

theslowdown_20200827_20200827_128

Wed, 9/30 8:40PM 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

moon, poem, cloud, red, finches, injustice, feeling, seeds, renounce, feel, tree, police, aegean, ableism, transphobia, inmates, swoon, faraway, prison, slowdown

00:06

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

00:16

We are living through what I want to believe is an awakening. Many people who have never given an injustice, like racism, much thought are beginning to think about it. they're beginning to recognize that it's not a theoretical abstraction, affecting faceless, faraway strangers. Now they see it. Now they believe those of us who have been saying, we can see and feel and smell it all this time. Now what? What are those who are awake to this reality? willing to give up, change, renounce replace, in order to begin writing age old wrongs? And what's next? What must we do? In light of all the other systems of injustice, in which you and I are implicated? transphobia ableism, sexism, nationalism, the list is long and close to home. Today's poem is the feeling by Ari bond. Yes. Each spring, a cloud travels up from the south to an island in the Aegean, the Red Cloud is coming. The town's people say, or the Red Cloud has been here. What cloud? My mother asks, since when the Red Cloud covers the buildings, the cars in a fine red film of dust from elsewhere, that we imagine we cannot feel the wars is an American feeling that we cannot see them that we say they are somewhere else. But someone pays the police. We do that we are meant to believe the poem can say moon but not government. Both have flags attached, and can make a body howl beyond its well. They punctuate existence, even if I believe I can't feel them. They legislate they leak. The moon, which is always here, even if it cannot be seen. The inmates and the detainees and correctional facilities in jails and prisons in maximum and minimum security in solitary, cannot see the moon or they can the inmates who are here always, even if I cannot see them, who cannot speak to me or who do but am I listening? are we listening to poems? Not much. Therefore, I can say anything. No. I can say moon and tree and Fox and river or me and you or love and stutter but I can mean Corporation. I can mean police. I can mean

surveillance, or that the moon is a prison. It is daytime and in day time. Nearly no one sees the moon and the tree is a television where the President appears in the form of a Finch. He sings gorgeously people swoon. We learn that finches eat mostly seeds small and harmless. So when the tree flowers in spring, we forget the moon and its mute armaments. How drunk we become on blossoms. We don't ask what kind of seeds or where they're from. We hum along with the finches with the sirens with the rivers with the police. A harmony who's falling droplets we can't feel. And meanwhile, a law ushered through noiselessly mandating seeds. This is not our poem. The poem has been privatized its flag will be a red feeling. The slowdown is a production of American Public Media, in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.