

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

James Crews, the author of this week's poem, is the editor of a fine anthology from Green Writers Press called *Healing the Divide: Poems of Kindness and Connection*, much needed in our troubled world. Here, as I see it, he graciously pays his respects to William Carlos Williams, our great poet of the local and ordinary, who once wrote about the pleasure of eating all the plums his wife had left in the refrigerator. His newest book is *Bluebird*.

Clearly

To see clearly,
not needing a drink
or pill or puff
of any pipe
to know I'm alive.
To come home,
peel off sandals
and step onto
the cool tile floor
needing only
the rush of water
over strawberries
I picked myself
and then a knife
to trim the dusty
green heads
from each one,
to watch them
gleam cleanly
in a colander
in a patch of sun
near the sink.

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Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.

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