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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

loneliness, therapist, looked, sleuthing, raindrop, vietnamese american, passed, direction, tributaries, feeling, flailing, picture, shake, cambodian, american public, whooped, root, mind, beautify, pasty



00:05

I'm us Poet Laureate Tracy k Smith.



00:09

And this is the slow down.



00:23

I've read several articles in just the last few months about loneliness. It seems to be on the rise in America, a kind of emotional epidemic. And that's serious. Because loneliness isn't just a momentary mood that can be shaken. For many of us, it can color the way we see everything, ourselves, the work we do, the future we're moving toward, which makes widespread loneliness, an urgent matter of public health. I wonder if 21st century loneliness is digital in nature? What I mean is, well, how often do you find yourself doing this? typing in search terms and hope of being led to a voice telling you things are going to be okay? Or a like mind whose perspective validates your own? I search for products to amuse, satisfy and instantly beautify me. Where does all this searching get me? I'm not sure really. There are only so many directions a person can be led in before she realizes she's going nowhere at all. That feeling of looking up from my smartphone, only to realize how much time has passed and how little of consequence has changed. That for me, triggers are very difficult to shake variety of loneliness. To be fair, sometimes my online sleuthing does turn up evidence of voices and actions that make me feel hopeful and inspired. But I believe the key to making those feelings last is to carry them back into the

real world as quickly as possible. I'm not talking about hitting the share button, but rather getting up going out, looking into the faces of other actual people, and passing some of that happiness along. No matter how small a thing it might seem. Today's poem by Vietnamese American poet, artist and activist bow fee is Frank in its description of loneliness, and despair. But it also seems to be an ode to togetherness, a testimony to the healing power and the collective strength of community. therapist for by bow fee. A river wanting to go down hill will carve new tributaries tear through homes flood the roots of trees. The therapist tells you, your mind is swollen with Doom that carries you and it's white rush, torrents ripping through rock and root. I don't know in what direction love pulls me. But I do know the feeling of the muscle in your chest flailing for fear of drowning. at many Haha, a Young Southeast Asian couple asked me to take their picture Cambodian or LAO or Thai or Viet he was heavily tattooed and looked like the dudes who would have whooped my ass just for breathing back in the day. She had dyed hair looked like the girls who dismissed me as a pasty, boring little sellout back then. They're the most gorgeous couple in the park. If it sounds like I'm making assumptions about them, and me, I am and it's not okay just because I'm Asian too. They like the picture I take for them. The Creek and the falls are swollen from the rains. The same that have de luge basements, dips in the road, drowned park benches too close to the lake shore. Each raindrop doesn't care if it's the one to soak in, or the one that stays above it all to flood. They just throw themselves on top of each other until they become bigger than who they were when they were apart. The slowdown is a production of American public media in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation.