

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Patricia Ranzoni, from Bucksport, has been writing and publishing poetry about people and places in rural Maine for many years. She explains that today's poem followed the "shocking generosity of a distinguished elder," offered "at a time when health troubles loomed." That generosity taught her, she says, to listen to her heart "for brave ways to say what feels inexpressible."

If You Should Die Before I Do

by Patricia Ranzoni

I'll come wherever you're praised.

Sit or stand in the back, *quietly*,

As I came whenever I came

among those you've loved. As any

grateful heart knows not how

to thank a source for song. At least

I knew you enough

to comprehend gave. If you should die first,

I'll come bare-footed when you

are alone. Don't worry, nothing tasteless

to clutter your grave,

only my dust and petals and pollens

from my beds to sift into yours,

and in this way I might come to hold you,

with the others,

perhaps forever.

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