

theslowdown_20200226_20200226_128

Wed, 9/30 8:07PM 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

life, filled, rocks, slow, poem, moreso, happened, hanging baskets, worry, die, minor, drove, eventually, plants, work, intact, morning, draining, blank space, pay

00:06

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

00:23

does everything die? My son asked this morning. And I told him, yes, everything dies. Everything he asked again. And this time my husband answered, Yes, everything. Animals, people, plants, even rocks eventually ground down and disappear. I was grateful when he mentioned this thing about rocks, essentially dying, because it gave me the chance to imagine the epoch long and event filled lives of rocks. That's what our life is talking to our children, introducing them to the world. After they're asleep at night, our attention turns to the small and large things that fill up our own life. The needs we nurture, the wishes and dreams we aspire toward. And the ongoing nitty gritty we work at to keeping our home comfortable and intact, keeping our bodies intact, keeping up with friends, paying bills, and trying to make sure there is enough magic punctuating all of this to keep our children happy, and ourselves. When I put it like that, it doesn't sound like much, but I like life. I like working. I like living life with the people I love. I suppose there is a part of me that must even like worrying, if only for how often I find myself doing it. Last night, driving home in the rain. I felt once or twice an instant when my car's wheels seemed to lose traction. Nothing happened. But I was filled with simultaneous dread and relief at the knowledge that under such conditions something awful could have happened. I drove on more slowly than before. While everything inside me thrummed clinging to life. Today's poem is a joke about how old we've become by Adam clay. I take a break from the mornings work to pay a credit card bill to take the dog out to water the plants and the hanging baskets. But why not instead, take a walk through the early August morning before the heatwave hits, the body's still stretching itself out. The music goes from minor to major when you flip the album. But sometimes the minor starts over before you cross the room. And sometimes it's best to just listen best to not fill any space with words. The

stars and the stripes catch the eye moreso than the blank space, like a life to be filled up with something bigger than breath. My dad last night on the phone told me the tests came back positive, but not to worry. But how not to worry with is almost three decades ahead of me. And what is the year really when they pile up. Time to dust the furniture again, to check on the slow draining sink. clean it out. start the day with a list of what a day should even mean or be not minding how fast the hours go by until eventually I will which by then it will be too late. Though I do not mean my life means anything. in the scheme of stepping back. We all do chipping at some unmovable block of rock as if time won't eventually undo even its looming shape to 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.

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