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

As a writer and reader, there's hardly anything I enjoy more than coming upon fresh new ways of describing things, and here's a sparkling way of looking at an avalanche, by Marty Walsh, who lives in Maine.

The snow's
feet slip . . .
out from
under it
and down
the mountain
slope it comes
flat on its back
white skirt
and billowy
petticoats
blowing
back over
its head,
whiplashing
rickety
pine sapling
as it passes,
bowling boulders
left and right
until it comes
to a juddering
sudden heart-
thumping stop
just shy
of the little village
in the valley far below.

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