

# theslowdown\_20200811\_20200811\_128

📅 Wed, 9/30 8:34PM ⌚ 5:00

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

fantasies, restaurant, eating, felt, husband, imitative, served, poetry, glasses, courtship, sat, underscored, linens, world, gestures, meals, dishing, spontaneity, luxuries, banquet

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I'm Tracy k

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Smith, and this is the slow down.

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Food is

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comfort, pleasure,

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sustenance. Food is also fantasy. Take all the baking My husband has been doing since the pandemic began. I see now it's rooted in the desire to keep us safe, which is how I feel. The moment a slice of warm cake is sat down in front of me. No matter what else the world tells us. Such gestures attempt to assure us that life can be sweet. I wish I could remember all the meals out in restaurants that marked my courtship with my husband, dinners, of course, but also lunch, brunch, breakfast cocktails, the candlelight, the gleaming chandelier ears, the tinkling of glasses, the soft murmur of collective chatter. All of it underscored the story of extraordinary happiness, we all of a sudden felt ourselves

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to be living.

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I remember later, the irrational sense of pride I felt during the brief window of time when my daughter was still tiny enough to sleep quietly in my arms while I ate in a restaurant. And I recall the inevitable shock that came when I realized she was just like other human children, who had no patience for the ritual of restaurant meals. That realization led to the fantasies of freedom, spontaneity, and responsibility to only ourselves alone, that dining out has come to constitute the table linens that for all I know, iron themselves, the dishwasher, I will not have to empty upon waking. eating out with my husband, the two of us return to our young selves alone in the world together, if only for a few hours. I should say that eating out once fostered those things. Because it's been months since I've sat in a restaurant letting fantasies overtake me, as it has been months since I've handed off care of my children and slipped out for the night. But it's okay. With our national health and well being hanging in the balance, not to mention our claim to justice and equality. Maybe this isn't the right time for indulging self serving fantasies. I dream a world where we are all of us valued. All are equipped with the tools to flourish. A world where unfair advantage and unfair disadvantage are leveled and we envision ourselves as willing guests at a banquet. It pleased our host to seat us among intriguing strangers, and long into the night. We sit talking, telling tales, filling one another's glasses until the windows pale with the light of a new day. Today's poem is we eat out together by Bernadette Mayer. My heart is a fancy place where giant reddish purple cauliflowers and white ones in French and English are outside waiting to welcome you to a boat over the low Black River for a big dinner. There's a lot of choice among the foods. Even a tortured lamb served in pieces on crude on a plate so hot as a rack of clouds blown over the cold filthy River. We are entitled to see any time while we use the table covers to love each other, publicly dishing out imitative luxuries to show off poetry's extreme generosity, then home in the heart of a big limousine. The slowdown is a production of American Public Media, in partnership

04:52

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