

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 166

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

Texas poet R. S. Gwynn is a master of the light touch. Here he picks up on Gerard Manley Hopkins' sonnet "Pied Beauty," which many of you will remember from school, and offers us a picnic instead of a sermon. I hope you enjoy the feast!

Fried Beauty

Glory be to God for breaded things—
Catfish, steak finger, pork chop, chicken thigh,
Sliced green tomatoes, pots full to the brim
With french fries, fritters, life-float onion rings,
Hushpuppies, okra golden to the eye,
That in all oils, corn or canola, swim

Toward mastication's maw (O molared mouth!);
Whatever browns, is dumped to drain and dry
On paper towels' sleek translucent scrim,
These greasy, battered bounties of the South:
Eat them.

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