

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 266

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

The great American poet William Carlos Williams taught us that if a poem can capture a moment in life, and bathe it in the light of the poet's close attention, and make it feel fresh and new, that's enough, that's adequate, that's good. Here is a poem like that by Rachel Contreni Flynn, who lives in Illinois.

The Yellow Bowl

If light pours like water
into the kitchen where I sway
with my tired children,

if the rug beneath us
is woven with tough flowers,
and the yellow bowl on the table

rests with the sweet heft
of fruit, the sun-warmed plums,
if my body curves over the babies,

and if I am singing,
then loneliness has lost its shape,
and this quiet is only quiet.

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