

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES, 2004-2006
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BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

Though parents know that their children will grow up and away from them, will love and be loved by others, it's a difficult thing to accept. Massachusetts poet Mary Jo Salter emphasizes the poignancy of the parent/child relationship in this perceptive and compelling poem.

Somebody Else's Baby

From now on they always are, for years now
they always have been, but from now on you know
they are, they always will be,

from now on when they cry and you say
wryly to their mother, *better you than me*,
you'd better mean it, you'd better

hand over what you can't have, and gracefully.

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