

# 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 542

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

Several years ago I published a children's book about a bag in the wind, so it's no wonder I love this poem by April Lindner, who lives in Pennsylvania. Once you start noticing these wind-blown bags, you see them everywhere. Her most recent book is *This Bed Our Bodies Shaped* (Able Muse Press, 2012).

### Carried Away

One rainy night we sat in traffic  
and, overtired in back, you saw  
a wind-whipped grocery bag afloat  
beyond the clutch of jagged branches,  
swept by gusts and whirled in eddies.  
A sudden downdraft swooped it earthward,  
where it danced till with a whoosh  
a current luffed it past the power lines.  
Disowned by gravity, small ghost  
not yet snagged by twiggy fingers,  
it couldn't reach the earth. Thin-skinned,  
it pulsed, translucent jellyfish.  
You wept and pled to be let out  
into the dark and slanted rain,  
somehow to save that desolate thing.  
The light turned green and still you begged,  
*Go back, go back*, on its behalf,  
caught and held, bossed and tossed  
by a will much greater than its own.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)), publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2010 by April Lindner, "Carried Away," (*The Hudson Review*, Vol. LXIII, no. 1, Spring 2010). Poem reprinted by permission of April Lindner and the publisher. Introduction copyright ©2015 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](mailto:alp@poetryfoundation.org)  
This column does not accept unsolicited poetry.