

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

One hundred years ago, in the summer of 1912, Caroline Dowd of New York City “discovered” Edna St. Vincent Millay reading her long poem “Renescence” during a staff party on the porch of the Whitehall Inn in Camden. On August 29, the date of that historic discovery, a group of poets from across Maine will offer a reading at the Inn to celebrate the event’s 100th anniversary. For more information, visit whitehall-inn.com. Today’s Millay poem, with its references to Maine, will help prepare you for the celebration.

Hearing Your Words, and Not a Word Among Them

by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Hearing your words, and not a word among them
Tuned to my liking, on a salty day
When inland woods were pushed by winds that flung them
Hissing to leeward like a ton of spray;
I thought how off Matinicus the tide
Came pounding in, came running though the Gut,
While from the Rock the morning whistle cried,
And children whimpered and the doors blew shut;
There in the autumn when the men go forth,
In gardens stripped and scattered, peering north,
With dahlia tubers dripping from the hand:
The wind of their endurance, driving south,
Flattened your words against your speaking mouth.

Take Heart: A Conversation in Poetry is produced in collaboration with the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance. Poems copyright © 1931, 1958 by Edna St. Vincent Millay and Norma Millay Ellis. Reprinted by permission of Holly Peppe, Literary Executor, The Millay Society. 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.