

# 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 720

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

A child at a school bus stop, on his way out into the world, a fine subject for a fine poem by Dante Di Stefano, who lives in Endwell, New York. Might we all live out our days in a place called Endwell! "With a Coat" is from his book from Brighthorse Books of Omaha, Nebraska, entitled *Love is a Stone Endlessly in Flight*.

### With a Coat

I was cold and leaned against the big oak tree  
as if it were my mother wearing a rough apron  
of bark, her upraised arms warning of danger.  
Through those boughs and leaves I saw  
dark patches of sky. I thought a brooding  
witch waited to catch me up from under  
branches and take me, careening on her broom,  
to her home in the jaundiced moon.  
I looked to the roof of mom and dad's house  
and wondered if the paisley couch patterns  
would change during the day. My brother peeked  
from a window and waved. When the bus came,  
I pawed away from the trunk, fumbled,  
and took my first step toward not returning.

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