

20200929 Episode SD

 Tue, 9/29 7:43AM  5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

standard, doctor, poem, warm blanket, pledge, devote, care, listening, pretend, left, unbend, nocturnal, elin, slow, clavicle, ajar, eyelids, nightingale, bare feet, egg white



00:06

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



00:23

I'm thinking of the phrase standard of care, for some reason. Somehow it's gotten stuck in my head standard of care. It's hard to shake because it has such a pleasant meter to it. Like it wants to keep pace with my footsteps, standard of care, standard of care.



00:46

When the doctor comes into the room, you want her to listen, you don't want her to finish your sentences. You don't want to feel like a job she's doing.



00:58

But sometimes you do. Once a doctor made me cry, right there on the table in front of her, as if my illness was an insult to her something in poor taste. This was decades ago. I remember the sharp blade of her voice more than I remember the relief of feeling healed.



01:21

Once a doctor teased me, pretending I had a problem far more serious. Before laughing and offering the truth. I was too young, too insecure. to shame him. It would be years

before I learned that the standard of care might be different for me than it is for another. And that this difference might have something to do with the story my skin tells even before I open my mouth, or before the doctor opens my chart,



01:57

but I tear up recalling the nurses who have been tender and quiet with me. The ones who nod as they walk away, then returned quickly with ice chips or a warm blanket, standard of care, standard of care, as if compassion is their philosophy.



02:21

Today's poem is Nightingale pledge by Rome Elin on day



02:28

before God and those assembled here, I pledge. I will check the screen tracing your heart rhythm, the beep steady as a birds call from the shadows. I will tie your gown so faithfully strong. It won't show your bare back your leaf like keloid only filtered air will stroke your unwashed hair. I will carry out to the best of my ability, my nocturnal duties, the warm Horlicks the call Bell the ajar door. I will devote my midnight listening to you hum a song something that lessens the weight of my eyelids. I will attend to the sound of your bare feet as they touch the sticky floor.



03:21

In the morning I will explain what the cylindrical bottles are for. Without a word. You'll unbend your arm to me. My fingertip will search for the strongest vein. I will not do anything evil. The defib pads will fly out of the metal drawer. I will slap them on your chest, one on the right below the clavicle, the other on the left just under the armpit. I will be the first one to greet you. Welcome back. Even if I know you'd rather go. I will not reveal the story of your life. How your daughter left when she learned of your diagnosis. I will devote my hours to listening to things you do not say I will maintain the prestige of my profession. But release a wild laugh when I find you pretend choking on your egg white tablets. So I will pat your back.



04:28

The slowdown is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.



04:38

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04:48

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