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00:06

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

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every New Year's Eve just before midnight, my husband and I take part in a wish making ceremony. It's simple. We each make a list of five things we're grateful for five things we resolve to accomplish in the coming year, and a whopping 10 gifts we're ready to receive from the universe. I've done something similar with my girlfriends over the years. It's cathartic, a way of dipping into three distinct perspectives, the recent past, the near future, and something like the cosmic present where every conceivable possibility exists at once. I've seen this type of visualizing described as the law of attraction, or intentional manifestation, or just plain old prayerfulness. I like to think of our little ceremony as a gesture of Thanksgiving. Because we don't always take the time to be grateful for what we already have. And I like to think of it as a demonstration of courage to, because it can be hard to own up to what we truly want. Let's face it, we're all wishing all the time for a glimmer of good luck, or a measure of needed strength, or a flat out miracle. Sometimes, I think we wish in order to distract ourselves from this fact that taking real steps every day toward our distant goals, has the power to carry us the long way to what we want. Today's poem is a laundry list of wishes. And it's by Marcus wicker, who teaches at University of Southern Indiana. I think these wishes add up to an aspirational self portrait, a way of saying, I know who I am, but I'm not there yet. Or I know where I'm supposed to be heading but, man, I'm going to need some help in getting there. It's a funny poem about needing to measure up and an earnest poem about wanting to believe in something like grace pray prayer on Aladdin's lamp by Marcus wicker grant me shelter and bread. Grant me porch ledge, mantel, scented candles, bed. Grant me four walls, a five foot fridge and a hall and maybe four more walls. Yes. Four more walls and a desk and a decent laptop plus, pleather rolling chair so that I might sit and write you a poem, Lord, a song

Praising all you've given air I sing with crickets, falsetto, buzzing bees and nectar how chrysanthemum feels on the tongue is what you are to me. You see what I'm doing here? You see, I am being so sincere Sire, which is sad. Still, grant me a few free hours each day. grant me a moleskin pad and a ballpoint pen with some mass. Grant me Your gift of this voice pages of this voice in a good book from a loving press. And grant me a great love to grant a way to provide for my love, like a tenure track job at a small college in the Midwest, the kind with poems and papers to read with hoodies running in and out of my office. deadlines. paychecks and an okay 401 K. Grant me everything Lord, not today. But before 28 be bulldozer Genie, let every prayer avalanche me into dust blank matter. Debris make me worthy. Oh Lord, make me me.

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