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00:06

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

00:23

It's a good thing to have a dog, someone who cares about you, someone who shares their whole heart with you entirely. Dogs don't hold back. They don't keep secrets. And they accept you as you are right now. Maybe your dog sits around imagining what it would be like if you got out more had more people over to the house. But if you want to lie in bed all day, with the peanut butter on the nightstand, your dog is going to be right there with you. Do you know that feeling after maybe your third or fifth sip of coffee in the morning, where you feel that surge of happiness, hope, gratitude. That's the feeling your dog gets just sitting next to you. Do you know how it feels when you're the first to wake up and your beloved is still lying next to you. Breathing those deep, rhythmic, blissful breaths when you don't want to wake them but you do want to reach over and touch their arm or lean over and give them a gentle squeeze or gather up a huge lungful of the air with that warm, sleepy smell. That's what it feels like all the time. Being a dog. It's also worth being a dog. There are lessons dogs must labor to teach us. Have you ever had a disagreement with your partner in front of the dog? And did you notice the way your canine friend tried to appeal to you to calm down? Look at the big picture and just be happy? Because you're all together after all, and what else could possibly matter? One of the jobs dogs take on when they live with humans is attention. Dogs are very much invested in teaching us to read signs. Dogs want us to listen better. Dogs want us to learn to see not just with our eyes but with our whole bodies. And this they lead by example. Sniff Listen, watch. Dogs are masters of love. They've been trained from before birth to love wholeheartedly, selflessly and without condition and they come to us often at great personal cost. With the higher purpose of imparting this wisdom. It is perhaps a mark of progress to return to the earth having been reincarnated as a dog. The pack the

plaintive Howl, collar ball bowl, that fab dog swag, a tail to wag and this abundance of love inside of you seeping out rising above you like steam, always trailing you all this love coming off on everything you touch. Today's poem is waiting for happiness by Noemi stone. dog knows when friend will come home because each our friends smell pails, air paring down the good smell with its little diamond. It means I miss you. Oh I miss you how hard it is to wait for my happiness and how good when it arrives. Here we are. In our bodies ripe is avocados, softer brightening with latencies like a hot blue core of electricity. Our ankles nodded to our calves by a thread womb sparking with watermelon seeds we swallowed as children, the hard again badly hurt, trying and failing. But it is almost five says the dog. It is almost five. The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation. To get a poem delivered to you daily, go to slowdownshow.org and sign up for our newsletter. Follow this slow down on Instagram and Twitter at [slowdownshow](https://www.instagram.com/slowdownshow)