

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

The poet Jorie Graham once wrote that a memory for a poet is an experience that has not yet been fully lived and waits for its second life in poetry. In today's poem Pam Burr, of Brunswick, relives the memory of sandwiches that her mother once prepared for her school lunch.

Sandwiches

by Pam Burr Smith

When I was young
My mother made me sandwiches for lunch
Butter on one slice of bread
Mayo on the other
Lettuce and tomato
Bologna or salami
Two slices always
Or tuna salad or meatloaf

These were big thick sandwiches
That could fall apart

Not like those one slice of bread
One slice of ham
One slice of bread sandwiches
The cool kids had

I wanted everything the cool kids had
And I wanted their dry little sandwiches, too

Mine were so obviously made by a mother
Clumsy in their over-love
Every taste and vitamin she could pack into them
Every morning too full too full
I needed two napkins to eat them

Not like the cool kids
Who could hold a neat little sandwich
In one hand
While mine dribbled love
Down my arm

Take Heart: A Conversation in Poetry is produced in collaboration with the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance. Poem copyright © 2011 by Pam Burr Smith. Reprinted from Heaven Jumping Woman, Moon Pie Press, 2011, by permission of Pam Burr Smith. Questions about submitting to Take Heart may be directed to David Turner, Special Assistant to the Maine Poet Laureate, at poetlaureate@mainewriters.org or 207-228-8263.