

# 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 410

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

If you've followed this column through a good part of the seven years we've been publishing it, you know how hooked I am on poems that take a close look at the ordinary world. Here's a fine poem by Eamon Grennan, who lives in New York state, about bees caught up against a closed window.

### Up Against It

It's the way they cannot understand the window  
they buzz and buzz against, the bees that take  
a wrong turn at my door and end up thus  
in a drift at first of almost idle curiosity,  
cruising the room until they find themselves  
smack up against it and they cannot fathom how  
the air has hardened and the world they know  
with their eyes keeps out of reach as, stuck there  
with all they want just in front of them, they must  
fling their bodies against the one unalterable law  
of things—this fact of glass—and can only go on  
making the sound that tethers their electric  
fury to what's impossible, feeling the sting in it.

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