

theslowdown_20200413_20200413_128

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

mask, poem, slow, flowers, fairy wings, mayday parade, strangers, ambling, girl, mercado, swirls, street, dress, marquette, walking, strollers, window, goings, block, flatbed trucks

00:06

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

00:22

It's strange. But with social distancing measures in place, I see more people walking past my house than ever before. I suppose that walking along down a quiet street is a way of taking your mind off the fact that you're not at a restaurant, or a bar, or a dinner party at someone else's house. Some afternoons It feels like a lazy parade is ambling down my block, one person at a time. And then I think, maybe that's what we are an accidental spectacle. With our voices, and our gestures, and the pattern of our comings and goings, all of us, the world over milling around, like the crowd at a sprawling attraction. When will the sun finally go down? When will the cranes and the big flatbed trucks come and take everything away? When will I get dressed again, and go to my office? When will I board an elevator or an airplane filled with strangers? When will I stand at the counter while someone swirls a heart into the foam atop my coffee? When will I drop my children off at school. And when that time comes? Will I feel afraid or relieved? For now, the people walking their dogs or pushing strollers or jogging and single file down my block each make a big circle and find themselves eventually back home. Today or tomorrow, I will make a big loop of my own down some other Street. Someone I don't know will see me through a window and come to their own conclusions about what's going on lately in the world, or what has gone on always in the world separately, and in a single file. We'll make it through the days, weeks, months leading out of the current crisis, and we'll find ourselves

02:35

elsewhere.

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Maybe we'll look back on this time with a knowledge we don't know possess and will understand more clearly where we've been. Today's poem is song for the festival by Gretchen Marquette at the Mayday parade, my mask made of moss and bark, my hair full of flowers. My friend beside me her pretty red mouth

03:03

under the Hawks beak of her mask

03:05

of green sage.

03:08

At the children's pageant music died in the speaker's, the shadow of a crow passed over my hair, a crown of flowers, yellow and red roses large as fists, flowers on which I'd spent my last \$20 at the Mercado. But beauty wasn't enough. Being admired by strangers was not enough. I saw a girl wandering looking for her mother. I knelt down, lowered my mask showed her my face. She's looking for you too. I say she tries to spot her mother's yellow dress. A gold dog passes happy and white faced wearing pink nylon fairy wings. The girl points and laughs the hard part of her day is over. The people I'm looking for. I don't know where they are. I don't know the color of their clothing. from across the park. I see the dark windows of my apartment. Spring has arrived. Let me not despair.

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