

# 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 193

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

The first two lines of this poem pose a question many of us may have thought about: how does snow make silence even more silent? And notice Robert Haight's deft use of color, only those few flecks of red, and the rest of the poem pure white. And silent, so silent. Haight lives in Michigan, where people know about snow.

### How Is It That the Snow

How is it that the snow  
amplifies the silence,  
slathers the black bark on limbs,  
heaps along the brush rows?

Some deer have stood on their hind legs  
to pull the berries down.  
Now they are ghosts along the path,  
snow flecked with red wine stains.

This silence in the timbers.  
A woodpecker on one of the trees  
taps out its story,  
stopping now and then in the lapse  
of one white moment into another.

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