

# 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 327

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

Some of us have more active fantasy lives than others, but all of us have them. Here Karin Gottshall, who lives in Vermont, shares a variety of loneliness that some of our readers may have experienced.

### More Lies

Sometimes I say I'm going to meet my sister at the café—  
even though I have no sister—just because it's such  
a beautiful thing to say. I've always thought so, ever since

I read a novel in which two sisters were constantly meeting  
in cafés. Today, for example, I walked alone  
on the wet sidewalk, wearing my rain boots, expecting

someone might ask where I was headed. I bought  
a steno pad and a watch battery, the store windows  
fogged up. Rain in April is a kind of promise, and it costs

nothing. I carried a bag of books to the café and ordered  
tea. I like a place that's lit by lamps. I like a place  
where you can hear people talk about small things,

like the difference between azure and cerulean,  
and the price of tulips. It's going down. I watched  
someone who could be my sister walk in, shaking the rain

from her hair. I thought, even now florists are filling  
their coolers with tulips, five dollars a bundle. All over  
the city there are sisters. Any one of them could be mine.

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