

# 20190722\_theslowdown\_20190722\_128

Wed, 9/30 7:31PM 5:00

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

betty, grow, loved, children, poetry, tracy, sail, milan, bussed, slow, poem, sky, visits, spry, beautiful, pass, lived, coo, production, today

00:06

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

00:23

Last year I visited Whiteville, North Carolina, a community on the shores of beautiful lake walk them off. While there, I gave a poetry reading at southeastern Community College and an assembly at the local high school to which dauntingly the district's 607th graders had been bussed. I paid visits to people's houses while in Whiteville, one belong to a woman named Betty, who was so Spry and lively. I am still not sure I heard correctly. When someone told me she was near to 90 years old. I sat in Betty's living room until after 11pm I drank a few glasses of Diet Coke, though, like a good host, Betty had offered me bourbon. And we talked and laughed about life in white bowl, and Princeton and in Manhattan, where Betty lived a lifetime ago. When I told her about my children, she asked if they loved a Milan. I had to think the moment a Milan Oh, yes, they enjoyed Winnie the Pooh, but not half as much as I had as a child. But Betty wasn't just talking about poo. She wanted me to go right home, and be sure to read them Milnes poetry for children. Her children had grown up on it and loved it. And Betty loves it to this day. I went home and fell back into my life as usual. I forgot about the books. But a few weeks later, a package arrived with three volumes of Milnes poetry for children. Betty had even written notes in the margins of her children's favorites. Now the books are so well loved, they could pass for relics from my childhood. Today's poem is spring morning, by a million. At the bottom of the page, Betty has written Tracy, I love this one and find myself repeating it in my mind often. And I know what she means. Because as much as this poem makes playful sense to a child, it also speaks to the way I feel sometimes as a grown woman wandering through life still uncertain of where I'm headed. spring morning, by a million. Where am I going? I don't quite know, down to the stream where the king cups grow up on the hill, where the pine trees blow anywhere, anywhere. I don't

know. Where am I going? The clouds sail by little ones, baby ones over the sky. Where am I going? The shadows pass little ones, baby ones over the grass. If you were a cloud and sailed up there, you'd sail on water is blue as air. And you'd see me here in the fields and say, doesn't the sky look green today? Where am I going? The hirrooks call. It's awful fun to be born at all. Where am I going? The ring doves coo. We do have beautiful things to do. If you were a bird, and lived on high, you'd lean on the wind when the wind came by, you'd say to the wind when it took you away. That's where I wanted to go today. Where am I going? I don't quite know. What does it matter where people go down to the wood? Or the bluebells grow anywhere? anywhere? I don't know. The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation. Follow the slow down on Instagram and Twitter at slow down. The slow down is written by me. Tracy K. Smith. It is produced by Jennifer Lai, with Tracy Mumford. Our music is by Alexis quadrado. Engineering by Corey Shrek and John Miller. Production assistance by Chrissy Peas and Brenna, ie Versa