

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

Jane Hirshfield, a Californian and one of my favorite poets, writes beautiful image-centered poems of clarity and concision, which sometimes conclude with a sudden and surprising deepening. Here's just one example.

Green-Striped Melons

They lie
under stars in a field.
They lie under rain in a field.
Under sun.

Some people
are like this as well—
like a painting
hidden beneath another painting.

An unexpected weight
the sign of their ripeness.

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