

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 204

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Memories form around details the way a pearl forms around a grain of sand, and in this commemoration of an anniversary, Cecilia Woloch reaches back to grasp a few details that promise to bring a cherished memory forward, and succeeds in doing so. The poet lives and teaches in southern California.

Anniversary

Didn't I stand there once,
white-knuckled, gripping the just-lit taper,
swearing I'd never go back?
And hadn't you kissed the rain from my mouth?
And weren't we gentle and awed and afraid,
knowing we'd stepped from the room of desire
into the further room of love?
And wasn't it sacred, the sweetness
we licked from each other's hands?
And were we not lovely, then, were we not
as lovely as thunder, and damp grass, and flame?

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