

# theslowdown\_20191206\_20191206\_128

Wed, 9/30 7:51PM 5:00

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, mother, envelopes, pair, slow, loved, meaning, felt, filled, snatches, clothing racks, played, memory, pepper plants, disintegration, clarinet, wool sweaters, cashews, eyelid, brown suede

00:06

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

00:22

Do you have a favorite age? Mine must be age nine. The spring of third grade. I played the clarinet in the school band. I played backgammon with my brother Conrad. I stayed up late some nights with my mother while my dad was away. He was gone all the time that year, Monday through Friday each week for work. I loved a pair of green corduroys and a cream colored cowl neck sweater. I loved a pair of brown suede saddle shoes. My mother drove a Plymouth with a tan roof and soft velveteen seats. On my days off from school, we took long car rides to Silicon Valley to visit my dad. We'd have dinner waiting for him. When he got back from work. We listen to the radio. I love to George Benson song called just the two of us. Neither my mom nor I could carry a tune those times alone with just my mom. I felt like her child, but not like a child. There are other ages 11 was glasses and period cramps 17 a bottle of Chanel number 1920. A pair of my brothers cast off Levi's, which I wore to the point of disintegration with cowboy boots and wool sweaters. It was brown ink fountain pens and black pebble cover sketchpads filled with poems 30 was like a snow globe filled halfway with happiness and halfway with misery, which got a good shaking up every day. Sometimes a poem takes you back to a place and time that meant something that felt a certain way that still lives somewhere inside of you. to dwell in another person's memory is to claim their feelings as if they belong for a time to you. These poems tend to wake you up to thoughts and memories of your own. A spider plant growing on a patio, the smell of stone fruit ripening in summer sun, white eyelid bedspreads, telephones with long coiled cords stretched from room to room, cornbread and beef stew. Things that in their own quiet way made you today's poem is when I am six by Amy nezzie come a title.

03:08

Chicago

03:10

my mother waters the tomato and pepper plants. I steal drinks from the penny taste of the garden hose. It is my favorite drink. I am six and think to cross the street by myself from time to time, but never do. I am six. My sister is five and we hide inside clothing racks at the store just to feel the black sick fill around Belize. When we get lost, lost lost from our mother. I am six and I am laughing with a mouthful of cashews. I think nuts is the funniest word I have ever heard. I am six and I break all my mother's lipsticks and glue them together and put them back in her bathroom drawer. She'll never notice. Sometimes I find sad on envelopes, the ones with red and blue stripes. Meaning these are envelopes fly, meaning thin feathers, meaning bird with a little worm in the beak. On envelopes from her father. I think she snatches them from my hand and says no, no. Where did you get these? Now put them back.

04:31

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