

# 20190812\_theslowdown\_20190812\_128

📅 Wed, 9/30 7:32PM ⌚ 5:00

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

butterfly, poem, slow, drove, dead, prayer, turning, sidewalk, wing, car, temperature, countless lives, finding, speaks, capture, mowers, sister, mid flight, hatching, pages

00:06

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

00:22

years ago, I drove from Marietta, Mexico to drop a friend at the airport in Cancun. And then I turned around and drove all the way back, nearly a six hour drive, and a vintage VW Beetle. When I finally got out of the car, I discovered to my horror, that the grille was full of bright yellow butterflies caught mid flight on their migration south. Every car on that same road had taken countless lives. It was a horrible, yet also a beautiful sight. I pressed one butterfly into the pages of a notebook I kept then the yellow stain the pages with pigment, the color of sulfur. Today's poem, directions to finding you, or maybe just an inferior prayer, by Angel Nephthys reminds me of that afternoon. It speaks with emotional urgency to the fragility of human life. And the fierce love we send to the people we seek to protect directions to finding you, or maybe just an inferior prayer. By Angel Nephthys. Say a butterfly had to die for you to get a gift. There must be some kind of prayer in that. I want to know how you feel about capture. Say, I saw it there, that dead contraption of flight and warmth and wing on the sidewalk and bent down to take it with my hands the way most humans do, when I should have used my imagination, or some other less selfish device. And isn't it something that when wings are fragile, or transparent and almost not there at all. I only thought of you and me sometimes too, but only when I am bleeding and borrow them to write this poem. It was dead, but not without life. And as an it's something that once I put it in the envelope and sealed it with my tongue. There was no turning back or and tasting the Vinogradov of loving you. I've seen people misplace themselves in such a heart flare up, watched their temperatures drop. And I don't know much about wilderness. But on days like these when you are harder to find, I want to learn the word seasons properly. feel its backside roll against my mowers so I can feel free. Like when we write to summon or when you are far away, and I collect

dead things to keep you alive in me say hair that traps sky and that's say flash say I could talk about the antenna or thorax. But I've already mentioned prayer and capture and there's no turning back now. The blood will come soon again say swish and slow movement. Say maps are irrelevant. Say accidents are blessings to say bellies of fish and coins. Say the texture of language hatching and other raw things. Say you accept this gift as all it was ever meant to be. Woman to search you say sister say this discovery of deaf and prism in my open fist. I am not afraid sister say this calamity of sweet and lack of coordination. And I am not afraid of today or an hour from now or however long it may be before someone captures my own dead butterfly self off some sidewalk. I am here now speaking and giving in bursts of chest and effort and temperature. The slow down 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](http://slowdownshow.org) and sign up for our newsletter.