

# 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 711

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

Squirrels hide many more acorns than they can find, and thus we have oaks. And a child might hide precious belongings, then hide the map that gives their location, then hide the clue to where the map is hidden. Dan Gerber, who lives in California, remembers just such a hiding place, as well as a place and time that's far beyond finding. This poem is from his 2017 new and selected poems from Copper Canyon Press, entitled *Particles*.

### The Cache

Behind the house in a field  
there's a metal box I buried  
full of childhood treasure, a map  
of my secret place, a few lead pennies  
from 1943.

The rest I've forgotten,  
forgotten even the exact spot  
I covered with moss and loam.

Now I'm back and twenty years  
have made so little difference  
I suspect they never happened,  
this face in the mirror  
aged with pencil and putty.  
I suspect even  
the box has moved as a mole would move  
to a new place long ago.

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