



# 20190821\_theslowdown\_20190821\_128

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

tree, leaves, winter, sprout, office, heart, campus, late autumn, outlived, lined, pass, happiness, princeton, tracy, poem, ginkgo trees, bask, disa, branches, mumford

00:05

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

00:22

There's a tall hearty, ginkgo tree outside of Dylan gym on Princeton's campus. It's a male tree, it doesn't bear fruit. But in the lush spring and summer months with the breeze flowing through the thousand fan shaped leaves, the tree seems to bask in its own beauty. I used to pass it every day on my walk from the train to my office seeing it without really seeing it. But the first time I really paused to take it in, was during my second year on campus. In late autumn, when the leaves had passed from deep green to a bright jewel like yellow. I was in love, and the golden display seemed to perfectly match the happiness in my heart. There was a ginkgo tree outside my apartment building in Brooklyn. In fact, ginkgo trees lined by walk to the subway down DeKalb Avenue past Fort Greene Park. I took it as a positive sign that each week I left one family of trees in New York, and made my way all the way to New Jersey, where another tree of the same family was waiting. Just before winter, when the ginkgos leaves had fallen into a bright pile. My heart had been shattered by betrayal. Again, I recognized a kind of symmetry, it made painful sense that my beautiful tree would have been robbed of its golden leaves. Just like I'd been robbed of what had felt like such hope and happiness. to my office and back through rain and snow, to my office and back, watching the tree cast shadows onto the hard, cold, dormant Earth. Then, one day in February, something seemed to sprout in my mind. By the time the ginkgo tree has grown leaves again, my heart will be healed of this sorrow. A Guide to the trees on Princeton's campus states that ginkgos date back to the early Jurassic period, to my office and back all winter long, smiling up at the tree, as if acknowledging a pact to my office and back thinking what a strong tree and how deep must its roots reach to my office and back in early spring, as the first green leaf tips began to sprout from the dark branches. One theory as to the trees survival after so many

thousands of yours, is that it has outlived all of its natural enemies. Today's poem is winter trees by William Carlos Williams in spare musical lines. The poem describes the cycle of trees as if it were the process of going to a party when I pass my gingko now, I feel as if the two of us share a secret, like we're comrades from an old war, which our side miraculously managed to win winter trees by William Carlos Williams. All the complicated details of the attiring and the DISA tiring are completed. A liquid moon moves gently among the long branches. Thus, having prepared their bugs against a shore winter. The wise trees stand sleeping in the cold. The slowdown is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation. 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 strebel and Veronica Rodriguez. Production assistance by Brenna Everson.