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

To celebrate my 75th year, I've published a new book of poems, and many of them are about the way in which we come together to help each other through the world. Here's just one:

Two

On a parking lot staircase
I met two fine-looking men
descending, both in slacks
and dress shirts, neckties
much alike, one of the men
in his sixties, the other
a good twenty years older,
unsteady on his polished shoes,
a son and his father, I knew
from their looks, the son with his
right hand on the handrail,
the father, left hand on the left,
and in the middle they were
holding hands, and when I neared,
they opened the simple gate
of their interwoven fingers
to let me pass, then reached out
for each other and continued on.

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