

# 20180111\_slowdown\_20190111\_128

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, tales, thigh, dennis smith, slow, wings, consent, fangs, yates, mortal, swan, zeus, slowdown, called, poetry, argonauts, lita, fraught, webs, breast

00:06

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

00:23

My first exposure to classical mythology was in grade school, the a book called mythology, timeless tales of gods and heroes. These tales were abridged and G rated introductions to the stories of Hara and Zeus, Aphrodite and Cupid, Odysseus, the Argonauts, and others. Then, in college, I encountered Yates's beautiful and frightening poem, Lita, and the swan, which describes Zeus in the form of a swan, forcing himself upon the mortal Lita. The poem begins a sudden blow, the great wings beating still above the staggering girl. Her thighs caressed by the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill, he holds her helpless breast upon his breast. The violence of the poem caused me to rethink those earlier tales of Gods seizing mortal Women Against their wills tales i'd once simply accepted. In the same way I accepted the messed up facets of fairy tales when I was a child. Today's poem by award winning poet Dennis Smith, enters into a fraught space similar to Yates's, but it introduces something missing from the previous scenarios. consent. The poem is called poem where I be a dough and you, by effect, are a wolf. And it sets the terms of engagement as predation with a twist. I see it this way. Sometimes passion can be surprising. Sometimes desiring someone means wanting to devour them. Other times it means consenting to being possessed completely. Is there a logic to that? Maybe not. But a poem which exists not in Acts but in language, impulse, and thought, can function as the safe space or such a wish can be played out? I love you. This poem seems to be saying, and I want to see what it would mean for you to need me so much. I become not just your counterpart, but something you would die without. We've all heard love described in terms of the thrill of the chase, but this speaker wants more. This speaker wants to be the feast. poem where I be a dough, and you by effect, are a wolf by Dennis Smith. Lay me down on I white snow, my slow brooding bed of Robin wings, my body

slit and smearing everywhere. I will not name this new opening a wound. Here. There is no pain I didn't beg for I heard the Howl, didn't dare run, stood waiting for the sweet blades of jaw and claw. You found me wasted no time making a myth of my thigh. My flesh turned to wind the earth under me wet with my life. I pray this is what they mean by always that heaven is a persistent mouth. Baby. I want you forever this way. fangs covered in me. Moon died red, bouncing off front teeth, my body only certain how to twitch your belly round with my joy. The slowdown is a production of American Public Media, in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation. If you like the show, tell someone or tell five people we couldn't do it without you. To get a poem delivered to you daily, go to [slowdownshow.org](http://slowdownshow.org) and sign up for our newsletter. Follow the slow down on Instagram and Twitter at [slow down show](https://www.instagram.com/slowdownshow)