

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

In celebration of mothers everywhere, here is a poem by one of Maine's most important poets, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. In it, Longfellow imagines Nature as a loving mother who guides us in our final years toward the unknown.

Nature

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, through more splendid, may not please him more;

So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

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