

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 687

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

I'm writing this column in the earliest days of another spring, and here's a fine spring poem from Rose King's book *Time and Peonies*, from Hummingbird Press. The poet lives in California.

In Spring

I'm out with the wheelbarrow mixing mulch.
A mockingbird trills in the pine.
Then, from higher, a buzz, and through patches of blue
as the fog burns off, a small plane pulls a banner,
red letters I can't read—
but I do see, over the fence,
a man in a sky-blue shirt walking his dog to the beach.
He says he missed it, will keep an eye out.
Four barrows of mulch around the blueberry bushes,
I'm pulling off gloves, and he's back, beaming.
"It says, I LOVE YOU, MARTHA.
Are you Martha?"

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright 2017 by Rosie King from *Time and Peonies*, (Hummingbird Press, 2017). Poem reprinted by permission of Rosie King and the publisher. Introduction copyright 2018 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.

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