

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES, 2004-2006
AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY © 2006 THE POETRY FOUNDATION WEBSITE: WWW.AMERICANLIFEINPOETRY.ORG CONTACT: ALP@POETRYFOUNDATION.ORG

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.

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 ©2016 by Dante Di Stefano, "With a Coat," from *Love is a Stone Endlessly in Flight*, (Brighthorse Books, 2016). Poem reprinted by permission of Dante Di Stefano and the publisher. Introduction copyright©2019 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.

American Life in Poetry ©2006 The Poetry Foundation
Contact: alp@poetryfoundation.org
This column does not accept unsolicited poetry.