



Lights on a Ground of Darkness: An Evocation of a Place and Time

Ted Kooser

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Like the yellow, pink, and blue irises that had been transplanted from house to house over the years, the stories of poet Ted Kooser's family had been handed down until, as his mother lay ill and dying, he felt an urgency to write them down. With a poet's eye for detail, Kooser captures the beauty of the landscape and the vibrancy of his mother's Iowa family, the Mosers, in precise, evocative language.

The center of the family's love is Kooser's uncle, Elvy, a victim of cerebral palsy. Elvy's joys are fishing, playing pinochle, and drinking soda from the ice chest at his father's roadside Standard Oil station. Kooser's grandparents, their kin, and the activities and pleasures of this extended family spin out and around the armature of Elvy's blessed life.

Kooser has said that writing this book was the most important work he has ever undertaken because it was his attempt to keep these beloved people alive against the relentless erosion of time.

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