

NOVEL READINGS

EVENT	NR Trial Sessions
PROJECT	Memoir
AUTHOR	Leslie Daniels
EXCERPT(S)	<i>This Won't Bring Her Back</i> <i>A Fallacy of Drakes, et al</i>
NR DIRECTOR	Michael Barakiva

Preparing with Michael made me think about the material with a different kind of objectivity. **His appreciation of my work in progress was enormously helpful**; I had the sense that **my work was deeply received and understood**. Also, Michael suggested some questions that could be useful in the discussion. This was very helpful in my anticipating how to think about the feedback. I would not have come up with the questions that he provided.

Michael is a genius at directing. It's subtle and yet profoundly generous. The result is that everyone brings out their best, and **there's a kindness and fun to all of it**. We are making something together. We are interrogating it together. It's utterly different from the solitude of writing; it's play in the best sense. **Michael led the discussion with clarity and insight**. He added a lot to the discussion.

I was able to laugh at my own jokes. I know this sounds small, but it was a first. **The experience of stepping outside and getting to see the progression of thoughts, made me clearer on the characters. The comments and questions from the discussion opened up areas of exploration for me.** The idea that all of the participants connected to the main relationship of sisterhood, relating it to their own cherished and complex sibling bonds was immensely powerful. **I felt that my work in progress connected with people in a deep way, they engaged with it.**

I would do it again in a heartbeat. It made me yearn for more collaborative work of this exact kind. Writing can be so lonely! The genius of theatre people at work here, the imagination and interactive skills cannot be valued enough. **There is an absolute thrill to hearing your work in progress treated with deep respect and interest**. Yes, you see its lumps and problems, but you also see how it aspires and yearns, plays for laughs and moves people to tears. You see what it wants to be. **It's a humbling reminder that we write to move others, to engage and entertain them, and how beautifully willing is this group of people to do just that. Thank you.**