

theslowdown_20200713_20200713_128

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

mother, grandmother, cake, week, struggle, roll, tiptoes, shedding, bird, chicken soup, sheltering, mind, american public, stole, unrest, slow, morsel, cold water, family, nostalgic

00:06

I'm Tracy k Smith, and this is the slow down.

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In the first week of sheltering in place, my husband baked a cranberry upside down cake. sweet and tart. It reminded me of the treats my mother whipped up for the family when I was a child. The second week, Raff made the same cake, but with a bag of frozen peaches he dug out of our freezer. When that was reduced to just a few crumbs under the cake saver, I made my mother's pound cake. Then there was the week of biscuits, which took me back to my childhood, like little elves could, and cinnamon rolls, and coconut bonds and French country bread. In addition to their obvious appeal, each of these nostalgic foods tapped into a remembered comfort that helps take our adult minds off the current unrest. The experience of certain foods is like a version of time travel, eating them, you feel yourself to be in different places at the same time, the past, the present, and a blissful fantasy elsewhere. A place as delicious to the spirit as a sweet morsel is to the tongue. Today's poem is lesson chicken soup by Christine Kitano rich with memories of family meals. It is also heavy with complex recollections of loss, struggle, misgiving, and regret. It revives the full range of emotions running through a life lesson, chicken soup by Christine Kitano. My grandmother pours salt into my right palm places then slivers of garlic in my left, she explained something about blood, how to salt the raw bird to drain its fluids. But my mind already wanders. I watched the chicken shrivel, but compose instead. The grandfather, I've only met in story daybreak. He's just finished mopping up in the buildings that sculpt the city skyline, but it's someone else's view of Los Angeles. The immigrant sees not the postcard perfect lights, but the scuffed tiles dust lined desks, the darkening throats of toilet after toilet. home, he tiptoes upstairs. Not to wake his daughter's holding his shoes, like a thief is fired for stealing a roll of toilet paper. A can of soda for my mother. Children are nothing but trouble. My grandmother says shaking a

wooden spoon. My mother claims the story. Otherwise, it was she who accompanied father to work. She who stole a box of stale doughnuts. She who lost the family's first job. Grandmother shrugs and repeats the same conclusion. Never have children. She says the her expression is hidden by the steam now rising from the pot. It's a simple recipe. boil until the meat falls from the bones easy like a girl shedding a summer dress. Last night, I cooked for friends. After dinner. My friend handed me his one month son who only blinked when I nudged my thumb into his fist. Earlier washing the pale bird I struggled to keep the body from slipping through my hands. I held it small flashed form under cold water, pulled the giblets out the round hollow between its ribs and was surprised to be surprised when it didn't make a sound. The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.