

**YOUNG, from page 8**

I just nudge and guide, the ones that kind of just come to me, are my favorite.

I never really got into psychedelic drugs. Maybe I should?

**S.Z.:** *I don't remember many dreams.*

**R.Y.:** Oh! I remember most of my dreams.

**S.Z.:** *What is an interesting dream you've had recently?*

**R.Y.:** I had an entire Russian prison escape film, the entire thing, with the option for a Part II. I woke up completely exhausted from running through the woods and dogs chasing ... it was in color and fully had a plot and a sub plot.

**S.Z.:** *There is research that shows an undeniable link between ADD and creativity.*

**R.Y.:** It's kind of an outlet. Letting that part of your brain — that is always moving — just letting it go. Well, you have to learn to pull it back sometimes or it will just be running around the room.

**S.Z.:** *It's the new year. Is that an important reflective time for you?*

**R.Y.:** (After a long pause) Yeah. And after two or three months of rain ... actually it's been pretty nice this winter.

**S.Z.:** *It's bizarre. The roses behind my place are still blooming. Blooming!*

**R.Y.:** Global warming. Yay. I'm joking.

**S.Z.:** *It is a tragedy, global warming. What are your thoughts about that?*

**R.Y.:** I was shocked when the pope addressed it.

**S.Z.:** *He continues to impress.*

**R.Y.:** I mean, that is like a billion people who have been advised to take action to fight global warming.

I would be much more concerned if I had children or my brothers had children.

**S.Z.:** *What do you think about the growing rift between police and the public in general over the continued killing of black boys and men?*

**R.Y.:** I should have gone into law and then I could have a much more eloquent response to that. As far as race is concerned, uh, I'm a white male and so I can't really speak to anyone else's experience.

**S.Z.:** *But surely you have thoughts about it.*

**R.Y.:** It's horrible. I don't think people should be killing cops nor should cops be killing people. I'm really confused why grand juries are

not bringing these officers to trial — even if there is video — just being shot down in the street. I think it's being tolerated because of white fear that they're losing control and so they (police) are tolerating a certain amount of backlash.

You have to go to BBC or external news sources to even read about these things.

**S.Z.:** *As you travel, do you get a sense of what Europeans think of the gun violence in America?*

**R.Y.:** From the people I have talked with, they are both disgusted and fascinated by us.

We played this tiny town in Germany and it was the first time my brother, Michael, played drums with us on that tour. He was drinking beers with two small-town German boys and they told him that he looked European. "You don't have a huge, thick neck and you don't have scars where the bullets went through" (pointing to his chest). I think some people think it is like the Wild West — which in some places it kind of is.

Most people are fairly educated on what is going on.

**S.Z.:** *To the same degree that we are, I suppose.*

**R.Y.:** I think we're all just baffled. What the hell is going on?

**Every song is totally different in how I go about creating it. The ones that I try to force are always awful. The ones that I just nudge and guide, the ones that kind of just come to me, are my favorite.**

**AUTRY, from page 7**

and the truer I am to myself the more relatable it is to people who are reading it.

**A.G.:** *When you're performing to a mostly white audience, to you ever feel like you have to explain more the experience of a black woman or do you think that it is just enough that the story is out there?*

**T.A.:** I think you can't control how (the audiences) hear it or how they interpret it or what they get from it. I think in this

region, especially as the majority and not having to deal with a lot of actual diversity, I think sometimes people are working on a different level of understanding. It's a lot of people wanting to do the work to make things better and it's not going to happen if folks who have privilege don't step back and commit to doing some work. And that work is not just asking the brown or black people that are in your office or in your

class with you. No, get a book, do the work, and then come to me so we can have an actual conversation. There are bookstores and libraries with shelves and shelves of authors talking about (the African-

American experience) from every angle about every issue with as much statistical information as you want, with as much poeticness as you want, you name it. Pictures, illustrated, child version — it's out there.

**A.G.:** *What do you see as the social function of poetry and its performance?*

**T.A.:** Poetry, it's really accessible, which is why I like it as an artform for the

people. I think anyone can write. I've always felt that at the end of the day it's not just about me, the individual artist. It's like, how do we make spaces for other people to find their artistic talent and express it? So a lot of the work I've done has been around hosting events, creating events and creating the spaces for adults but also I do tons of youth work with lots of organizations helping young people write

and step to a stage and share their stories. It's very much about how we all contribute our unique gifts to the world, because everyone has something that they're here to offer. Artistic expression is a way for people to come into who they are. Everyone has a mission. How do we help them get there?

**A.G.:** *What's next for you?*

**T.A.:** I've been working on playing violin. I want to get back into music and really just start pushing my own boundaries and really defining who I want to be as an artist. Being a poet has been really practical and it's definitely my calling. But now I'm thinking about where I want to go with my art.

Now I'm a playwright, so that's pretty cool. I'm curious about exploring that. I've acted in a couple works of local artists, but this (show) is really pushing me in a different way because I'm taking on different characters and really trying to personify, so who knows? Maybe I'll really like this acting thing. I'm kind of just being open.

*Roots, Reality & Rhyme: The One-Woman Show premieres Jan. 24, 2 p.m. at Conduit Dance, Inc. Visit [turiyaautry.com](http://turiyaautry.com) to purchase tickets, view additional performance dates, and learn more about Turiya Autry.*

**S.Z.:** *It's true. Republicans have the majority in both houses of Congress and Obama is on his way out the door ...*

**R.Y.:** I don't think anything is going to change. Because they (Republicans) were obstructionists before. They're not going to try to overthrow Roe vs. Wade or do anything for the Religious Right. They're not going to help poor people. They won't help the middle class. I think it's just kind of throwing the ball back-and-forth from the people who really control this country: giant corporations.

Just because they shuffled the board room up a little bit — it's still the same board room. I'm jaded today.

**S.Z.:** *I'm asking you all the easy questions ...*

**R.Y.:** I think maybe I should stop bitching and do more things.

**S.Z.:** *We all should do that. What is 2015 going to bring for you?*

**R.Y.:** Try to be productive. Try to motivate myself to get more done. The band was having drinks and we were talking about everything that we do is for ourselves in an unintentionally selfish way. So we all decided we wanted to volunteer, but we weren't sure where to start.

**S.Z.:** *We should talk. I have a few ideas.*

**R.Y.:** I thought you might.

**Who Am I**

by Sean Sheffield

I think it is a mixture  
Of culture and childhood heroes  
Who make us  
My heroes were Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
and Malcolm X  
I tried to bring compassion and  
understanding  
To people like Dr. King did  
But also a passion and a fire  
To my arguments like Malcolm X  
Every now and then I let  
The Hulkmania run wild  
Growing up  
In a gang neighborhood  
Gave me an understanding  
Of different cultures  
And a determination  
That feeds me to this day  
All of these things  
Make me  
Who I am  
Today