

# theslowdown\_20200507\_20200507\_128

📅 Wed, 9/30 8:15PM ⌚ 5:00

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

distance, quarantine, slow, social distancing, reunite, jose, highest rung, underlying health conditions, cubicles, love, sheltering, light, feel, february, sky, thoughts, poem, sense, hold, feeling

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

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This spring, quarantined and self isolated

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and

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sheltering in place because of the coronavirus. Many of us feel farther than ever from family and loved ones, like my cousin, whose underlying health conditions forced him to isolate himself from his symptomatic parents, though they live together in

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the very same house

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are my siblings who live within a one mile radius of one another. But his chief forms of contact are now platforms like FaceTime, or zoom, or a friend who returned home from Italy early this spring,

and spent two weeks in self quarantine before she could be reunited with her husband. Distance under these conditions, is a fluid concept. But the loneliness it breeds is concrete. To me, all of our social distancing feels like a hotel, or the big ballroom we occupied together so recently, has now been divided up into tiny cubicles, we're no farther apart. Nevertheless, we can't quite reach one another. The strange thing though, is that I also feel closer than I have in a long time to certain people in my life. Phone calls feel a lot more like they did when I was growing up, not a third tier alternative to emails or texts, but a way to revel in the voice and thoughts and even the passing silences of someone you love. And there's a way that holding someone in my thoughts can create such a feeling of warmth, and presence, that it doesn't matter where in the world they are, or how long it's been, since we were together, space, time, distance, everything just collapses. I'm operating under the belief that someday soon, we'll all get the green light to congregate, reunite and get up close like we used to. I'm leaning on the hope that eventually Our lives will go back to normal. But I know some things and some lives will never be restored to the way they used to be. Certain distances, like the distance brought about by loss can't be undone. Perhaps that awful fact will render what we do have all the more precious. Today's poem is February, and my love is in another state by Jose olivarez. It fills me with the sense of fullness and presence that love in parts. No matter how far from your beloved you might be. This is the feeling I want to dwell in these days. This sense of joy and hope and memory and anticipation. This is Jose Olivares is February, and my love is in another state. So when I walk down the street, I hold hands with the wind. There's a chimney coughing up ahead and a sky so Honey, I could almost taste it. A cat struts away from me and two yellow eyes become four. Just like that. I'm the loneliest creature on this block. Soon, the street lights will come alive and television sets will light up with blues. Stay with me, while the sky is still golden. Hold the ladder so I can climb and from the highest rung, I can scrape away a drizzle of light to wear around my neck alone is the star I follow in love and in solitude alone is the home with the warmest glow.

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