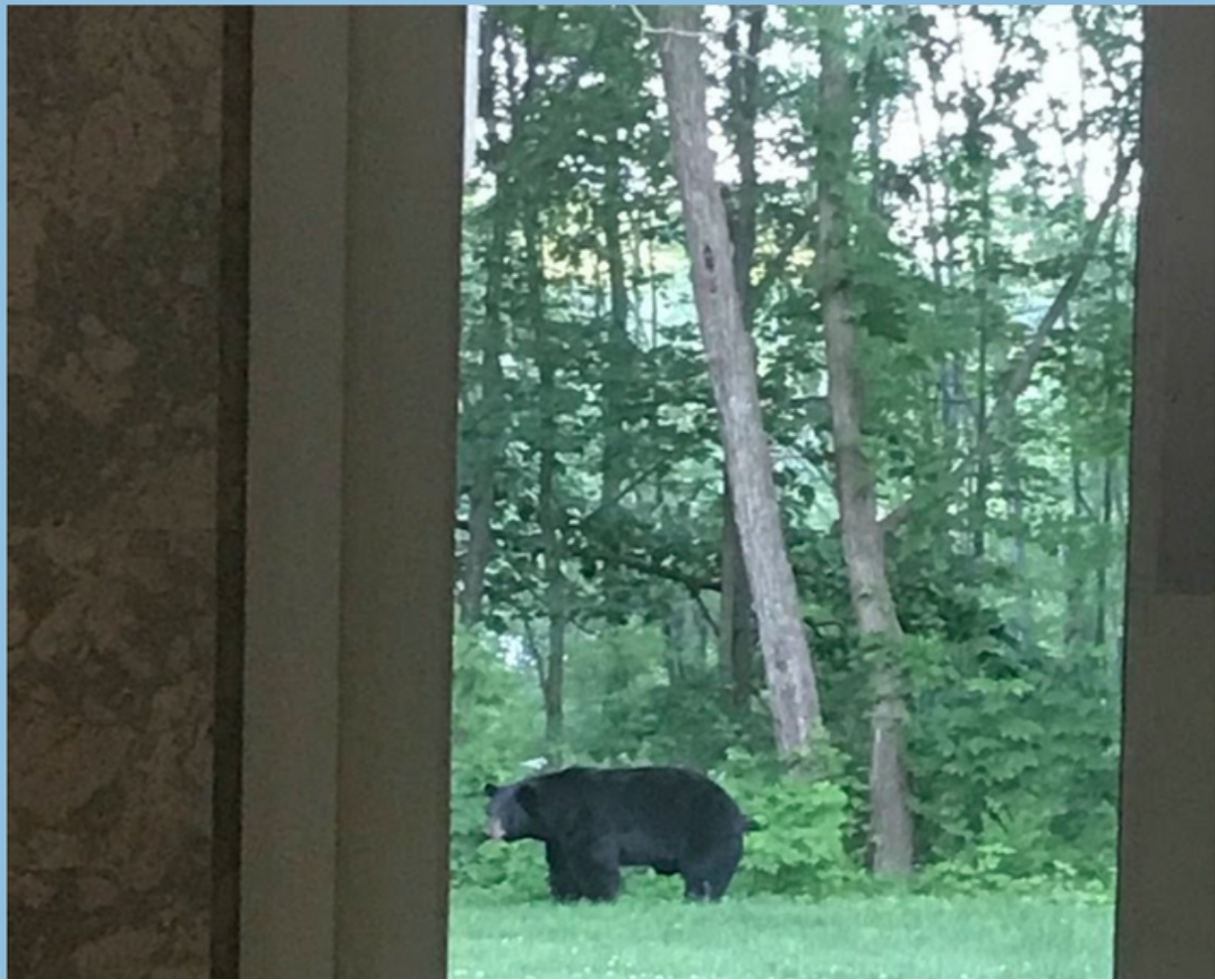




*Drawing Animals* is a weekly newsletter featuring an essay on our interconnection with animal life, an anthropomorphized doodle, and a short list of recommended readings related to the week's theme. Expect musings on a bird call's relationship to intuition, earth worms, myths about the land, and how we might think differently about consciousness. Twice a month, interviews are released with ecological writers, vegan chefs, animal-related spaces, artists, and more!



## ESSAY SIX: "HIBERNATION"



We saw once what it was to be caught with silver teeth. We know there are roads with you walk and do not come back. We like it here: trees and stones. We rub the wood ones to leave scent. This is where we will be. We think again of the silver things: sharp ones, teeth ones, small round ones.

We stay in the mountains, knowing this. Until it becomes dark. Then, noses under plastic lids, ones unchained. We drag. We bite the hard surface until, until, until: there.



We know they gather here, behind the transparent. One always at the front, the others pulled around the center. They smell all in one direction. What do they know? What do they miss?

They circle us as we pass their wall of eyes. Let us stare at each other. We look at the ground so there will be no weapon. Remember our common soil.

They fear when we stand like them, and so we yell together at our shared discontent. Where have our languages collapsed us? What we want are the small things under the tree skin. We peel back and find the moist, tongue the creatures into our bellies.

When we go for water, we free what crawls. What burrows deep into us. Light goes from sky and this time we move back up in the darkness. We like the streams, the other creatures.



Soon we will sleep. The young ones don't know yet this kind of rest. We visit here still, unmoving this time. We visit the bright ones and flying ones and the fast metal moving away. We visit where they yell for us to leave, we go where we don't belong.

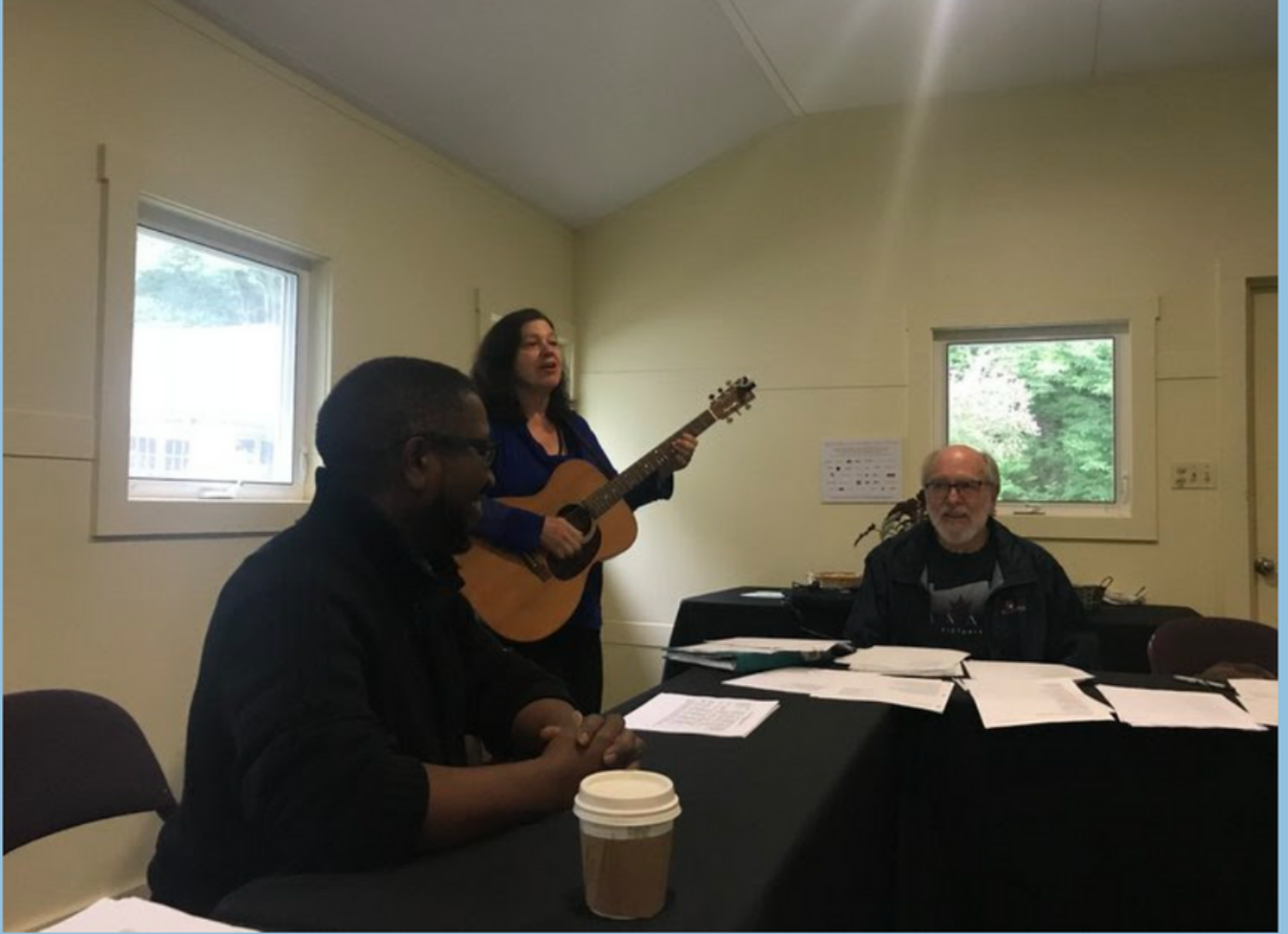
## AFTERTHOUGHTS

When I left graduate school, I went back to the woods. For five days, I slept in a tent in Rhinebeck, New York at the Omega Institute while I studied poetry with *Orion Magazine*.

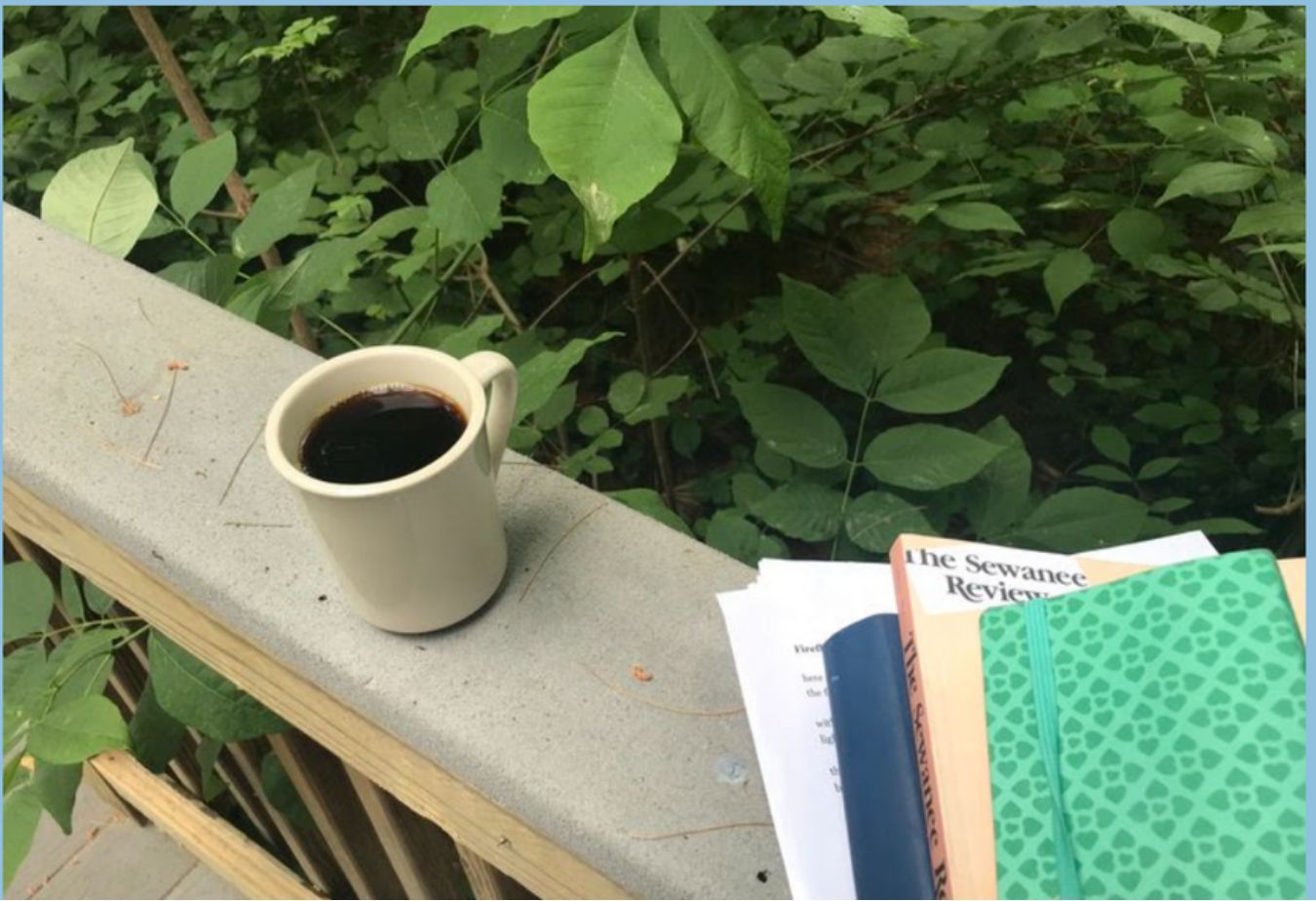


It was easy to wake with the light—the sun greeting me at 6 AM. I crawled out of my sleeping bag early enough sometimes for a bird walk with the magazine’s editor or a yoga class before breakfast. There was a sanctuary up a stone-lined path with cushions to meditate or do guided walks through a temple. It was an idyllic week, the total opposite of two rigorous years of teaching and classes—some days from 8 AM to 10 PM, often punctuated with setting up at a table at the only bar within walking distance of our campus in Camden, NJ where we would split fries and cheap beer as we argued about line breaks and what complex we were really working through in our drafts.

Some nights on the short train ride across the bridge into Philadelphia, my body squished against a friend, I’d ask myself: *How could I ever write without this?* As I stepped one foot over the other, feeling for the soft stone under my feet as I followed the meditation instructor’s guidance around a pond, I thought again: *How could I ever write without **this**?*



Before gathering with the other writers for our morning session, I'd drink chicory in silence and free write until it was time to go up to our cabin to study.



I made a few friends in the workshop, one who was from Denmark. She gave me coins to remember her by.



Our group spent the time after classes until dinner stretched in a field as we read together.



And went to find new poems in local bookstores.



I imagined getting a job at the retreat center and never having to leave. I fell into the idea that I'd found paradise. Here I could be close to the sun and the land, to fill myself with roasted corn and peppermint tea.

One night, our workshop leader, Major Jackson, was reading from one of his books when the whole room evolved in their silence. It was no longer the demure, respectful silence of listening to another read, but now bodies were shuffling in their chairs. It became a stifling silence. One where the group struggled to keep composure.

I looked to the window and saw a black bear lumbering behind the podium. Major, his back to the wall, continued reading. We stayed in our seats, watching the bear move about the land. I watched as the bear continued down to wear I'd pitched my tent. I gulped, smiled, tried to find myself in Major's language.

That night, I dawdled before returning to my bed. My safe nest. My home away from harm. I ate coconut ice cream and attempted to edit my poems for the next day. I tried to pretend I wasn't thinking of the bear. The moment itself was too present to write about. I looked away. Conjured images of the backseat of my mother's car growing up, Britney Spears lyrics.

I needed to give into my heavy eyelids. The cafe was closing and I felt it would be better just to surrender to trust. To listen to the articles online that said I would be safe if I didn't have food, if I made noise enough to rattle the bear away as I walked down the path. I just needed to keep myself zipped up.

I did as I had read. I clapped, stomped, made use of my wild body.

And then I heard something singing back. Drums? I followed the sound to another cabin in the woods, opening the doors. Inside, I found a band playing, bodies alive with dance and motion. My fatigue lifted. I disappeared into the crowd, knowing I was protected by sound.





This week, I wanted to introduce a new way I'll be sending these letters: through the voice of the animal themselves. It's an experiment in embodiment, moving from drawing into words. I'll still include a little context on the story and images I'm sharing, but I hope you like this new format, that it's a way to slip into the possibility for the way an animal inhabits the world :).

## + A NEW CREATURE FILM



As I keep digging around in artwork from growing up, I found these little boxes I used to make with creatures inside. I decided to bring them back into an evolved form, and that became a new stop motion animation.

Meet *Maude & Frankie*.



It was fun to play around—hope you enjoy! Feel free to share the piece.

Maude & Frankie  
Juliana Roth

MAUDE & FRANKIE

00:48 vimeo

A screenshot of a video player interface. At the top left, there is a circular profile picture of a woman, followed by the text "Maude & Frankie" and "Juliana Roth". On the right side, there are three icons: a heart, a clock, and a play button. The center of the screen is dominated by the title "MAUDE & FRANKIE" in a large, white, serif font. At the bottom, there is a progress bar with a play button icon on the left, a timestamp "00:48", and various control icons (signal strength, volume, settings, full screen) on the right, followed by the "vimeo" logo.

## READING LIST: REVISION

Peter Ho Davies, my undergrad mentor who was an important guide in taking my writing practice more seriously, wrote a book on what it is we do when we re-see: *The Art of Revision*. Here is favorite quote I re-read today: “A vision of revision, if you will, begins to emerge of **revision as an ongoing process of creativity, inspiration, and discovery, in which we continue to learn, to refine our intent, to come to understand what our own stories mean** as we *know* them better.” This mode of constantly re-seeing, of learning to know better what we create, is helping me understand what this letter is all about, and where I’d like to take it.

There’s still time to sign up for the monthly “[how!](#)” (first is June 26th at 8:30 PM EST) where we gather to share stories of animals in our lives, learn from each other, and practice a guided writing/ art making prompt. It is a casual environment—no specific skill set necessary to participate.

My *All We Can Save* circle begins on June 24th at 11 AM EST. Sign up [here](#).

Subscribe to the *Drawing Animals* podcast [here](#)! Next week I talk with a super talented documentary director who is changing how we see animals on screen.



SUPPORT THE WORK

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*Got an animal lover in your life? Forward them this letter!*

