

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

To have a helpful companion as you travel through life is a marvelous gift. This poem by Gerald Fleming, a long-time teacher in the San Francisco public schools, celebrates just such a relationship.

Long Marriage

You're worried, so you wake her
& you talk into the dark:
Do you think I have cancer, you
say, or *Were there worms*
in that meat, or *Do you think*
our son is OK, and it's
wonderful, really—almost
ceremonial as you feel
the vessel of your worry pass
miraculously from you to her—
Gee, the rain sounds so beautiful,
you say—*I'm going back to sleep*.

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