Down in The Yard

Theodore Kooser*
beneath the street lights, while every few minutes a bat swooped through their midst. Somewhere an owl hooted — once, twice; and somewhere in the distance a car churned down a gravel road at high speed. In North River a small boy with an odd — no, with no expression on his face paused on a corner beneath a dull street light. He was looking at something on the sidewalk in front of him. It was a rock — a fairly large, smooth, almost round rock. The small boy took his hands from his pockets, held his arms out straight from his shoulders, and balanced on his left foot. Then, in much the same manner as a football punter, he kicked the rock with his right foot, with his black, tongue-less tennis-shoe.

“All-ee, all-ee ox-in free-eel!” he shouted as his toe connected with the rock. It flew a few feet through the air, then skipped and bounced out of the circle of light into the darkness ahead — where it skipped, bounced, and fell off into the thick grass along the sidewalk.

**Down in The Yard**

*by Theodore Kooser*

Down in the yard the arbor gate
is open and the whitewashed swing
and trellis greet with mute surprise
the whiteness of an early frost.

The ripened grapes have split their skins;
dark lips with fragrant yellow tongues
are huddled, whispering laments
between the browning leaves and vine.