

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES, 2004-2006
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American Life in Poetry: Column 153

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

In this endearing short poem by Californian Trish Dugger, we can imagine “what if?” What if we had been given “a baker’s dozen of hearts?” I imagine many more and various love poems would be written. Here Ms. Dugger, Poet Laureate of the City of Encinitas, makes fine use of the one patched but good heart she has.

Spare Parts

We barge out of the womb
with two of them: eyes, ears,

arms, hands, legs, feet.
Only one heart. Not a good

plan. God should know we
need at least a dozen,

a baker’s dozen of hearts.
They break like Easter eggs

hidden in the grass,
stepped on and smashed.

My own heart is patched,
bandaged, taped, barely

the same shape it once was
when it beat fast for you.

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