

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Poets do not isolate themselves in a garret, but walk among us, taking notes about our shared experience. In this week's poem, David Moreau, a resident of Wayne, explains.

Salt to the Brain (In Praise of Poets)

By David Moreau

As a rule we are not the brain surgeons
or the bridge builders. We did not figure
how to make water flow in a pipe
or keep airplanes stable in flight.
Instead, we stood in a circle and chanted,
"All praise to the most beautiful bridge,"
then walked across it.

As a rule we do not meet the payroll
or keep the factories open.
Others figured how enzymes work
and built hydraulic brakes.
Instead, we were the ones at the machines
whose idea it was to sing, "Happy Birthday,"
or "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen."

In this world the moneychangers change money.
The nurses nurse and the lawyers lawyer.
My mother feeds the stray cats that come
to the screen door of her house in Marion Oaks.
The orange tiger has a nasty scratch.
The poets take note,
add this small pinch of salt to the brain,
our gift to the taste of existence.

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