

20200917 Episode SD

Tue, 9/29 12:09PM 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

america, light, crisis, swimming pool, egyptian pharaoh, disinterest, wilderness, sovereign country, recoiling, rooftop pool, heed, hold, wicker chairs, metro manila, life, parched, implicates, change, tourmaline, waltz



00:06

I'm Tracy k Smith. And this is the slow down.



00:20

in America's earliest mythologizing of itself, America is the underdog, guided to the promised land by a merciful God.



00:31

Other countries do something similar. In some other national mythology, America might be the Egyptian pharaoh holding a worthy population captive.



00:45

We can't all be that righteous. And sometimes that's hard to stomach. It's hard accepting that your comfort or privilege or disinterest might feed into a real and palpable problem for another group of people. And it's hard, once you've recognized this to be the case, to heed the call to change.



01:12

I believe that struggle to identify what must change and to enact that necessary change

is central to America's crisis of racism. We are right now, in the difficult moment of Revelation. Those who have chosen to pay attention are now clearly able to see the different ways in which systemic racism implicates each of us.



01:40

I think it is like having blinders removed and recoiling from so much direct light. Any moment now, it will be time to build upon what we can no longer fail to see, to move forward in concrete steps from the darkness of ignorance or aversion and into the light of justice. I am praying for a mass exodus.



02:10

Today's poem is in the middle of Metro Manila's water crisis. My mother posts a picture of my siblings, and a swimming pool by cabal Mischka legal.



02:26

In the stories are always the Israelites, Moses in the wilderness drawing water out of a rock. In another iteration of this life, my throat is parched sweat in my hair turning to salt crystals, baking like food under the sun.



02:46

In this life, we aren't rich. But when the lights right, we stroll in the gardens of wealth we live adjacent to it's beautiful bronze gates could waltz in and out of its French doors, leaving our umbrellas in the answer rooms. Go back to our rented house and dream of another brunch and another Greek restaurant. In the photo, they splash around the rooftop pool of a friend's uncle's condo, pretending to wash clothes.



03:19

Maybe in one translation of heaven, we'll have swimming pools, gilded pits of shellack and Tourmaline will be made to fill mouthful by mouthful from a nearby Brook before we're allowed to swim in it.



03:36

In this life, wilderness is a mouth it must first be made full with the right bodies for climbing in our wicker chairs. The country is half a world away, tinted rose gold through our sunglasses. The swimming pool isn't ours but the here and now is we hold these blessings to be self evident. Of course the Lord provides. But how do you portion blessing in this water crisis? Nobody has died of thirst yet. But people die of thirst every day. We're never Pharaoh and his foreman. If anything, the wild reads swaying in the river complicit in the flow and Ebb that nudges the poor babies basket to the incensed aqueducts of a palace. He will take his first steps in a sovereign country a world away. Name and baptize me there.



04:42

The slowdown is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation. This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts on the web@arts.gov