

20201026 Episode SD

📅 Thu, 10/22 2:54PM ⌚ 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

data, face, history, grownups, crystal balls, feet, camera, proclivities, city streets, phone, national endowment, pore, eyelids, today, corporations, afar, facial recognition, trade offs, inching, policeman



00:06

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



00:17

When I was growing up,



00:19

I often heard grownups use the phrase, his name will go down in history, or her name will go down in history, meaning their accomplishments will live on forever, they will be remembered. Now, the internet leaves a seemingly permanent trail of our best and worst thoughts. Such documenting of our every mood, or every utterance is tantamount to an exhaustive history of humanity and all its complexity. But for whom, we've long known that our likes and dislikes our browsing and buying proclivities have become valuable data to corporations vying for Dominion in the marketplace. And we are becoming increasingly aware that our faces are aware about our questions, our bio data are a whole other source of power for corporations and governments. Try as we might, to put such thoughts out of our minds. We are inching, or perhaps shuttling toward forms of government surveillance that make Orwell look like child's play. Some believe we are already there. Still, we peer into our phones as if into crystal balls. We bathe in cool computer monitor light day and night.



01:45

What are we seeking?



01:47

connection, satisfaction, absolution, distraction, and is the community and the solidarity these platforms afford us enough to counteract the more insidious aspects of being caught up in the worldwide



02:05

web?



02:07

I hope so. I hope we can make it so. I hope we might also strive to guard more of ourselves in these spaces, and to demand that the trade offs of interacting there, whatever they may be, are worth it. If cyberspace is the final frontier, maybe it follows that the next great social movement will be for cyber justice.



02:36

Today's poem is facial recognition by Alice Leon. After Sasha styles.



02:45

In China these days, they recognize a face with a single hair. The city streets lined with one camera for every 10 heads. Most of the time, I can't even recall my own reflection in a mirror. So I have to say I'm impressed by the city's sweep. In my American suburb, my phone blinks Good morning to my face. A policeman's chest camera is blind, over another dead body. The ringing in my head drowns out the knock of recorded reality. Someone afar is calling for me, or for some other Asian woman nearby. At any rate, someone is looking for one of us. I can't be sure if it's God, or the database, who's kissing my eyelids, who's stroking my back to sleep? There are the men who take any one of us to bed. But none who know us so intimately scanning our every open pore and saving it to memory. In the data, my face doesn't match today's suspect, or yesterday's call for internment, or tomorrow's terror of mass detention. The state doesn't find my feet for jaywalking, or

brand my back with a score, or at least not that I know of yet. So I get away with ignoring it all for now unsure of how to ever step foot in my old country. How can I ever stay still in the new I can lose my face, but the data never forgets.



04:42

The slowdown is a production of American public media



04:47

in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.



04:50

This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts on the web@arts.gov