

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

Here's a poem for this season by Tim Nolan, of Minnesota. Once we begin to be thankful for things, there are more and more things to be thankful for.

Thanksgiving

Thanks for the Italian chestnuts—with their
tough shells—the smooth chocolaty
skin of them—thanks for the boiling water—

itself a miracle and a mystery—
thanks for the seasoned sauce pan
and the old wooden spoon—and all

the neglected instruments in the drawer—
the garlic crusher—the bent paring knife—
the apple slicer that creates six

perfect wedges out of the crisp Haralson—
thanks for the humming radio—thanks
for the program on the radio

about the guy who was a cross-dresser—
but his wife forgave him—and he
ended up almost dying from leukemia—

(and you could tell his wife loved him
entirely—it was in her deliberate voice)—
thanks for the brined turkey—

the size of a big baby—thanks—
for the departed head of the turkey—
the present neck—the giblets

(whatever they are)—wrapped up as
small gifts inside the cavern of the ribs—
*thanks—thanks—thanks—*for the candles

lit on the table—the dried twigs—
the autumn leaves in the blue Chinese vase—

thanks—for the faces—our faces—in this low light.

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