

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

American literature is rich with poems about the passage of time, and the inevitability of change, and how these affect us. Here is a poem by Kevin Griffith, who lives in Ohio, in which the years accelerate by their passing.

Spinning

I hold my two-year-old son
under his arms and start to twirl.
His feet sway away from me
and the day becomes a blur.
Everything I own is flying into space:
yard toys, sandbox, tools,
garage and house,
and, finally, the years of my life.

When we stop, my son is a grown man,
and I am very old. We stagger
back into each other's arms
one last time, two lost friends
heavy with drink,
remembering the good old days.

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