

# 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 106

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

By describing the relocation of the moles which ravaged her yard, Washington poet Judith Kitchen presents an experience that resonates beyond the simple details, and suggests that children can learn important lessons through observation of the natural world.

### Catching the Moles

First we tamp down the ridges  
that criss-cross the yard

then wait for the ground  
to move again.

I hold the shoe box,  
you, the trowel.

When I give you the signal  
you dig in behind

and flip forward.  
Out he pops into daylight,

blind velvet.

We nudge him into the box,  
carry him down the hill.

Four times we've done it.  
The children worry.

*Have we let them all go  
at the very same spot?*

*Will they find each other?*  
We can't be sure ourselves,

only just beginning to learn  
the fragile rules of uprooting.

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