

theslowdown_20200714_20200714_128

Wed, 9/30 8:35PM 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

butter, stick, toast, finger, jelly jar, elega, tiptoes, sandcastle, cream, sacramental, melted, watched, kirti, stand, margarine, children, form, silk blouse, slather, american public

00:06

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

00:23

I start my grocery store excursion

00:26

with vegetables than fruit, then meat, fish, milk, eggs, cream, cheese, and butter. And after that, really what does any of the rest matter? I love taking three soft sticks of butter and mixing them with as many cups of sugar. That moment when the one marries the other, and they blossom into an airy frothy dream. That's when the heart of the cake begins to beat. When I was three, I understood there was nothing that tasted better than butter. After dinner, I'd slip back into the dining room before the table was fully cleared. I'd stand there on my tiptoes, making short work of the butter. Once my sister's dog jumped up onto the table to steal a new stick of cold butter. I suppose she did it because she knew better butter. Can you forgive me for how I first soak you all throughout the 90s for olive oil, margarine, or toast dry as a shingle. Now, I spread you on my children's bread from crust to crust, recognizing the act for what it is sacramental.

01:53

Does anyone else remember putting

01:54

butter on a burnt finger? It made things worse until you put your finger in your mouth and tasted butter. On colonial day in my daughter's class, we dropped a marble into a jelly jar of heavy cream then stood and shook and shook until the glass filled up with newborn butter. Watching my father hold a slice of toast in the palm of his hand. slather it with butter and preserves, then folded in half before

02:29

taking a bite.

02:31

That was the first ritual

02:34

of my young life.

02:36

Baking a pie. You dice a stick of butter into a bowl of flour. then squeeze the mixture through your fingers until it resembles a sandcastle that has only just been kicked down. It turns out I have a lot of thoughts on butter. Dark fingerprints of butter on a silk blouse is a form of disaster. If you're like me, you'll agree that unsalted butter is a form of treason. And sometimes while cooking, the kitchen will fill up with black smoke,

03:12

which is also butter.

03:17

Today's poem is

03:19

butter

03:20

by Elizabeth Alexander.

03:23

My mother loves butter more than I do more than anyone. She pulls chunks off the stick and eats it plain explaining cream spun around into butter. Growing up we ate turkey cutlets sauteed and lemon and butter, butter and cheese on green noodles. Butter melting in small pools in the hearts of Yorkshire puddings, butter better than gravy, staining white rice, yellow butter glazing corn in slipping squares, butter, the lava in white volcanoes of hominy grits, butter softening and a white bowl to be creamed with white sugar butter, disappearing into whipped sweet potatoes with pineapple. butter melted and Kirti to pour over pancakes. Butter licked off the plate with warm elega syrup. When I picture the good old days I am grinning greasy with my brother. Having watched the tiger chases tail and turn to butter. We are Mumbo and jumbos children, despite historical revision, despite our parents efforts glowing from the inside out 100 megawatts of butter. The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.