

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, THE POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE

A poem need not go on at great length to accomplish the work of conveying something meaningful to its readers. In the following poem by the late Marnie Walsh, just a few words, written as if they'd been recorded in exactly the manner in which they'd been spoken, tell us not only about the missing woman in the red high heels, but a little something about the speaker as well.

Bessie Dreaming Bear

Rosebud, So. Dak., 1960

we all went to town one day
went to a store
bought you new shoes
red high heels

ain't seen you since.

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