The Man Who Likes Cows
by Sheila Gray Jordan

Thirty miles from the city,
past the first town
with a small name,
cows are in a field,
black and white Holsteins,
nudes with dairy nipples.

He stops the car,
opens the door on my side,
and I get out to see the cows
who look at us over their shoulders—
sloppy, dumb broads, wading
in milk and honeybees.

He is a man who likes cows.
But they are not to be coaxed,
cud-happy this spring day,
the grass green.
Something big—a bell or a sunset—
is necessary to move them.

Like Jove, “Speaking
their tongue...,” in his city suit,
he cups his hands: the Moo
rising from his groin,
a brazen klaxon,
helloing.

The call bends their thick skulls.
They lift their heads—
all eyes and ears—
coming on to crowd the fence.
I take his hand, make a fist of it
with its gold ring.

Take Heart: A Conversation in Poetry is produced in collaboration with the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance. Poem copyright © 1995 by Sheila Gray Jordan. Reprinted from The China In The Sea, Signal Books, 1995, by permission of Sheila Gray Jordan. 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.