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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, life, genie bottle, notley, thought, feel, persuades, love, clumsily, infidel, reason, caressed, different roles, american public, inhuman, conflicting feelings, poets, pity, hating, shaman

00:06

I'm Tracy K. Smith, and this is the slow down. What is our reason for being? No. Let me get more to the point. What is my reason for being? Does it stem from my job? Or the different roles I play in the lives of others? Does this reason hinge upon an essential private discovery I've come here to make? Or does my reason for being depend on some collective action in which my role will be key. There are times when I feel certain I know what I'm here to do, and others when life has me feeling so lost that I haven't got a clue. My own life has felt long and varied enough to seem to me now like many different lives, some of which makes more sense to me than others. What I enjoy about today's poem, remember what I came here to do to this world very little, actually, by Alice Notley is that it sets out to answer one of life's big questions. Yet it does so surprisingly, by employing silence or absence in key places. Reading the poem, I feel that I'm being guided to make a strange and at times regulatory account of my own life. I feel freed from a strictly utilitarian mode of valuation purpose in this poem does not align tidally with common notions of profit or loss. Moreover, I feel urged to embrace my own conflicting feelings, unfulfilled wishes and occasional failures. The poem persuades me that what I have done with my life thus far is, indeed what I came here to do. Remember what I came here to do to this world, very little, actually, by Alice Notley

02:17

I came here, so that the

02:21

I came to be equal and surprise to I came empty handed before being dried.

02:31

I am a poisonous epoch,

02:34

I was at for a shape of love and reason. I was at 15 capable of heinous pity. I am not so foolish as to I think, at 34 that I know who the best poets are. I saw your footage of what you said was the age. I meet 6000 men and 15 women on the way too.

03:03

I thought we would have more influence on

03:08

I perform no generous act at four. I put self back in the genie bottle for the fad. I and did I ever love. I loving truth more than myself, am a based by. I was poor, but never poor enough. I have as much authority to speak as I was against all war, and loved mostly soldiers. I have no identity. I recognize except in myself. I go in there. It's the page of a book. I rip it. I am infidel to country. I guilty always through speaking inhale. I that year hating the species thought of myself as inhuman I think the imagination is more real than I, I said presume we're all fully responsible for I once visited their great graves that was years ago. I measured that year in sequence of vivid dreams of it.

04:23

I was once the shaman of a death.

04:27

I keep trying to be honest in this glittering wind. I find you difficult like as not. I saw it and I said I will never be complete without the

04:42

I caressed him to clumsily

04:45

I borrow someone else's form. What else is a body the slowdown is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.