

# theslowdown\_20200327\_20200327\_128

📅 Wed, 9/30 8:17PM ⌚ 5:00

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

mother, forest, believes, mistake, wanting, ferryman, rabbit, misgivings, son, chang, cross, rowing, droppings, ransack, flickers, slow, river, obedience, alternatives, rocking

00:06

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

00:23

Okay, so what are you going to do next time you get upset? I asked my son, I'm going to use my words. And what else can you do? I can breathe. Should you hit your brother or sister even if they make you really mad? No. And I believe him. I believe he believes he's telling me the truth. I believe he believes he has and will use alternatives to these other strategies. But 20 minutes later, we're right back here having this same dialogue, a dialogue during which I might add, I once again believe my son is telling me the truth. At least he thinks he is. It's frustrating, because he knows better. But look at me. Look at everyone. Knowing better isn't always enough to keep from making certain mistakes. That just one more cookie mistake. The I'll wake up early and take care of this mistake. The No need to write it down mistake. Knowing better isn't always enough of a safeguard. It's possible My son is simply telling me what I want to hear. I don't like that option, but it's possible. And it surely describes the way people sometimes operate. I did as much as a teenager not wanting to disappoint my mother. I suppose the things we know we ought to do. Don't always take priority over the things we wish

02:07

or even need to do.

02:10

Today's poem is obedience, or the lying Tale by Jennifer Chang. Its subject is this very tension

between wanting to live up to someone's wishes and wanting to do things your own way?  
satisfyingly it has me believing a little bit of everything about the daughter's intentions toward her  
mother. And about the mothers expectations of her child.

02:40

Obedience or

02:42

the lying Tale by Jennifer Chang.

02:47

I will do everything you tell me mother. I will charm three gold hairs from the demons head. I will  
choke the mouse that NAS and apple trees roots and keep it skin for a glove to the wolf. I will be  
pretty and kind and curtsy is crossing of my path. The forest vocal even in its somber tread  
rageous

03:16

a slope ends in a pit of foxes

03:19

drunk on Rotten brambles of berries and the raccoons ransack a rabbits unmasked hole What do  
they find? But a winter's heap of droppings. A stolen nest, the cracked shell of another creatures  
child. I imagine this is the rabbit way and I will not stray mother into the forest thick, where the  
trees meet the dark. Though I have known misgivings of light as a hot hand that flickers against  
my neck. The path ends at a river I must cross. I will wait for the ferryman to motion me through  
into the waves he hatches with his or a new story. A silent girl runs away. A silent girl is never safe.  
I will take his or in my hand. I will learn the boats rocking and bring myself back and forth. To be  
good is the hurricane of caution. I will no indecisions rowing the water I lap into my lap as he  
shakes his withered head. Behind me is the forest before me the field a loose run of grass. I stay in  
the river mother. I study escape.

04:50

The slow down is

04:51

a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.