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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, existed, heart, hear, felt, needing, breakup song, days, rosenthal, flung open, slow, wind, marietta, sharp spike, falling, blunt force, broken, muscle, mother, grown ass man



00:05

I'm us Poet Laureate Tracy k Smith.



00:09

And this is the slow down



00:23

a good heartbreak poem, like a good breakup song can feel life saving, because it helps you describe an insurmountable feeling. And if you can describe it, maybe it's no longer larger than you. A good poem about a bad situation wields words so that they begin to function as a strategy for finding hope, courage or sense, when those things don't seem to exist. It almost feels dangerous to say these words but here goes. The last time My heart was broken. The blunt force of it sent me reeling. Maybe I thought that I had been inoculated against romantic despair, having lived through breakups before even through a divorce. But then the ground just kind of opened up beneath me. I remember walking through airports or down city blocks and just needing to stop and sit down on the luggage belt, or a stranger's front stoop, needing to yell and cry, not caring, who heard or caring but having no choice. I was 33 years old, still young, I now understand. But I felt suddenly ancient, decrepit, I felt shoddily built, not capable of standing up to such winds of hurt and rage. There was one afternoon or maybe it was a night, when I needed proof that I still existed, that I had a voice that another living soul could hear proof that I existed in the present, and that I had existed before in the past, that my memories of the person I'd once been were not false. Oddly enough, the person I tried phoning was my ex mother in law in

Marietta, Mexico. It was one of the only numbers I still knew by heart. But the phone just rang and rang. Nobody ever picked it up. I think of that night, and the blur of days around it. When I read Patrick Rosenthal's poem, which is called broke heart just like that. This poem is the telephone number I wish I'd been dialing all those years ago, even just to hear the speaker pick up and say, I'm breaking two little pieces to But listen, doesn't falling apart, make a kind of music.



02:50

Broke heart, just like that.



02:54

When the bass drops on, Bill Withers better off dead. It's like 7am. And I confess, I'm looking over my shoulder once or twice, just to make sure no one in Brooklyn is peeking into my third floor window. To see me in pajamas. I haven't washed for three weeks before I slide from sink to stove in one long groove, left foot first, then back to the window side with my chin up, and both fists clenched like two small sacks of stolen nickels. And I can almost hear the silver hit the floor by the dozens when I let loose and sway a little back. And just like that, I'm a lizard grown to new good legs on a breeze bent limb. I'm a grown ass man with a three day wish and two days to live. And just like that, everyone knows my heart's broke, and no one is home. Just like that. I'm water. Just like that. I'm the boat. Just like that. I'm both things in the whole world rocking. Sometimes sadness is just what comes between the dancing and bam, my mother's dead. And bam. My brother's children are laughing just like okay, it's true. I can't pop up from my knees so quick these days. And no one ever said I could sing. But tell me my body ain't good enough for this. I'll count the aches and other time, one in each ankle. The sharp spike in my back this mud muscle throbbing in my going bones. I'm missing the six biggest screws to hold this blessitt mess together. I'm wind rattled the woods splitting, the hinges are falling off when the first bridge ends, just like that. I'm a flung open door.



05:04

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