**Richard Jewell’s Three-Minute Literary Welcome to MNWE**

Welcome to MnWE 2021! My name is Richard Jewell, and I would like to thank the all-volunteer MnWE Committee for organizing this great conference. I also would like to thank all of you for being here.

In the past year, we have lived through what William Shakespeare and John Steinbeck might call “the winter of our discontent” (Shakespeare, *Richard III*; Steinbeck, *Winter of Our Discontent).*

Charles Dickens might say it has been “the best of times,...the worst of times,...the spring of hope,...the winter of despair (*A Tale of Two Cities*).

This past year, the borders of our lives have been expanding. Feminist scholar Gloria Anzaldua [“OnZollDooUh”] suggests, “Though we tremble before uncertain futures / may we meet illness, death and adversity with strength / may we dance in the face of our fears” [*Prietita and the Ghost Woman* (?)]. (Her signature book *Borderlands* is free on pdf at <https://actlab.us/trans/Borderlands%20reader.pdf>.)

Here are three futures:

* First, Kao Kalia Yang says, “Patience is the road to wisdom” (*The Late Homecomer*). This means, for us, vaccines are coming for everyone.
* Second, James Baldwin tells us, “Love...in...daring and growth...takes off the masks we fear...” (*The Fire Next Time*). We are discussing and implementing greater racial equity.
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* Third, the Hopi have a saying, “One finger cannot lift a pebble.” In Minnesota, we work together to find health, jobs, and justice.

For all of us here today: Toni Morrison says, “If there is a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, you must be the one to write it” (Unknown). We who are gathered at this conference must write our own new vistas and opportunities and help our students to do so, as well—teaching and learning better, more deeply, and with greater equality.

Finally, Louise Erdrich tells us, that “which causes me to wonder, my own purpose on so many days as humble as the spider's, what is beautiful that I make? What is elegant? What feeds the world” (*Painted Drum*)?

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