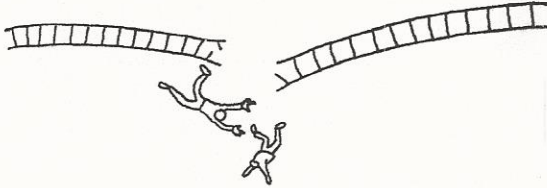


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Poem Selected by Natasha Trethewey

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*I love the moment in a poem when two worlds collide, as in a movie theater. Here, the action on-screen and in the audience reflects what is always present in a poem: something in the foreground and something in the background – a distance that must be bridged.*



### **The Bridge**

*By Linda Pastan*

At Loew's Burnside Theatre in the forties  
an unknown boy pressed his face  
to mine. We were in the children's section;  
a glowering matron patrolled the aisles alert  
as a watchdog, nose twitching, for noise  
or fighting or missiles of wadded gum.  
Not for the discovery of desire  
by twelve-year-old strangers,  
The Bridge of San Luis Rey looming  
on the screen, Akim Tamiroff starring.  
I still remember that bridge (woven by Incas  
imagined by Thornton Wilder) falling  
and falling, the actors in period costume spilling  
like tenpins into space, caught in midair  
as I was, partway between love and death.

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**Natasha Trethewey** served as the United States poet laureate from 2012 to 2014. **Linda Pastan** is the author of numerous collections of poetry, including "Insomnia," to be published by W. W. Norton & Company this month.