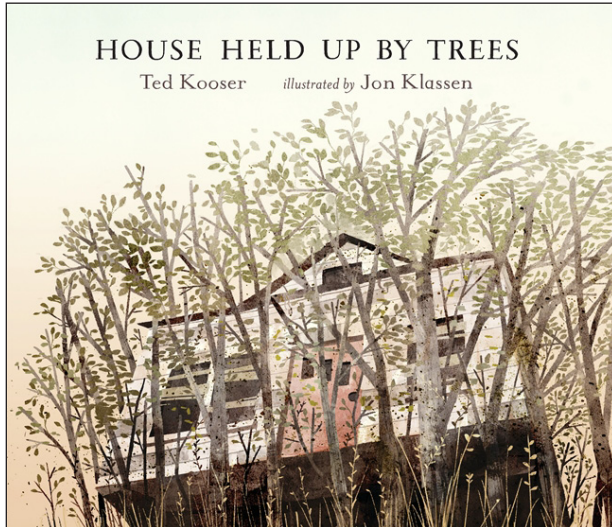


# HOUSE HELD UP BY TREES

by TED KOOSER *illustrated by* JON KLASSEN



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## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

I see *House Held Up by Trees* as a story about time and change, big themes throughout all my writing. Nature is persistent, relentless in pursuit of its needs, and the seeds keep dropping and the saplings keep coming up. And the father fights nature with his yard work, but what he's really fighting against is time and change. And all the while, despite his fierce struggle with nature, his children are growing and moving away from their father. Change is happening. He isn't good at expressing his feelings to his children, and he turns his back to them and hunkers down over the yard.

A reader's own interpretation is fine, too. I have said over and over to students and audiences to whom I've spoken that what the author meant is not very important. It's what the story means to the reader that really counts. I have a poem that was meant to be about the failure of farmers, but kids all over the country have written to me with ideas about what went wrong. They suggest it was a motorcycle gang, a spaceship, and I always write back and say it could have been.

*Ted Kooser*