

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

*Edited & Introduced by Wesley McNair,
Maine Poet Laureate*

Chebeague Island is home to one of Maine's liveliest poetry communities. In today's poem Sheila Jordan, a member of that community, explores the familiar yet strange event of elderly women wandering outside in nightgowns.

In Nightgowns

by Sheila Jordan

Nothing insists they get dressed.
Midmorning, like toddlers,
late parading in their pajamas,
they walk out of the house
in nightgowns.

What do they care who sees them
without a robe, appearing
in the first layer over
the Emperor's new clothes,
these elderly women

sweeping the steps, accommodating
an arthritic cocker spaniel,
dead-heading the lilies.
Or they proceed like butterflies,
pastel-bright, to flutter

from this to that, breezy —
not explaining —
in and out of sun and shade,
air reaching up under
a skirt.

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