

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 093

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

Newborns begin life as natural poets, loving the sound of their own gurgles and coos. And, with the encouragement of parents and teachers, children can continue to write and enjoy poetry into their high school years and beyond. A group of elementary students in Detroit, Michigan, wrote poetry on the subject of what seashells might say if they could speak to us. I was especially charmed by Tatiana Ziglar's short poem, which alludes to the way in which poets learn to be attentive to the world. The inhabitants of the Poetry Palace pay attention, and by that earn the stories they receive.

Common Janthina

My shell said she likes the king and queen
of the Poetry Palace because they listen to her.
She tells them all the secrets of the ocean.

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