

theslowdown_20200528_20200528_128

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

woodpecker, tap, hammer, bird, poem, slow, blackbird, sounds, shrouded, hummingbirds, wakes, staves, edge, tree, prowess, feel, sat, earthbound, thoughts, stallings

00:06

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

00:24

There's a woodpecker in my yard. He purchased midway up a tall tree. I don't know what kind, which he hammers with his remarkable speed and endurance morning, afternoon, and just up until the edge of evening. He's feeding himself. He's also I've read, demonstrating his prowess to potential mates. It's spring after all, and the animal kingdom is looking to propagate itself, just like the plants are doing with their buds and pods and pollen. This woodpecker is so good at what woodpeckers do that his hammering rhythm sounds like an instrument, either something to drill a hole and pavement, or something made to keep very fast time like a metronome for hummingbirds. When he wakes me in the morning with his industry, the song that occurs to me is if I had a hammer, sometimes when I feel very stuck in duty, in self pity, in whatever seems to saddle me, I feel a wistful kind of envy toward this bird. There are so many things I tell myself standing between me and the peace. I wish I could cultivate so many jobs to do so many roles to play, all of them keeping me from sitting down and listening to the thoughts in my own head and writing them down word by word. As that bird seems to be writing his into the bark of the tree. It doesn't seem fair, that the woodpecker can hammer and hammer with such singular dedication. When right now I can barely read. These weeks of uncertainty have taken something from me as though there is a tiny woodpecker in my head, drilling holes through all the ideas. Do I have a say in the matter? Tomorrow, when the bird wakes me? What if I hear his racket as an invitation to rise and obey the urge to turn my thoughts inward? Even if only briefly. Tap tap tap. I dropped two roads. One leading straight ahead to a destination I could see the other winding up and off to the right. steep and shrouded with mystery. Tap Tap. There was some urgency, some panic in the air. People were deciding quickly where to go and how to get there. Tap tap tap. I hated to believe it

hated the time and labor it would cost me but I knew that the difficult road was the one that called to me. Today's poem is Blackbird a tude by a Stallings for Craig Arnold. The Blackbird sings at the frontier of his music. The branch where he sat marks the brink of doubt, is the outpost of his realm. edge from which to route encroachers with trails and melodramatic runs, surpassing Earthbound skills. It sounds like ardor, it sounds like joy. We are glad here at the border, where he signs the air with his invisible staves, trespassers beware song as survival, a kind of pure music which we cannot rival.

04:22

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