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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:05

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

00:22

I think there are a number of misconceptions about poetry in the popular imagination. One is that the poet has buried an encoded message deep within the poem that the reader must wrestle out. Another is that when a reader encounters different perspectives within a single poem, like sorrow and joy, one perspective has to be right and the other wrong. But sometimes a person can be both happy and sad. At the same time, one feeling doesn't always win out over the other, which is why poems quite often arise out of the desire to acknowledge and explore the messy, complex, contradictory nature of life. And while it is sometimes an abundance of feelings and opinions, that draw young poets to the art form, I suspect that more poems arise out of the writers desire to learn, listen and discover, than out of the intention to make grand or infallible pronouncements realizing this when I was a younger writer, set me free, allowing me to engage with all manner of material about which I knew little and sought to learn more dh Lawrence's poem, song of a man who has come through is an example of a poem written out of the wish not to pronounce, but to receive wisdom. The poem opens, Not I, Not I, but the wind that blows through me. The speaker doesn't just want to write about what he knows. He wants to be a vessel of something powerful and necessary. And yet, when just such a thing comes knocking on his door, the speaker falters, saying, quote, what is the knocking? What is the knocking at the door in the night? It is somebody wants to do us harm. Lawrence's poem brilliantly dramatizes the wish to receive real insight real magic from the mystery that surrounds us, and the fears and doubts that impede such an aim. Today's poem, Robert Frost's to the thawing wind, also features a speaker who wants very badly to be touched or changed by something larger and more powerful than he, maybe that something is the wind, maybe it's more. Whatever inspires frost speaker, it catches him up in a

regulatory rhythmic music, reading the poem, I feel myself drawn into a Gathering Storm lifted up and quite nearly carried away. Of course, we don't know where this plea leaves the poem speaker, for all we know, the wind may pass him by, but his wish to be Tempest tossed and thrust out into the world is awfully infectious. I read it as a poem to wake both body and spirit in invocation of the rapturous and the terrible, and all that invests poetry and life with urgent appeal to the thawing wind by Robert Frost. Come with rain allowed Southwest or bring the singer bring the Nester give the buried flower a dream, make the settled snowbank steam, find the brown beneath the white. But whatever you do tonight, bathe my window make it flow melted as the ISIS go. Melt the glass and leave the sticks like a hermits crucifix, burst into my narrow stall, swing the picture on the wall, run the rattling pages or scatter poems on the floor. Turn the poet out of door. The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation.