

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES, 2004-2006
AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY © 2006 THE POETRY FOUNDATION WEBSITE: WWW.AMERICANLIFEINPOETRY.ORG CONTACT: ALP@POETRYFOUNDATION.ORG

American Life in Poetry: Column 456

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

Many of us feel a great sense of pride as we watch our children discover the world for the first time. Here, Kathleen Driskell, a Kentucky poet, shows us her own daughter taking that first taste of a late summer watermelon she has grown herself.

Seed

In first grade, you met Squanto,
nearly naked and
on his haunches, showing
those thick-headed pilgrims
how one must plant fish
to grow maize. And in autumn
you dove into the lobotomized
pumpkin, into the gooey pulp
and seeds, raising a clump
like a slimy chandelier
from the Titanic. And now
in late summer, daughter,
you smile, holding a ripe watermelon,
cut in half, exposing the black
seed within its bright red heart.
Your melon. How proud you are
to think you grew this delicious
thing all on your own.

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 ©2009 by Kathleen Driskell, whose most recent publication is *Peck and Pock: A Graphic Poem*, Fleur de Lis Explorations, 2012. Poem reprinted from *Seed Across Snow*, Red Hen Press, 2009, by permission of Kathleen Driskell and the publisher. Introduction copyright 2013 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.

American Life in Poetry ©2006 The Poetry Foundation
Contact: alp@poetryfoundation.org
This column does not accept unsolicited poetry.