast. And so I find it really interesting when Lizzie takes a job answering this woman's emails from both, you know, people on the right and the left side of the political spectrum. That had to be fun to write these really hilarious emails—yet sometimes frightening at the same time—as she's working with this podcast host.

[00:12:57] **Jenny** They were a lot of fun. I mean, I went down a lot of rabbit holes into various prepper worlds and conspiracy theories. And I had one podcast that I listen to a lot that was called Ecoshock. And it was not like the podcast I'm describing. It was mostly scientists. But it did have a pretty relentlessly dire tone and doomy quality to it. So I was interested in what it would be like to run a show like that and what would come in. When I was first working on it—this was probably 2015—I was traveling a lot for DEPT. OF SPECULATION. And as I was talking to people, especially people that were like driving a cab or something, I started to hear what I realize now where the beginnings of kind InfoWars, conspiracy theories, I didn't know what they were yet, but I had a sense that something was kind of bubbling up. And I went on the internet, trying to figure out what that was. So it was both a curiosity thing. And also I thought that it might be a way to add that little shimmer of of darkness and also of humor to the book.

[00:14:08] **Kendra** You mentioned writing this around 2015 forward. And you really capture a lot of time in this book in such an effective way. And so we go through the 2016 election. And there's this scene where she and her husband, I think, are sitting from the TV. And her husband's like talking about Hillary's lead narrowing. And you don't mention a lot of names. But we all know, as people who have lived through this, know what context that is. What is it like for you to write to a current moment or a recent moment? And how much did you want to engage with that?

[00:14:45] **Jenny** I'll be honest. I wanted to engage with it very little. But, you know, it's funny, whenever I hit anything that is even remotely within the zeitgeist of the moment, it's always astonishing to me because I'm such a slow writer. So I certainly. . . . I don't think if Trump had lost, it would have been much of a part of the book. But it felt when he won like the whole atmosphere in New York City had a different feeling to it. And it felt, in a book that's about both actual and emotional weather, it felt like something that needed to be in the book, that there's no way that Lizzie wouldn't be picking up on.

[00:15:23] **Jenny** Also, I became kind of early on a little obsessed with this idea that perhaps he had authoritarian aims. And that's why there's some sections in the book where I quote from this excellent book by Timothy Snyder, who's a scholar at Yale, about

fascism and what does it mean when. . . . In the early days, what does . . . what does that feel like? So it was a surprise in some ways for me that I ended up at the election that just happened because at the moment I was having to project myself into the future to do that. And I'm not sure I've ever done that before. But I knew that I wanted both those . . . both those moments to be in there and that sense of, you know, just not knowing what was coming down the pike to be something that Lizzie and her family were feeling.

[00:16:10] **Kendra** Was it tricky to write in the near future when we didn't know what the results of the 2020 election would be?

[00:16:17] **Jenny** It was tricky. And I actually felt like, you know, I felt like I . . . in some ways, I downplayed what was my fear that violence would erupt after the election. If you read the end of the book, you'll see that in the last twenty pages, there is ideas about that. There's ideas about what it means to vote and act collectively. And then at the very end, you know, there's a . . . there's a sense that there may be gunshots that she's hearing, although she's sort of talked out of that in the moment by her husband. And so I wanted to write something that could go either way. And it was a really interesting and very difficult exercise craftwise. But I did feel it was extremely strange when that time actually came around that I had written about. I sort of was surprised that what had seemed very alarmist when I was writing, it didn't seem quite as alarmist.

[00:17:12] **Kendra** Yeah, I keep thinking about that scene where they're laying in bed. And she thinks she hears gunshots. And it's actually like walnuts on the roof—or that's what her husband says.

[00:17:24] **Jenny** But you don't know, actually. You don't know. They sound exactly the same.

[00:17:27] **Kendra** Right. When I talk to people, and we talk about that scene, usually we have very different opinions about like what actually happened because there is that vagueness. And I won't give a spoiler for the last line, but I reread that repeatedly. And I would go back to where that section started and read the whole thing again. And it's a very thought-provoking way to end the book. And I really appreciated the way you stuck the landing there, as it were.

[00:17:54] **Jenny** Hmm. Well, thank you. I think that they are lying in bed, and they're out in the country. And it's after the election in that scene. And, you know, the line is that Lizzie says, "I wake to gunshots in the distance." So she doesn't say, "I think I hear gunshots." She says, "I wake to them." And then her husband says, "Oh, it's just walnuts falling on the roof." But what I found so interesting was various friends of mine had completely different reactions. And they often were sort of who I would expect. One of my best friends was like, "Oh, I really liked how you had actual gunshots, that you actually had unrest at the end and gunshots." And then my agent said, "I'm really glad that, you know, she has her husband to talk her down in that moment of paranoia." And so it's really interesting to just see how different people landed on it. And certainly when I was writing it, it felt like gunshots to me. But it also felt like the character didn't know in the moment. She didn't know.

[00:18:51] **Kendra** That's one of the great things I love about books is that readers can read the same exact thing and come away with different takeaways from it, which is always great for discussion.

[00:19:05] **Jenny** Yeah, I think so. And I think that that. . . I really love, I guess, endings to novels that feel, on the one hand, very much like the author has control of them, that they know what they're trying to do there, but also that have a way in which they kind of open up to the reader and that there's a feeling like you can carry on your line of thought after the book ends. And so that's what I was hoping to do with the ending of WEATHER.

[00:19:30] **Kendra** It's definitely that, if the heated discussions of me and my friends are anything.

[00:19:36] **Kendra** I have to ask you about Virginia Woolf. Our logo has Virginia Woolf on it because she is my favorite author, and I love her writing style and the stream of consciousness. And I have a very sweet, soft spot for MRS. DALLOWAY because of the way that it captures everyday life and is written about so beautifully, but it really has all these universal themes in it. And I feel like in a way, you were able to capture a similar essence of Lizzie's everyday life, but these big questions that she's thinking about while she's taking her son to school or doing, you know, mundane tasks at the library. It's almost like the universe is in her mind as she is about doing these things. And she actually mentions Virginia Woolf in the book and reading her diaries of like what birthday Virginia Woolf was on or something. And I'm like, that's a great idea. Like, why haven't I thought of that? So what was it like to write in that vein? And how much were you thinking about Virginia Woolf in that as you were writing Lizzie's story?

[00:20:41] **Jenny** You know, I think she's someone I've always, always loved and that I write in the shadow of because I think she came closer to putting on the page how people think than, you know, almost any writer I can think of. I was just asked to write a forward to the new edition of MRS. DALLOWAY. And it was really interesting. It's coming out in a couple of days. But I wrote it, and they posted the essay on. . . It's on [thenewyorker.com](http://thenewyorker.com). And one of the things I did was I wrote about what it was like each time I read MRS. DALLOWAY. So I wrote about reading it when I was nineteen and reading it when I was in my thirties. And now, I realized as I was reading it for this forward that I was the exact same age as Clarissa Dalloway was in the book. And so I was kind of talking about the different things you notice at . . . in each . . . in each reading. And they have to do with where your own focus is in life. But it was a real pleasure to go back to the book. And as often happens when you read things that you read when you were really early on as a writer to realize how much you're trying to, you know, copy and steal from the greats.

[00:21:51] **Kendra** I think it's such a difficult style to capture well because it has to look effortless. But that, obviously, that takes an immense amount of work. And the way that your novel is structured is in these little vignettes, in these little snippets where you just share just enough about Lizzie and who she is to give that reader the information you want before you move on to the next kind of segment. What was that process like? And how did you find yourself writing in these snippet-like ways that bind together to create this novel?

[00:22:23] **Jenny** Well, my first novel, LAST THINGS, is written in a more conventional style. It's still has, I think, the love of, kind of, interdisciplinary things. Like, there's stories within stories. And it ranges across the natural sciences and some mythology, etc. Then with DEPT. OF SPECULATION—I think partly because I was a mother, and I was having very little time to write—I started experimenting with just putting down very small things because I was afraid I was never going to write again. And I was reading a lot of poetry and just things here and there. And so I had long admired this kind of fragmented style, but I hadn't quite felt like I could write it. And then with DEPT., I realized this was the form for that book. I wanted all of the moments in it to be somehow on the same footing. So there's

very sublime moments and very trivial moments. I wanted them set off as similar. So that's why I did these little blocks of text.

[00:23:20] **Jenny** And then with WEATHER, well, I felt that that had been kind of a breakthrough for me as a writer. And with WEATHER, I was thinking about how weather itself moves, how there's these sudden storms and these eddies and these moments of quiet. And that also lent itself to fragments. But I think I just think of . . . I think of writing a novel as, in some ways, a collaboration with the reader. I like to leave space for. . . . I'm just not the sort of person that loves it when every single motivation of a character or everything about how the character looks is described. I really like to have some room in my own mind to create that when I read.

[00:23:56] **Kendra** I really . . . I really love that about the book. And I have chronic daily headaches and migraines. So I primarily via audiobook. But I always try to have a print book nearby so I can look at the form. And I found myself just sitting on the couch, just following along these different sections to see how they looked on the page because that also adds to the story in how like what is in a block little square and what isn't. And engaging with that as a reader was just really interesting, as well as listening to the prose read aloud. It created this beautiful reading experience.

[00:24:32] **Jenny** I haven't listened to the audiobook. That would be that a fun experience. I actually read the first. I read DEPT. myself. So it was easier to sort of make sure that it paused when I would have, when I was imagining it to pause. But yeah, my mom listened to the audiobook, and I've heard they did a great job with it.

[00:24:51] **Kendra** Yeah. It really is a beautiful audiobook. And I know I'm completely 100 percent biased, but I think stream of consciousness, that more fluid style of the character's mind, works really well on audio because that's how we think as human beings, more so. Or at least it's a better imitation of how we think as human beings, in these snippets. You know, I'll be thinking about taking my corgi out for a walk, but also, like, you know, I'm thirty, so how much time do I have left to do X, Y, and Z all at the same time?

[00:25:25] **Jenny** Right. And those things are sort of. . . . They're abutting each. . . . Those thoughts are right next to each other, or one's coming right after the next one or mixing in with the one before. I find it funny sometimes because occasionally people will, you know, they'll criticize WEATHER by saying that it's like a novel written like a Twitter feed—which, of course, I can understand how it might look like that. I'm not on Twitter myself. And that's partly because I think it seems really fun, and yet that distilling process, that process of compression for me needs to happen outside of a kind of immediately publishable medium because a lot of the way that I figure out how the different parts of my novels go together is that I just wait a lot of time and keep looking at them and seeing if they still seem to hold up or they still make sense to me or they still seem interesting to me. And a lot of it just drops away because of that.

[00:26:25] **Kendra** This is a very concise book in that it's a shorter book, and you have these little snippets. I used to work as an editor, so I was constantly thinking, how did you decide what snippets to include and what to delete? Because I'm sure you wrote a lot more that ended up on the cutting room floor.

[00:26:45] **Jenny** The funny thing is what I have a lot more of is the kind of more factual things in the book. I have pages and pages about actual details and facts about climate change. I probably have pages and pages about the conspiracy theories that I reference in

just one sentence. I mean, it's an extremely inefficient way to write a novel to read like an entire book about. . . . Like, the epigraph to the book is—I took from a history of pilgrims—and, you know, I read a whole book and took this one thing from it.

[00:27:18] **Jenny** But the part that is . . . it takes the longest is, like, it takes me a long time to understand what order I want things to be and how I want the story to move forward and what the emotional momentum of it is. So I have pages and pages of notes of things that interest me. I start very much on an intuition that these things seem to me like they go together. I trust it. I trust it. I've read about this because I thought that it would go together. And then there's the process of sort of making each paragraph sound the way I want it to. And then there's just a process of, like, I have different files. You know. I have files for different characters. I files for mysticism. I have files for, you know, World War Two resistance fighters. And what I do is when I'm writing the storyline and something comes to me, I go and scroll through my files and try to find it. And then I find it. And sometimes it doesn't seem like it works, and sometimes it does. And I leave them there for a while to see if they kind of feel like they have a magnetic pull to each other.

[00:28:30] **Kendra** I'm just finding this absolutely fascinating, and I'm sure I could ask you so many questions about structure and different things. The editor in me always comes out in interviews. And I'm like, Kendra, not everyone is as fascinated with this as you are. But one thing I did want to ask you before I let you go is . . . one of the things that I have noticed working on this podcast and reading a lot of books by women is that whenever there is a book about a middle-aged woman, there are a lot of people who say, oh, this is just . . . this is just a novel about a woman doing whatever she does. This is just a novel about a middle-aged woman. Why is that interesting? And that always rubs me the wrong way because there's obviously a moment of sexism there and some ageism there. Beyond that, as you have been promoting this book and talking about characters like Lizzie and different things, have you found that also to be true? And, I mean, how does that feel engaging with this kind of, I don't know, commentary?

[00:29:40] **Jenny** I have found that there, I mean, there's certainly a sense like we don't need to hear from one more middle-aged white woman about anything. And you can certainly, I think, make a case for that. But I also think that there's a narrowness always present when you categorize whole groups of people. And I really go back to the whole idea that really the Greeks had where they said, "Nothing human is alien to me." And so I think that we can read outside of our own experience and learn and inhabit other people that way. And I think that's part of what novels can do, is allow you to see a fuller picture of something that you might have stereotypes about or know about.

[00:30:25] **Jenny** But I also feel like, you know, my job as a writer is just to write about things that matter to me and that are radiant and important to me. And no one has to read it if they don't want to. So I feel like that's the best thing about it. Like, if you pick up something that I've written, and you're drawn in either by the language or the story or the voice, then that's wonderful. And I'm thrilled. I'm thrilled that someone wants to read me. And if you don't find anything in it. . . . I remember once I was being interviewed on some TV show. And they said, "What's the takeaway? What can you say that will make people know they need to read this book?" I said, "Well, there is no takeaway in this book. And you don't have to read this book." I'm sure my publicist was cringing.

[00:31:19] **Jenny** So I feel like, you know, if you think you don't have anything . . . that there's nothing of interest in a middle-aged woman's life, that seems a strange view that cuts out a lot of humanity. It certainly would cut out MRS. DALLOWAY from being on your



reading list. And I know that I just . . . I find it really exciting to to read about people whose lives are different from mine. And, you know, what's been really lovely with WEATHER is that I've talked to a lot of younger people who have connected to this book. I think because they're more. . . . They don't think that this character is anxious or neurotic. They think that she is seeing clearly what the future holds. And that's been fascinating to me, that people my own age think of this as an unhinged or paranoid character and that college age and people in their twenties and thirties—who are often expecting the effects of climate change, and it's really affecting their decisions that they make in their life—they see it as a more realistic point of view.

[00:32:30] **Kendra** Well, I really love the book. And I feel like I'm in between those two ages. I really enjoyed the book and the way that your prose is. And I feel like this is a great introduction to your work. So I know I'm going to go buy your other two books and that new edition of MRS. DALLOWAY because I collect editions of MRS. DALLOWAY. I'm that person.

[00:32:53] **Jenny** Oh, that's great. Yeah, it came into the public domain this year. So there's a couple new editions of it. It's really exciting.

[00:33:01] **Kendra** Well, before I let you go, in addition to those books, which I am going to go buy as soon as we're done here, what other books would you recommend to our listeners?

[00:33:15] **Jenny** Let's see. What have I read lately that was really interesting? I read, well, I just took all the books. . . . And oh, I read a book called PICNIC GROUNDS, which is by an Israeli writer, Oz Shelach, which is fascinating. It's written in these very tiny fragments. I'd never heard of it before. I just picked it up at a bookstore and started reading it. I've also been reading a book by a Hungarian writer, which I just started, called THE LAST WOLF, which is a very strange book that. . . . I think he might have won the Nobel Prize, or at least he was . . . he was nominated for it. It's one sentence. And it's about a person who was asked to write the true tale of the last wolf that existed. It's a . . .and it's a very . . . it's kind of in the tradition of, like, those writers like Thomas Bernhard, where it's kind of a misanthropic, strange narrator. So I'm interested in that. And then I'm reading a lot of great poetry books because I have a subscription to Wave Books, which is my favorite press, which is based out of Seattle. So that's always like a Christmas present of not knowing what I'm going to get.

[00:34:33] **Kendra** I've never heard of them.

[00:34:35] **Jenny** Yeah! They actually won the. . . . This year, one of their writers won the National Book Award. They're a small press, but a really wonderful one. If you know the work of Maggie Nelson, her first book, BLUEETS, was published by them. They publish poets and prose by poets. So it's really fascinating stuff.

[00:34:57] **Kendra** That is fantastic. Well, I guess I have more books to go shopping for now. And I'll make sure to include links to all of them in our show notes. But thank you so much, Jenny, for being on the podcast and chatting about your book with me.

[00:35:12] **Jenny** Thank you so much, Kendra. This was a pleasure.

[00:35:17] **Kendra** And that's our show. I'd like to thank Jenny Offill for talking with me about WEATHER, which is out now in paperback from Vintage. You can find Jenny Offill

on her website, [jennyoffill.com](http://jennyoffill.com), where you can also learn more about her other books. Many thanks to our patrons, whose support makes this podcast possible. This episode was produced and edited by me, Kendra Winchester. Our music is by Miki Saito with Isaac Greene. And you can find us on Instagram and Twitter (@thereadingwomen). Thanks for listening.