

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

Billy Collins, who lives in New York, is one of our country's most admired poets, and this snapshot of a winter day is reminiscent of those great Chinese poems that on the virtue of their clarity and precision have survived for a couple of thousand years. His most recent book of poetry is *Aimless Love: New and Selected Poems*, (Random House, 2013).

Winter

A little heat in the iron radiator,
the dog breathing at the foot of the bed,

and the windows shut tight,
encrusted with hexagons of frost.

I can barely hear the geese
complaining in the vast sky,

flying over the living and the dead,
schools and prisons, and the whitened fields.

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