

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

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

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American Life in Poetry: Column 071

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

William Carlos Williams, one of our country's most influential poets and a New Jersey physician, taught us to celebrate daily life. Here Albert Garcia offers us the simple pleasures and modest mysteries of a single summer day.

August Morning

It's ripe, the melon
by our sink. Yellow,
bee-bitten, soft, it perfumes
the house too sweetly.
At five I wake, the air
mournful in its quiet.
My wife's eyes swim calmly
under their lids, her mouth and jaw
relaxed, different.
What is happening in the silence
of this house? Curtains
hang heavily from their rods.
Ficus leaves tremble
at my footsteps. Yet
the colors outside are perfect--
orange geranium, blue lobelia.
I wander from room to room
like a man in a museum:
wife, children, books, flowers,
melon. Such still air. Soon
the mid-morning breeze will float in
like tepid water, then hot.
How do I start this day,
I who am unsure
of how my life has happened
or how to proceed
amid this warm and steady sweetness?

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