

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

One of the privileges of being U.S. Poet Laureate was to choose two poets each year to receive a \$10,000 fellowship, funded by the Witter Bynner Foundation. Joseph Stroud, who lives in California, was one of my choices. This poem is representative of his clear-eyed, imaginative poetry.

Night in Day

The night never wants to end, to give itself over
to light. So it traps itself in things: obsidian, crows.
Even on summer solstice, the day of light's great
triumph, where fields of sunflowers guzzle in the sun—
we break open the watermelon and spit out
black sees, bits of night glistening on the grass.

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