

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

Those of us who have hunted morel mushrooms in the early spring have hunted indeed! The morel is among nature's most elusive species. Here Jane Whitledge of Minnesota captures the morel's mysterious ways.

Morel Mushrooms

Softly they come
thumbing up from
firm ground

protruding unharmed.
Easily crumbled
and yet

how they shouldered
the leaf and mold
aside, rising

unperturbed,
breathing obscurely,
still as stone.

By the slumping log,
by the dappled aspen,
they grow alone.

A dumb eloquence
seems their trade.
Like hooded monks

in a sacred wood
they say:
Tomorrow we are gone.

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