

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

This week is the 26th anniversary of NASA's Challenger disaster, which took the lives of the New Hampshire teacher Christa McAuliffe and her astronaut companions. Today's haunting poem describes their ill-fated journey and the technological culture that failed them.

What Positions Do They and We Assume In the Encapsulated Stillness?

By John Tagliabue

While
somewhere in a capsule deep in the sea
off the Florida coast
seven visitors to the earth who planned to
visit outer space
lie dead with their advanced technological gadgets
and once active
mysterious eyes, all kinds of scientists and many
argumentative committees
discuss in details the possible causes of the Challenger's
explosion, flaming
demise into fish-wandering seas. Octopus nearby,
and dead sea captains,
ships like old cultures gone to the bottom. The many
slightly alive
statisticians argue and probe and computers they think
are at their advanced
command. How silent they are, the sky dreamers, those
children in the womb
of the metal.

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