

# 20190201\_slowdown\_20190201\_128

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

love, felt, slow, tracy, poem, mistaken, weep, different guises, reach, friendship, unsolicited, wiser, bigfoot, exquisite, heart, genuine, surely, oars, roadmap, lai

00:05

I'm us Poet Laureate Tracy k Smith. And this is the slow down.

00:23

One day, when I was still a teenager, I felt my heart fill up with something I'd never felt before. It was an exquisite feeling, a hurricane of emotion, nobody else could see. I decided it was love. And I devoted a great deal of energy to considering it. Who was I now that love had changed me. Surely I was someone different from my same old pre love self. When that feeling left me, I felt like a version of myself had died. But a new self rose up in her place. She was older, wiser, she could be sharp edged and bitter. There was a depth to her. I enjoyed testing the way as a little kid, my tongue would seek out the space where a new tooth had gone missing. Again and again, love stormed into my life and it's different guises. passionate love, playful love, angry, jealous love, desperate, needy love, lust or fear or friendship, mistaken for something that might one day turn into love. whole years went past. Sometimes, it felt as though I were conducting a very unsystematic experiment. Other times, it felt as though I was in pursuit of something as elusive as Bigfoot. Surely love was a myth. Something that didn't really that could never really exist. Well, decades later, I can tell you with confidence that love does exist. But if there is someone who was born knowing how and whom to love, I've never met her. Maybe love, like friendship is something we must learn. Maybe it's like what I see my young children doing now, bickering and going through the motions of making up then out of the blue, surprising me with acts of genuine and unsolicited empathy. Maybe Love is a capacity we build not in spite of the many mistakes we make, but precisely because of them. I'll wager that love is all the more meaningful because of the struggle we endure to reach it. Today's poem, dear P. by Victoria Chang, is like a roadmap for the long path to genuine love. Dear P. by Victoria Chang, someone will love you. Many will love you. Many will bother you. Some of these loves will bother you. Some will leave you one might haunt

you, hunt you in your sleep, make you weep, the tearless kind of weep, the kind of weep that drowns your organs slowly. There are little oars in your body, little boats, grab on to them and row and row. Someone will tell you no. But you won't know he is right. Until you have already wrong your own heart, dry your hands dripping knives until you have already reached your hands into his body and put them through his heart. Love is the only thing that is not an argument. The slow down is a production of American Public Media, in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation. To get a poem delivered to you daily, go to [slowdownshow.org](http://slowdownshow.org) and sign up for our newsletter and follow the slow down on Instagram and Twitter at [slowdownshow](https://www.instagram.com/slowdownshow). The slow down is written by me. Tracy k Smith. It is produced by Jennifer Lai, with Tracy Mumford. Our music is by Alexis quadrado. Engineering by Corey strebel production support by joy Biles