

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

An aubade is a poem about separation at dawn, but as you'll see, this one by Dore Kiesselbach, who lives in Minnesota, is about the complex relationship between a son and his mother.

Aubade

“Take me with you”
my mother says
standing in her nightgown
as, home from college,
I prepare to leave
before dawn.
The desolation
she must face
was once my concern
but like a bobber
pulled beneath
the surface
by an inedible fish
she vanished
into the life
he offered her.
It stopped occurring
to me she might return.
“I’ll be back” I say
and then I go.

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