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00:06

I'm us Poet Laureate Tracy k Smith. And this is the slow down. Sometimes it's funny to think of what accounts for our view of the world. When I was little, it seemed like I never saw my mother excuse herself to go to the restroom. And so I lived for a time under the impression that ladies did not go to the restroom, that using the bathroom was something only kids and men did. Older, but not much wiser. I thought that to be beautiful, a woman had to carry a little bit of sorrow. Because there were moments when my mother's beautiful younger sisters grew quiet, turning their attention inward in a way that struck me as well. sorrowful. I will admit that I even brought home my daughter from the hospital, thinking she was an exceptional baby, and achievement I could be proud of because she was peaceful and alert and quiet. We live in obedience to these random ideas about the world until something barges in to call them into question. A woman admitting she was in need of a toilet. A friend from my 20s whose beauty and laughter were one and the same. My nine year old daughter tearing through the world, like a high pitched fiery comment, making me prouder than proud. Could it be that we learn more from the things that contradict us than those that affirm what we've long believed to be true? Today's poem by Palestinian American poet Khalid Ali on is an elegy for World Wrestling Entertainment celebrity China. It's a love poem of sorts, paying tribute to a woman who stood stereotypes of female fragility on their head. And it's a song of heartbreak and protection for someone who surprise actually was just as vulnerable as any of the rest of us. Even in all her celebrated physical strength. On the death of WWE professional wrestler, China, by Hala algon the first woman I wanted to touch, typography of darting muscles and sinew, a body made for ambulances. It was Oklahoma. I was seven. My heart was broken. And you are the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. I loved you best. All rewilding hooker, red lips, black leather, four miles, a man named hunter to love. The women I knew feared the fist, not you. When your action figure came out. I bought two. I made your plastic legs. Part Seven became 10 became 22. What I mean is, I drank and snorted. What I mean is I tore bread so the birds would come. I watched your sex tape to see if you'd cry. I wanted to see the

secrets of a woman who had none. You dove into a fish tank once. After too many cocktails. They had to yank you out. A headline screaming the great fall of but I think you hit your mark. A woman can spend a lifetime wiping a man from her thighs. China. I went for a run yesterday and realize it was spring already. The tree shaking there Marie Antoinette wigs into a savage green. The fog lifted as I ran this world brightens with or without us. Recognizing the miracle becomes the miracle. The Victorians had it right. A woman will be as small as the world needs her to be. But you already knew that, didn't you? The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation.