

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 worm in an apple, a maggot in a bone, a person in the world. What might seem an odd assortment of creatures is beautifully interrelated by the Massachusetts poet Pat Schneider. Her poem suggests that each living thing is richly awake to its own particular, limited world.

There Is Another Way

There is another way to enter an apple:
a worm's way.

The small, round door
closes behind her. The world
and all its necessities
ripen around her like a room.

In the sweet marrow of a bone,
the maggot does not remember
the wingspread
of the mother, the green
shine of her body, nor even
the last breath of the dying deer.

I, too, have forgotten
how I came here, breathing
this sweet wind, drinking rain,
encased by the limits
of what I can imagine
and by a husk of stars.

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