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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:06

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



00:23

Part of the thrill of being a mother is seeing how much energy, how much life force my children possess. they yell, they pounce, they fight, they stomp and kick and whirl and spill things and shatter things and collide full force with the world. And when they're happy, they're like thunderclaps of riotous joy. And when they're unhappy, they're like calamitous minds collapsing into themselves. Sometimes, I feel that my children's emotions have been built out of materials repurposed from me. Sometimes I'm certain that their fiery spirits were born out of kindling pilfered from my own heart. They rage and crackle and fume. I can't any longer muster the drama, The Wild vicissitudes of youth, beside my kids, I'm like a calm little campfire. And that's fine. I get enough of an emotional kick out of minor shifts in the wind.



01:35

I think I understand my own parents better now. How they used to sit quietly in the evenings, laughing almost under their breath. How romance for them was their hands finding one another, or a look exchanged from across the table or across a room full of their children. It seemed quaint to me when I was young, and covetous of big screens cinematic love affairs, the wild, passionate current, I grew up. I swam in those waters, more than once they pulled me under. Now, I cherish the calm surface beneath which lies a river bed full of old furrows and grooves. There are songs that flood me instantly with the

memory of old feelings, songs that belong to each love. I've felt each heartache I've endured landmark moments from throughout my life. And then there are the songs that fill me with the remembered impression of other people's lives. Like the radio hits that crooned out from the dashboard, when I was a kid, long drives when my parents sat in the front seat, quietly holding hands, Bill Withers, Randy Crawford, George Benson. Those voices rise up around me like a cloud of contentment.



03:12

Today's poem is grooving low. By AB Spellman.



03:19

My swing is more mellow these days. Not the hard bop drive I used to roll but more of a cool Foxtrot. My eyes still closed when the rhythm locks. I've learned to Boogie with my feet on the floor. I'm still moving, still grooving still fallen in love. I bought to the baseline now. That trap set para diddles random accuse and flames that used to spin me in place. Still set me off. But I bought to the baseline now. I enter the tune from the bottom up and let trumpet and sax wheel above me. So don't look for me in the treble. Don't look for me in the fly staccato splatter of the hot young horn. Know, you'll find me in the nuance hanging out in inflection and slur I'm the one executing the half bent dip in the Slow, slow drag with the smug little smile and the really cool shades.



04:35

The slow down is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.



04:45

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