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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

poem, slow, youthful energy, daycare, gaslight, whole wheat bagel, knew, elegy, littlest, excitement, fact, befall, miscarriage, layman, guidance counselor, placenta, catch, felt, loss, bruised

00:06

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

00:20

I'm 47 years old, and the mother of three children. I love my kids, and they keep me busy, so busy that I've been known to lament the fact that I held off having kids until I was well into my 30s when my youthful energy was dwindling, but a little over a year ago, one Saturday morning to be precise, after I woke up with a distinct craving for lox, cream, cheese, capers and onions on a whole wheat bagel. My husband and I got the surprising news that I was pregnant. Have you ever felt the roller coaster of disbelief then abject fright, then giddy excitement, all in quick succession. That is what we embarked upon. For weeks, I moved through my days with a joyful excitement. It was something it felt excruciating, not to share with everyone I knew. I'm having a baby. I did all the mental work of imagining the glorious changes that would soon befall my family. I even allowed myself to wish for a girl, a baby sister for my daughter, and to choose a name for her and to believe she would be calm, wise and beautiful. The peacekeeper in my wild brood. And then, one day, it was as if a portal closed, I experienced the pain of loss that many women experience a pain made sharper by the fact that there was hardly anyone to tell hardly anyone to turn to for support. I understood for the first time that many of the women I know must also understand firsthand the particular grief of miscarriage. Though most of us keep these stories to ourselves. Today's poem is elegy for almost by Rebecca layman. It was as simple as this. I really want to do and then you were gone. bad things happened. My finger pinched and bruised in the Dutch door at the daycare. The infection in my left eye that spread to my right. The election that didn't go the way I wanted it to. I was unconscious when the doctor slipped her instruments in and took you out sack with no heartbeat. placenta that wouldn't let go it's hold raspberry sized cluster of cells that didn't put together right? My love My blinkered out Gaslight when I was 17 and drove my car

stoned around the Wisconsin countryside. I never knew you. I ping pong over the yellow line singing along to Cohen's hallelujah. My guidance counselor son waving his tattooed arm out the passenger window. Why do I think of those far away days now and again, and again. Little against the odds in the daycare parking lot. Three weeks later, I tell another mother about you. Each word scraping the late fall fog the loss of you focusing in like a telescopes broad lens, catching some swirled debris on the edge of the solar system. Some not quite formed ghosts of rock and ice littlest little. If I could find you there. I'd catch you by your heel and never let you go.

04:37

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