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.