

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES, 2004-2006
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American Life in Poetry: Column 631

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

There are few writers who have done more to promote the work of other writers than Grace Cavalieri, who lives in the nation's capitol. She has a radio show, "The Poet and the Poem" from the Library of Congress, she writes book reviews and is a tireless advocate for poetry day in and day out. All this while writing her own poems and plays. Her most recent book is *With* (Somondoco, 2016)

Wild Life

Behind the silo, the Mother Rabbit
hunches like a giant spider with strange calm:
six tiny babies beneath, each
clamoring for a sweet syringe of milk.
This may sound cute to you, reading
from your pulpit of plenty,
but one small one was left out of reach,
a knife of fur
barging between the others.

I watched behind a turret of sand. If
I could have cautioned the mother rabbit
I would. If I could summon the
Bunnies to fit him in beneath
the belly's swell
I would. But instead, I stood frozen, wishing
for some equity. This must be
why it's called *Wild Life* because of all the
crazed emotions tangled up in
the underbrush within us.
Did I tell you how
the smallest one, black and trembling,
hopped behind the kudzu
still filigreed with wanting?

Should we talk now of animal heritage, their species,
creature development? And what do we say
about form and focus—
writing this when a stray goes hungry, and away.

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