

# theslowdown\_20200810\_20200810\_128

📅 Wed, 9/30 8:33PM ⌚ 5:00

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

meant, fannie lou hamer, vote, marching, laws, feels, continues, poem, death, america, work, wormholes, portals, hammers, battles, free, white supremacist, american public, civil rights leader, ai

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

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In science fiction, and perhaps

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in science, there is talk of portals, wormholes, places where the laws of space and time seem to buckle, or disappear. places where you can get from the point where you are, to a point in the past or the future,

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just like that.

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Sometimes it feels to me that we have arrived at one of those portals. Sometimes it feels to me that we have crossed paths with the battles of the past battles for the rights of black people

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in America,

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to live where we want to vote, to enjoy protection under the law, and to be genuinely free. For people of my generation, who grew up believing these battles had long ago been one. Sometimes it feels that we are marching alongside our forebears. It feels as though we have been yanked out of 2020 and dragged back to the struggle for civil rights. Today's poem reminds me that the work of American heroes, like civil rights leader and voting rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer is not finished. It continues through the many surges of hatred and violence against black people. It continues through the many barriers to true democracy, erected by the criminally corrupt. hammers home was shot at by white supremacist seeking to bar blacks from registering to vote. She was arrested and beaten nearly to death by Mississippi police enforcing white supremacist laws. hammers work is not done. It continues through you and me, any of us courageous enough to become agents for justice. This is mahogany I browns. When Fannie Lou Hamer said, I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. She meant no more turned cheek. No more patience for the obstruction of black woman's right to vote and plant and feed her family. She meant equality will cost you your luxurious life. If a black woman can't vote, if a brown baby can't be fed, if we all don't have the same opportunity, America promised. She meant ain't no mountain boulder enough to want off a determined woman. She meant here. Look at my hands. Each poem holds a history of the 16 shots that chased me harm free from a plantation shack. Look at my eyes. Both these are windows, these little lights of mine. She meant nothing but death can stop me from marching out a jail cell still a free woman. She meant nothing but death can stop me from running for Congress. She meant no blackjack beating will stop my feet from working and my heart from swelling and my mouth from praying. She meant America you will learn freedom feels like butter, beans, potatoes and cotton seeds picked by my sturdy hands. She meant look Victoria gray and a divine and me in our rightful seats on the House floor. She meant until my children and my children's children and they babies to can march and vote and get back in interest. What was planted in this blessed land. She meant I ain't stopping America. I ain't stopping America. Not even death can take away from my woman's hands. What I've rightfully earned. The slowdown is a production of American public media

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