

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Susan Deborah King divides her time between Minneapolis and Great Cranberry Island. In this week's moving poem she remembers a hospital visit with an elderly Maine friend.

Watermelon

by Susan Deborah King

There being not much of later
to enjoy it in, he suggested to me,
down-island neighbor, we cut it open
right now, the "personal-sized" melon
I brought, since he told me
I might as well take back home
the rhubarb pie I made for him in the hospital
because he preferred his fruit plain.
He could be plain in his speaking too!
Was it just the emotion of the moment
or was this the sweetest, juiciest, most rubiate
fruit a tooth ever sank into, bright
in the mouth as the July day outside
his shut in, TV-in-the-background house,
next to which sat his big red truck
with his late wife's name, same as his boat's,
emblazoned on the hood? Next to that
rose a yellow, cross-hatched
squared off mountain of idle,
due to his illness, traps. He was a strapping,
loose-jointed man, a hunter, a kidder, skipper
of any room he sauntered through.
When I got up to leave, he couldn't rise,
oxygen tubes pinched into his nostrils.
He took my hand – a surprise – looked
into my eyes and couldn't find the bottom.

In memory of Lyn Colby

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