

theslowdown_20191213_20191213_128

📅 Wed, 9/30 7:54PM ⌚ 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

love, cyborg, crave, face, reasonable, belted, specialty foods, cry, smile, cocked, optimally, labor, placid, blemish, skin, clean, convince, repelling, web browsers, sir

00:06

I'm Tracy K. Smith, and this is the slow down.

00:23

What is beauty? For not, evolutionarily speaking? but practically, why do we crave it? Why do we suffer and pay so very much to obtain it? I used to think we labored so to convince others that we are worthy of their desire, interest, admiration, and love. Now, I think we labor in order that we might be convinced to love ourselves, and an effort to love ourselves. We spend a small national fortune on hair products, scan appointments, gym memberships, specialty foods, and designer clothes. Then, we peer into web browsers that feature images and videos posted by others who fork over the same amount of money to even greater effect. And we're back at square one. Or rather, I am I really ought to speak for myself, but I crave the safety of others. And so I've invented a crowd, a whole love starved nation struggling like me, to muster the simplest feeling of attachment to itself to myself. Sometimes I think I love myself when I've lost 10 pounds, or I love myself after I wallpaper the powder room. I love myself once this blemish fades. Or if only I could sing really belted out then I'd have no choice but to love myself. The crazy thing is I do love myself. I enjoy my own company. The thoughts I can cocked in the imagination they spring from console me. When did those things stop being enough? Today's poem is what a cyborg once by frannie joy. It helps me to pinpoint something the way we see one another has changed. Cell phones, social media and the internet, when deployed optimally allow us to prep and light and filter and edit ourselves into an unnatural, invulnerable state. We fashion a surface that invites scrutiny while repelling penetration, like the ever placid expression on the faces of influencer after influencer, but maybe we still crave something more. What a cyborg once by Franny joy. What a cyborg wants is to work perfectly, to simulate pleasure perfectly, to not cry at dinner, forget to call back to keep her skin clear, to keep the sheets clean. To reply all when asked to get up at a

reasonable hour to stop smoking, or at least get it down to something reasonable to not worry her friends by worrying about her weight, to not be so afraid to not pick at her face. To have a face you can really trust to have the face of a pretty American who makes you smile back when she says Right this way, sir. Or who makes you drool when she says yes sir. I like it, sir. What a cyborg once is to be clean, reasonable to wash her hair a few times a week to not kill the plants to stop trying to leave her friends before they can leave her to smile and mean it to believe in heaven. To believe the humans when they say they love her. To not want sometimes to watch them cry, to not want so badly to be touched badly enough to slice herself open to trap a man in a corner to peel the skin from her face and not let him go until he looks. The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.