

# 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 330

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Humans first prized horses for their strength and speed, but we have since been captivated by their beauty, their deep eyes and mysterious silences. Here's a poem by Robert Wrigley, who lives in Idaho, where the oldest fossilized remains of the modern horse were found.

### After a Rainstorm

Because I have come to the fence at night,  
the horses arrive also from their ancient stable.  
They let me stroke their long faces, and I note  
in the light of the now-merging moon

how they, a Morgan and a Quarter, have been  
by shake-guttered raindrops  
spotted around their rumps and thus made  
Appaloosas, the ancestral horses of this place.

Maybe because it is night, they are nervous,  
or maybe because they too sense  
what they have become, they seem  
to be waiting for me to say something

to whatever ancient spirits might still abide here,  
that they might awaken from this strange dream,  
in which there are fences and stables and a man  
who doesn't know a single word they understand.

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