

# theslowdown\_20200508\_20200508\_128

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, kid, children, date, slow, charismatic cult, overbite, yearn, play, cardiologist, profile pic, cosmetics, dispense, class clown, family, death row, verisimilitude, abstraction, slowdown, older siblings

00:07

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

00:23

We all know family can be complicated. Even if most of us can agree that our family members probably mean well. We should also acknowledge that sometimes meaning well just isn't enough. These people who have known you since forever, but who still sometimes encounter such difficulty letting go of the old you that they never fully take in the person you've become. Maybe you were insecure as a kid. Or maybe you were always the class clown. Maybe you stumbled a few times on the way to adulthood, maybe you flat out fell. Sometimes it's hard for those second cousins or older siblings to grasp that the shy kid or the zany kid, or the adult who wobbled a while on her own isn't still you. In my family, I'm sometimes still pegged as kitten, the innocent baby sister. I don't resent it. But being reminded of the role I played once upon a time also drags me back to the days when I felt less certain, less capable, less me. I wonder if parents ever feel stifled by the way their children see them old or hopelessly unhip, or solid and serious, or like giant entertainment devices that play games and tell stories and dispense meals one day? Well, I yearn to tell my children how passionate and reckless I was during a season in my life, or how much effort it cost me to finally understand that there could be life after youth, or how much I sometimes long for a moment inside the skin of younger me. Today's poem is when your mother asks if you're seeing anyone, and no longer means a therapist, by Cindy King. It's tough to find a cardiologist who dates patients from the ward of cracked hearts. But there's always the bariatric surgeon who thinks you could drop a few pounds. If it's too late for the death row in may try the child predator. You too could date the would be senator or even the President of the United States. If you can't have the priest, don't give up. You too could fall for the charismatic cult leader.

You too could try the celibate polygamist. Admittedly, you'd have to share. And you wouldn't know for sure if you're actually dating, or whether you'd ever consummate, but who's in it for that kind of thing anyway, unless of course, you'd finally give me a grandchild. You didn't spend years in braces, only to settle for a dental assistant, did you? We didn't correct your overbite just so you could eat your dinners alone. It took sacrifice to cultivate your eligibility, years of home perms and hand me downs. Decades of clearance rack cosmetics. And yet, the people you called friends, were privileged enough to discover your brain and not your body. Btw, did you see that profile pic of the head floating in a jar, though I'm not sure if it's really enough to love. But love you will as everyone does toward infinite grace, the x into the olive branch, verisimilitude to abstraction, even the sarcophagus toward mummy dust the intellect to its dementia and I will support you as the mantle above the fireplace supports the little box house to your spouse's ashes.

04:30

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