

# 20200924 Episode SD

Tue, 9/29 12:17PM 5:00

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

hour, backyard, faces, woodland creature, true culprit, natural inclination, carry, betters, eyes, zoom, book, beasley, foxes, compulsion, cage, dismay, forgot, kelp, piano, notes



00:06

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



00:23

You know how they say that when confronted with a group photo, most people's natural inclination is to seek out themselves. I suspect this might also be the case on video conferencing platforms. I have zoom meetings most every day. And I hate to admit it, but of all the faces in the tiny grid, my eyes keep gravitating back to my own. Is that what I look like? When I talk? I find myself thinking, how is that the expression my face makes when I listen? What's up with my mouth, and on and on? I think I may have found the true culprit of the zoom headache. My kids are the same way. for them. FaceTime is just a chance to make loony faces in what is essentially a flashy mirror. With the tap of a button I hadn't previously known existed, they can turn themselves into foxes or sharks, or, much to my dismay, poo emojis. Which is why it's so exciting. When I find them in Thrall to buy a mound of dirt in the backyard, or bent over the pages of an actual book. They've wriggled free of the human compulsion for self scrutiny. for however long it lasts, they've forgotten themselves entirely.



01:56

The same goes for me when I sink into a good book, or sit in the backyard chasing after a woodland creature with just my eyes. That rapture is self forgetting helps me temporarily cut ties with who I am, and what I lack and how soon I ought to get back to the task of trying to keep up with my betters.



02:20

It's been hard to get to that state under the current conditions. Everywhere I look, there's evidence of me. Best are the days when something unexpected takes me by surprise. A song comes on even a song I've heard 1000 times before. But this time, it opens up a new door. Or I turn the page onto a rapturous metaphor. And finally, thankfully, I'm carried far, far away from the cage of my own self regard.



02:59

I guess this is another of the life saving properties of art, the ability to carry us far beyond the limits of our known selves. Because the world is full of fascinating perspectives. And because sometimes one very good form of self care is to get lost in the world outside your head.



03:25

Today's poem is the piano speaks by Sandra Beasley. After Eric Sati



03:35

for an hour, I forgot my fat self, my neurotic innards, my addiction to alignment. for an hour. I forgot my fear of rain. for an hour. I was a salamander shimmying through the kelp in search of shore and under his fingers. The notes slid loose from my belly and along jelly rope of eggs that took root in the mind. And what would hatch I did not know. A lie, a waltz, an apostle of glass.



04:16

for an hour, I stood on two legs and ran.



04:21

for an hour I panted and galloped for an hour I was a maple tree and under the summer of his fingers, the notes seated and winged away in the clutch of small, elegant helicopters.



04:42

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



04:50

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