

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, THE POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE

This fine poem by Rodney Torreson, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, looks into the world of boys arriving at the edge of manhood, and compares their natural wildness to that of dogs, with whom they feel a kinship.

On A Moonstruck Gravel Road

The sheep-killing dogs saunter home,
wool scraps in their teeth.

From the den of the moon
ancestral wolves
howl their approval.

The farm boys, asleep in their beds,
live the same wildness under their lids;
every morning they come back
through the whites of their eyes
to do their chores, their hands pausing
to pet the dog, to press
its ears back, over the skull,
to quiet that other world.

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