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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, poet, bowing, nara, thinned, metaphors, herds, trees, slow, cries, ayesha, centuries, natural, america, susceptible, blood, write, wild, considered, capital offense

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I'm us Poet

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Laureate, Tracy k Smith. And this is the slow down.

00:23

My favorite place to write is in my home, sitting by a window facing out onto trees. When I look up from what I'm writing, usually because I'm stumped about what to say next, the natural world offers a different perspective. It doesn't matter if the poem I'm struggling with is about the dynamic between people,

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the birds, in their industry,

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or the trees in their patients, will surely have something useful to teach me about the human realm. And so, I believe that the best metaphors aren't plotted out by poets trying to plant symbols, or even to prove a point. Rather, the best metaphors intrude into the poet's thought process, shedding new and surprising light upon the poems, conscious concerns. In this way, a poem that the poet believed was about people can take a surprise turn, and suddenly become a poem about the planet, or a poem about animals can swerve to become one about human

relations. A poem about one place can reveal itself to be a poem about another and because our senses have been attuned to the initial subject or context, we are all the more susceptible to realization to unguarded feeling when we find ourselves

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elsewhere.

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I am astounded by the way this type of a shift occurs in today's poem by Atlanta based poet Camila Ayesha moon. The Emperor's deer by Camilla Ayesha moon, one their noises make you think they are crying or suffering they have learned to bow even the Fonz bow centuries of bowing in their blood. They are not considered wild, precious pests, litter parks with dung take over the roads, sweet nuisance worth saving. thinning these herds is a last resort once a capital offense to spill their endangered blood. They are so used to humans, it is scary. To our cries are heard as noise, our suffering considered natural native citizens. We are not free to roam or deemed sacred, like Japanese bowing deer protected as messengers of the gods. Nara Japan is known for its temples shrines to peace. America is known for its churches, segregated Sundays. This is not Nara Japan hunted. It is always open season. The sight of dark skin brings out the wild in certain human breeds, bowing hands up or any other gesture of surrender makes no difference. They slay our young and leave them in the streets. Expect us to walk away and wonder after centuries, why we are not used to this. grieving masses treated like waste, filthy herds thinned at will. Three To be clear, this is America and we are not deer. We are not deer. We are not deer here. The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation. To get a poem delivered to you daily, go to slow down show.org and sign up for our newsletter.