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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

bored, boredom, mind, margaret atwood, daydreaming, vivid memories, glide, afternoon, interminable, sunnier, suspect, spend, life, dreamt, remember, twill, graying, birdsong, minutiae, slow

00:05

I'm us

00:06

Poet Laureate, Tracy k Smith.

00:09

And this is the slow down.

00:23

I remember childhood as slow,

00:26

quiet and lit by an ever present California sun. I have multiple vivid memories of staring up at trees, and staring past the trees at clouds of picking handfuls of grass, and throwing them into the wind of watching ants and birds of watching cars glide past and waving at the people inside them. I thought my life was boring, riddled with absence, a never ending idle afternoon, I dreamt of growing up and getting away from my parents house in our small town of going someplace where things happened. Now, I look back at all of that daydreaming as a luxurious freedom, the freedom to get to know the sound of my own thoughts. I suspect that all those afternoons devoid of structure devoid of any real purpose, are probably responsible for my becoming a writer.

Because I was so bored. And because boredom invites the mind to wander,

01:35

to wonder,

01:36

to be imprinted by all the little strange and wonderful pieces of the world. It happens upon. Is it just me? Or does the world feel different now? It seems like long days and interminable weeks have gone extinct. My time and I suspect yours too, is suddenly spoken for. Even children have places to be appointments to keep shuttling mind from school, to sports to music to swim class, I think, wow. All it took was a generation or two for boredom, that wonderful laboratory of the imagination to be almost completely eradicated. Today's poem is bored by Margaret Atwood. And it makes me thankful for the days I spent paying attention to all the many small nothings that once made up my life bored by Margaret Atwood. All those times, I was bored out of my mind, holding the lug while he sought it, holding the string while he measured boards distances between things or pounded stakes into the ground for rows and rows of lettuces and beats, which I then bored with weeded or sat in the back of the car, or sat still in boats SAT, sat while at the prow, stern wheel he drove steered paddled. It wasn't even boredom. It was looking looking hard and up close at the small details. myopia. The worn gunwales, the intricate twill of the seat cover the acid crumbs of loan, the granular pink rock, it's igneous veins. The sea fans have dry moss, the blackish and then the graying bristles on the back of his neck. Sometimes he would whistle. Sometimes I would the boring rhythm of doing things over and over, carrying the wood drying the dishes. Such minutiae. It's what the animals spend most of their time at, ferrying the sand, grain by grain from their tunnels, shuffling the leaves in their burrows. He pointed such things out and I would look at the world texture of his square finger Earth under the nail. Why do I remember it as sunnier all the time then, although it more often rained,

04:22

and more birdsong

04:25

I could hardly wait to get the hell out of there to anywhere else. Perhaps though, boredom is happier. It is for dogs or groundhogs. Now, I wouldn't be bored. Now. I would know too much. Now, I would know. The slow down is a production of American Public Media, in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation.

