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📅 Wed, 9/30 7:24PM ⌚ 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, courtyard, reality, slow, moments, fire, carry, illusions, mystery, spark, wormholes, tracy, landing, climb, lilac, portal, daydreaming, peony, zigzagging, departing

00:06

I'm Tracy k Smith.

00:08

And this is the slow down.

00:23

We've all had those moments when concentrating on one thing, you suddenly detach from the reality that routes you

00:32

and lift off, carried further

00:34

and deeper into the reality of the mind. daydreaming, zoning out coming unstuck. I think of it as a real journey taken by way of the unconscious. And I think of the unconscious, as a place full of wormholes and portals, ready at a moment's notice, to zip you from one state to another. It's the exact opposite of those moments that occur sometimes just as you're drifting off to sleep, when your body is startled by the feeling of falling, or landing, and you wake back up.

01:11

Where do we go?

01:12

How can it feel so real, as to overwrite the sounds that surround us? And the sites that stand right before our open eyes? And why is it that you can gather things in these places, details you hadn't seen? or heard before? answers to the questions you'd been asking. Without asking. I love this mystery. I accept it. As fact, I trust my mind's wiring, or chemistry is not working alone. But with a layer of reality. I haven't learned to reach by other means. In some way. I believe this mystery aptly describes my sense of where poems come from. They spark into being when my fixation upon the conscious or known world gives way to another place, a place that's both within the self and beyond it. And when a poem takes strange turns departing from its concrete material, it does so in pursuit of something more pressing, something that sits at the other end of a kind of psychic portal, waiting to be grasped. Today's poem, courtyard fire by Arthur z, gives me access to one of these departures into the unconscious mind of its speaker. When the poem opens, its speaker is watching a fire burn. But his thoughts carry him backward in time, outward in perspective, and inward to a montage of associations before carrying him back. courtyard fire by Arthur z. At autumn equinox, we make a fire in the courtyard, sparks gust into the black air, and all seasons are enfolded in these flames, snow gathers, and tips the lilac twigs. A stink horn rises out of dirt below a waterspout ants climb the peony stocks, and gazing into coals. I skydive and pass through stages of youth. At first, I climb a tower and looking out, find the world tipped. Then I dashed through halls. If ripening is all, what can the dead teach us? We who must rage and lust, hurdles zigzagging between cars and traffic

03:47

affirm

03:48

the call to abandon illusions is a call to abandon a condition that requires illusions. And as I pull the cord, spring rips and blooms on landing, I sway

04:04

on Earth.

04:07

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Congress and the Poetry Foundation. To get a poem delivered to you daily, go to slowdownshow.org and sign up for our newsletter. Follow the slow down on Instagram and Twitter at [slowdownshow](https://twitter.com/slowdownshow). The slow down is written by me, Tracy K. Smith. It is produced by Jennifer

04:39

Lai, with

04:39

Tracy Mumford. Our music is by Alexis quadrado. Engineering by Corey strebel and john Miller. Production assistance by Chrissy PS and Brenna Everson.