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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

ocean, slow, poet, senses, wong, narratives, distance, lives, landscape, translated, stabilizing, smallness, grown, keener, flinging, poem, journeying, eleanor, compresses, unfamiliar

00:06

I'm poet Jenny shear filling in for Tracy k Smith. And this is a slow down.

00:23

Often when we think we know a place, or having grown accustomed to it, we can mute our powers of perception. We stop taking in what's new, dim our senses and rely on autopilot. Distance can de-familiarize what we think we know. It can bring back the strangeness of the physical and psychic landscapes we traverse. When we allow ourselves to take some distance and travel, whether geographically or just in the mind, our attention grows keener and more alert. We have to map out a place or see at a new from an unfamiliar vantage point, we can free ourselves what feels like stale or rigid realities. Our senses are activated and heightened. When we build new pathways and put ourselves in new surroundings, or past cells, and their oppressive weights and shapes can fall away. The narratives we tell ourselves can shift and change. Movement is energizing in that way. Motion and journeying can also provoke self reflection. It can ask us to take measure of where we've been and where we might still go. What is it about high altitudes and certain speeds that enable us to cast a renewed look at our lives and the narratives that branch from it. Perhaps it's the fact that the outside world maps onto our inner one. If you're too close to something, you can't see a hole or against the relief of something else. From an aerial view, though, a smallness of our desires and attempts are made visible and set against the immensity of what surrounds it. When I have occasion to fly, the sight out of the plane window offers a reliable thrill. at 40,000 feet, the vascular systems of landscape sharpen interview, one can see the veins of rivers emptying out into a sheet of sea. Boats appear like crumbs dusted off by unseen hands on land, or grievances and worries can often feel enormous and uncontainable. But at elevated altitudes, our lives shrink down to size. The places where we spend most of our hours waking and not diminishes into a pebble, which compresses into a pinprick until finally, it's

indistinguishable from a larger solid mass of city and country. The next thing you know, you can't see any of it above the clouds under which everything else is local weather. Today's poem by the Chinese poet Wong Shani, translated by poet Eleanor Goodman offers us a view from such heights. It speaks to the D stabilizing experience of being in the air from which perspective the world is made, both large and small, close and distant and strange again, seeing the ocean from a Night Flight by Wong Gianni Translated by Eleanor Goodman. Everything becomes small. Only the ocean makes the Knights leather clothes open up, the further out it spreads. Fine north, to the right is tanjun. To the left is Beijing. two clusters of moths flinging themselves fire. Then the East China Sea suddenly moves and the wind bring silver bits that can't be more shattered, and many thick wrinkles whip up. I see the face of the ocean. I see the aged seashore, trembling and hugging the world too tightly. I've seen death, but never seen death come back to life like that.

04:38

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