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00:06

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

00:21

the very first stories of the supernatural that spoke to me, were Bible stories. Maybe what's so interesting about the tales of Christ's miracles is that they're so analog, no space vehicles, no bleeping communication devices, just mountains, water, ancient dusty cities. Nevertheless, those gospels are tales of visitation from beyond our galaxy. Growing up in the church, there were so many prohibitions on what I was supposed to believe. dinosaurs were problematic, as they threatened to infringe upon the validity of the Bible's creation story. And if aliens reached us, wouldn't they throw a wrench into God's plans for the second coming? Being an obedient child, I allowed a number of walls to go up inside my imagination. Now, I love the idea of a multiverse where angels and aliens are fast at work in dimensions beyond our own. In every source I've found, from out of body experiences, to past life regressions, to the Gnostic Gospels once deemed heretical. We humans are unique in the universe, not because we're so advanced, but rather because we're restricted by the very human traits of fear, ignorance and greed. Every single system we erect, perpetuates these very same flaws. But the message from the stars is simple. It doesn't have to be this way. I hope we humans might change of our own volition. Barring that, I'm game for celestial intervention. Today's poem is on a spaceship somewhere long after empires collapse. By Hey, Seuss, i vi. Yes. Somehow, even in this future, amidst motherboards and cast aside Mrs. Every Cool Whip and country crock tub is still deceitful. More mystery than promise housing, nothing like its original cargo, but instead salsa and the week's beans. Even with the stars close enough to kiss. The swerve heat of celestial bodies pick a veto. Every Danish butter cookie 10 is still stocked with the seamstresses, tools, her threads, the symbols, and every needle that ever kept our miseries mended. And right above the cold steel of the bolt adores the same

thing as always, a horseshoe, wrapped in red ribbon, a wreath of garlic, a picture of son who does and that gilded rendition of the Last Supper she ordered from the home interiors catalog. We are inside a Leviathan, waltzing with every lover moon, Jupiter's neglected, and Earth is a distant story. We are told before bed right before she blesses us. And every morning still smells like whoever's concerti So, and the Avon spray she loves most. Once on Earth, someone told my Thea Cami, go back to your country, which she took to mean, go home. And if the sky is the thing that follows us everywhere, she thought, if the vast black blue saw me born, then the sky is my home, and every star is every place I've come from. Long after the Empire was no more. It was all the Auntie's who led every expedition. Just like on Earth, it was all the DS who looked at an unknown and threw their heads back cackling as they soared into the sky, showing the children all of us where exactly we belonged. The slow down is a production of American Public Media, in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.