

20190816_theslowdown_20190816_128

📅 Wed, 9/30 7:34PM ⌚ 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

language, squirrel, poem, breadcrumbs, blackbird, ayman, creatures, robin, species, daily, grass, swooped, slow, main characters, other living beings, global, trawling, transcends, word, robot

00:06

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

00:19

In the past year, my daughter and I have read the wild robot and the wild robot escapes by Peter Brown, and she and her father have read, ending the last and ending the first by Katherine Applegate. In both series, there is a global language that all species of animal share a language which transcends those private tongues shared only within species. Both serve the necessary function of allowing the main characters to travel great distances and collude with other creatures. Those fantasy languages stoked my imagination with ideas of a grand global community that unites all creatures throughout nature. What would it take to learn such a thing, and to belong to such an enterprise? Once driving through neighborhood streets in my town, I was caught off guard by a squirrel that ran right into my path. I hit the brakes, but too late. My front wheel crushed him. It was the first time anything like that had happened to me. And I pulled my car over and got out. I felt awful about what had happened. Just at that moment, a robin swooped down to where the squirrel lay, flapping around, as if stricken and confused. It struck me that the two must have been friends. The poor squirrel was beyond reviving. But I was able to move his body from the pavement and into the shade of a laurel Bush, hoping that that went some way toward an apology. If there is a universal language, I can understand why we humans remain locked outside of it. Our overall regard for the other living beings on the planet is shamefully dim. But maybe that language is what our species once knew. And maybe under the right conditions, it can be learned a new today's poem is world word by Ayman grennan in one long sentence, it ponders all the many kinds of meaning that sit outside of human language, perhaps outside of any language at all. The poem alerts me to the wonder, the logic and the largeness of the world with all its daily miracles, miracles, language as we know, it falls just shy of

reaching world word by Ayman grennan what over the gable end and high up under tangled cloud that Raven might be saying to its tumble soaring mate, or what the Blackbird might intend when chattering among scattered breadcrumbs, or what the bellowing of one cow and then another in the near field might mean remains beyond my Ken being all noise for which no words will manage, though all is language, settling and unsettling the world beyond me. And yet, there's the dunnoek in all it's done colors at work among the small stones and patchy grass of the driveway. And here's the Robin's aggressive tilt at breadcrumbs. And there goes the sudden shriek of the Blackbird, all alive. Inside the inhuman breath pattern of the wind trawling every last leaf and blade of grass, and flinging rain like velvet pebbles onto the skylight. Nothing but parables in every bristling inch of the out of sight, unspoken, never to be known, pure sense, startling, untranslatable there of the world as we find it. The slowdown is a production of American Public Media, in partnership with the Poetry Foundation. To get a poem delivered to you daily, go to slowdownshow.org and sign up for our newsletter.