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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

fears, grocery stores, form, gimlet, unfamiliar, glamour, eldest, slights, mistrust, national endowment, met, wild animals, graver, work, mole, vulnerable, grin, grief, eat, poetry



00:06

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



00:22

Think of how vulnerable each of us is vulnerable to unkind words to slights to graver forms of harm. And yet, I'm trying to figure out how to say this. There is someone, somewhere who, having never even met you, fears what you represent. So many fears are rooted in ideas or suspicions about people we don't even know firsthand.



00:54

I like it. When I pass into the orbit of a stranger, and without expecting or even wanting to, I feel a very accidental, very fleeting form of kinship. For me, this happens sometimes when I'm traveling, and far from home, far from my every day me.



01:18

Or when I'm moving through public space, while also deeply lost in thought, talking to myself maybe, or laughing at something I think only I have seen. And then I meet unfamiliar eyes. And I understand that we are in the same moment together. How wonderful would it be, if trust or even love might be possible between any of us or even all of us? I mean, if we let ourselves believe such a thing as possible.



01:55

In the meantime, we move through our lives as experience tells us we must doubt fear and mistrust broadening the distance and the division between us. But today's poem gathers us up as a nation, and asks us to recognize each other.



02:17

Say thank you say, I'm sorry, by Jericho Brown.



02:25

I don't know whose side you're on. But I am here for the people who work in grocery stores that glow in the morning, and close down for deep cleaning at night. Right up in the street. And in cities I mispronounce in towns too tiny for my big lack car to quit. And in every wide corner of Kansas. We're going to school means at least one field trip to a slaughterhouse.



02:59

I want so little, another leather bound book, A gimlet with a lavender gin, bread so good when I taste it. I can tell you how it's made.



03:12

I'd like us to rethink what it is to be a nation. I'm in a mood about America today. I have PTSD about the Lord. God save the people who work in grocery stores. They know a bit of glamour is a lot of glamour.



03:33

They know how much it costs for the eldest of us to eat. Save my loves, and not my sentences. Before I see them, I draw a mole near my left dimple add flair to the smile. They can't see behind my mask. I grin or lie, or maybe I wear the mouth of a beast. I eat wild animals. While some of us grow up knowing what neoci is.



04:05

The people who work at the grocery don't care. They say thank you. They say sorry, we

don't sell motor oil anymore. With a grief so thick, you could touch it. Go on, touch it. It is early. It is late. They have washed their hands. They have washed their hands for you and they take the bus home.



04:37

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04:47

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