

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

A FREE COLUMN FOR NEWSPAPERS BY TED KOOSER, POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES, 2004-2006
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What motivates us to keep moving forward through our lives, despite all the effort required to do so? Here, North Carolina poet Ruth Moose attributes human characteristics to an animal to speculate upon what that force might be.

The Crossing

The snail at the edge of the road
inches forward, a trim gray finger
of a fellow in pinstripe suit.
He's burdened by his house
that has to follow
where he goes. Every inch,
he pulls together
all he is,
all he owns,
all he was given.

The road is wide
but he is called
by something
that knows him
on the other side.

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