

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES, 2004-2006
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BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

Here's a fine seasonal poem by Todd Davis, who lives and teaches in Pennsylvania. It's about the drowsiness that arrives with the early days of autumn. Can a bear imagine the future? Surely not as a human would, but perhaps it can sense that the world seems to be slowing toward slumber. Who knows?

Sleep

On the ridge above Skelp Road
bears binge on blackberries and apples,
even grapes, knocking down
the Petersens' arbor to satisfy the sweet
hunger that consumes them. Just like us
they know the day must come when
the heart slows, when to take one
more step would mean the end of things
as they should be. Sleep is a drug;
dreams its succor. How better to drift
toward another world but with leaves
falling, their warmth draping us,
our stomachs full and fat with summer?

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