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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, story, shira, life, dad, poet, disappear, exert, gums, consent, partial, healing, chorus, write, student, cheeks, spits, preschool, soften, congress

00:05

Find us Poet Laureate Tracy k Smith. And this is the slow down.

00:23

When my daughter was in preschool, she and her classmates with the help of their teachers wrote and performed an original play. I think it was called glow power. It featured a song that still brings tears to my eyes, the chorus went, when we tell our stories we make power. To date. I think that refrain is still one of the best explanations of why literature matters that I've ever encountered. The stories we tell about our own lives are important. they exert a sense of order, purpose and meaning upon what might otherwise seem to be random or chaotic events. In this way, they become the stories not only of who we have been, but of what we have the ability to become. Even when the story of your life involves trauma, finding a way to tell the story of what should have happened can be at least a partial means of healing. I once had a student who wrote a poem about an assault they endured. Telling the story, as it happened, allowed them to claim a kind of ownership of the terms of their own experience, and telling the story again, not as it happened, but as it ought to have happened, allowed part of the students mind or spirit to own the terms of psychic victory. I feel that today's poem by poet and activist Orson Shira represents a similar act of healing backwards by warson Shira for Saeed Shira, the poem can start with him walking backwards into a room. He takes off his jacket and sits down for the rest of his life. That's how we bring dad back. I can make the blood run back up my nose, ants rushing into a hole. We grow into smaller bodies, my breasts disappear, your cheeks, soften, teeth, sink back into gums. I can make us loved. Just say the word. Give them stumps for hands. If even once they touched us without consent. I can write the poem and make it disappear. Step dad's spits liquor back into glass. Mom's body rolls back up the stairs, the bone pops back into place. Maybe she keeps the baby. Maybe we're okay, kid. I'll rewrite this whole life. And this time, there'll be so much love. You

won't be able to see beyond it. You won't be able to see beyond it. I'll rewrite this whole life. And this time, there'll be so much love. Maybe we're okay kid. Maybe she keeps the baby. Mom's body rolls back up the stairs, the bone pops back into place. Step dad's spits liquor back into glass. I can write the poem and make it disappear. Give them stumps for hands if even once they touched us without consent. I can make us loved. Just say the word. Your cheeks soften, teeth sink back into gums. We grow into smaller bodies, my breasts disappear. I can make the blood run back up my nose, ants rushing into a hole. That's how we bring dad back. He takes off his jacket and sits down for the rest of his life. The poem can start with him walking backwards into a room.

04:40

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