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UNL professor Ted Kooser wins 2005 Pulitzer Prize for poetry

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Lincoln, Neb., April 4th, 2005 —

Ted Kooser, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor of English and the poet laureate consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress, has been awarded the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, for his book "Delights & Shadows" (Copper Canyon, 2004).

The 89th annual prizes in Journalism, Letters, Drama and Music were announced today by Columbia University. The poetry award honors a "distinguished volume of original verse by an American author." Finalists were "The Orchard" by Brigit Pegeen Kelly and "Collected Poems" by the late William Matthews.

"I'm thrilled by this," Kooser said today shortly after the announcement. "It's something every poet dreams of. There are so many gifted poets in this country, and so many marvelous collections published each year. That mine has been selected is a great honor."

In addition to "Delights & Shadows," Kooser has authored 10 collections of poetry and prose, including "Local Wonders, Seasons in the Bohemian Alps" (2002) and "The Poetry Home Repair Manual" (2005), published by University of Nebraska Press. Kooser was born in Ames, Iowa, in 1939 and attended public school there before earning his bachelor's degree at Iowa State University (1962). He taught school for one year before moving to Nebraska to pursue graduate school. He received his master's degree at the University of Nebraska in 1968. He has lived all of his life in Nebraska and Iowa.

Poetry Daily said this about "Delights & Shadows:" "For more than 30 years Ted Kooser has written poems that deftly bring dissimilar things into telling unities. Throughout a long and distinguished writing career he has worked toward clarity and accessibility, making poetry as fresh and spontaneous as a good watercolor. A gyroscope balanced between a child's hands, a jar of buttons that recalls generations of women, and a bird briefly witnessed outside a window -- each reveals the remarkable within an otherwise ordinary world."

Kooser's other collections of poetry include "Sure Signs" (1980), which received the Society of Midland Authors Prize for the best book of poetry by a Midwestern writer published in that year; "One World at a Time" (1985); "Weather Central" (1994); and "Winter Morning Walks: One Hundred Postcards to Jim Harrison" (2000), winner of the 2001 Nebraska Book Award for Poetry. "Local Wonders" also won the Nebraska Book Award for Nonfiction in 2003. The book was also chosen as the Best Book Written by a Midwestern Writer for 2002 by Friends of American Writers, and it won the Gold Award for Autobiography in ForeWord Magazine's Book of the Year Awards. He has an upcoming release, "Flying at Night," a new compilation from University of Pittsburgh Press that will include poems from "Sure Signs" and "One World at a Time." This new book will be out in early 2005.

Kooser is also the author, with his longtime friend Jim Harrison, of "Braided Creek: A Conversation in Poetry" (2003), for which the two poets received the 2003 Award for Poetry from the Society of Midland Authors. Among Kooser's other awards and honors are two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, the Pushcart Prize, the Stanley Kunitz Prize, the James Boatwright Prize and a Merit Award from the Nebraska Arts Council.

Since retiring from the insurance business, Kooser has had more time for writing and has published three books. He teaches poetry and nonfiction writing as a visiting professor at UNL and is on faculty for the Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference. Since his appointment in September as the U.S. poet laureate consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress, he has traveled extensively to readings, events and literary conferences, while attending to his office in Washington, D.C.

He recently unveiled a new public service, the "American Life in Poetry" project. In collaboration with the Poetry Foundation and the Library of Congress, the initiative offers a weekly newspaper column called "American Life in Poetry" free of charge to any paper wishing to carry it. Each 6- to 8-inch column features a poem by a contemporary American poet and a brief introduction to the poem by Kooser.

Winners of the Pulitzer Prize receive a \$10,000 award.

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Associated Media Files:

- [Ted Kooser black & white JPEG \(http://ucommxsr1.unl.edu/downloadables/photo/20040812kooserbw.jpg\)](http://ucommxsr1.unl.edu/downloadables/photo/20040812kooserbw.jpg)
- [Ted Kooser color JPEG \(http://ucommxsr1.unl.edu/downloadables/photo/20040812koosercolor.jpg\)](http://ucommxsr1.unl.edu/downloadables/photo/20040812koosercolor.jpg)



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