

# 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 276

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

I live in Nebraska, where we have a town named Homer. Such a humble, homely name and, as it happens, the poet Donal Heffernan is from Homer, and here's his hymn to the town and its history. Long live Homer. And while we're celebrating Nebraska towns, let's throw in Edgar, too.

### My Hometown

Oh, Homer!  
Your village sleeps near the Missouri River  
With your cousin Winnebago, both children of Lakotaland.  
You kept your town at two stories, as flat as the surrounding prairie.  
You taught the Iliad and Odyssey in honor of your namesake poet.  
Your spirit outlasted the bleached fields of the Depression, and  
Bravely swam against the raging Omaha Creek floods.  
On warm, wet spring Saturday nights,  
You provided dark places for your young  
To launch your next generation  
In pickups, unlighted.

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