

# 201902015\_slowdown\_20190215\_128

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, tyree, mama, slow, logic, tracy, sons, cricket, stood, liter bottles, feel, childhood, production, slowdown, swig, window sill, wrangling, fireflies, mother, shortchange

00:05

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

00:23

When we say childhood is magic, I think what we mean is, in a child's mind, everything is possible. I don't want to believe the following early memory is a dream. I stood one morning at the top of the stairs in my home in California, swinging my arms back and forth, and rocking at the knees. I was three and a half or four years old. The next moment, I remember jumping all the way down to the bottom step and somehow walking safely into the kitchen for breakfast. The ordinary laws of logic and reality didn't apply. How could they? If I had no idea what they were. When my daughter was three, she used to make plans for what she would do when she was a baby again. My five year old sons still sometimes say, when I was old, or even when I was your grandpa, my imagination yearns to run wild with such possibilities. But tyrannical logic hammers them down, wrangling time back into a straight line. When that happens, what I feel is akin to heartbreak. Gradually, my daughter and sons will enter the realm of adulthood, though I hope their journey can be slow. Sometimes, as I watch them zigzagging along that path dawdling, backtracking, making only a gradual forward progress, I feel the world growing strange and wonderful to me again, they're small hands turning up clods of damp Earth, filling boxes and paper cups with wriggling grubs. throwing off the bed covers and raising the shades after I turn off the light. Sitting up in mid summer dark, leaning onto a window sill to watch the yard fill up with fireflies. Today's poem by Tyree de recaptures glimpses of the freedom and the wonder of childhood, but it doesn't shortchange grownups. And as a mother, I appreciate that because it's easy to feel guilty for how practical minded I sometimes have to be in doing the work of teaching my kids and keeping them safe. day's poem assures me that adults, like the speaker's mother can plant the seeds of a lasting magic in their children.

03:06

Chained by Tyree day

03:11

I was the unbroken horse of that town, slept standing up, held on to the breeze like wild flowers. I kept caterpillars in jars. My mama let them go. I figured they just disappeared. There are moments you can hear God say things soft spoken. The sun settling between thin pines collected crickets in two liter bottles, dropped them on a path far from the house, one or two at the bottom, drowning in the last swig of cola. The smell of Mama's leaf pile faint and almost gone. My mama would say to kill a cricket is the sin against the night.

04:05

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04:35

The slow down is written by me. Tracy K. Smith. It is produced by Jennifer Lai, with Tracy Mumford. Our music is by Alexis quadrado. Engineering by Corey strebel production support by joy Biles