

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 259

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

Wisconsin writer Freya Manfred is not only a fine poet but the daughter of the late Frederick Manfred, a distinguished novelist of the American west. Here is a lovely snapshot of her father, whom I cherished among my good friends.

Green Pear Tree in September

On a hill overlooking the Rock River
my father's pear tree shimmers,
in perfect peace,
covered with hundreds of ripe pears
with pert tops, plump bottoms,
and long curved leaves.
Until the green-haloed tree
rose up and sang hello,
I had forgotten. . .
He planted it twelve years ago,
when he was seventy-three,
so that in September
he could stroll down
with the sound of the crickets
rising and falling around him,
and stand, naked to the waist,
slightly bent, sucking juice
from a ripe pear.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2003 by Freya Manfred. Her most recent book of poems is "Swimming With A Hundred Year Old Snapping Turtle," Red Dragonfly Press, 2008. Poem reprinted from "My Only Home," Red Dragonfly Press, 2003, by permission of Freya Manfred and the publisher. Introduction copyright © 2010 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.

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