

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 652

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Last week we published a poem from Jill Bialosky's new book from Knopf, *The Players*, and if you didn't see it you can find it on our website, www.americanlifeinpoetry.org. The poet is a New Yorker, an editor at W. W. Norton, and a daughter grieving the loss of loved ones. It's unusual for us to print two poems by one poet, in sequence, but this one and the one from last week go very well together.

Red Rover

We take our last walk.
Walls stripped of portraits,

warped mirrors, dressing tables,
and the grandfather clock

with its stoic face
and elaborate gentle fingers.

For years we struggled to break
free of the closeness of rooms,

the obligation of birth order,
the metaphysics that bind

one element to the other,
as if we were still wild girls

playing wild rover in the garden,
breaking through a chain of linked hands.

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