TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

Edited & Introduced by Wesley McNair, Maine Poet Laureate

In this week's column, poet Carolyn Locke, from Troy, begins with a description of the starfish and ends with a poem in praise of love.

Regeneration

by Carolyn Locke

for Gerry

I heard how the starfish learns the world through touch, how its chemical sense leads it to the mussel bed, how it feels its way around crevices sucking soft bodies from their shells. You can't kill a starfish in any usual way—chop one up and it multiplies, filling the waters with quintuples of spiny legs reaching out from humped backs, and curling around the deep purple shells on the rocky bottom. Sometimes I think I know what it is to know the world through only the body. If I close my eyes, I no longer feel where my body ends and yours beginsand I can believe your hands are mine reaching for muscle, a strange body becoming my own, and in my ear an unfamiliar heartbeat pumps new blood, breath no longer mine doubles the lungs, my need growing larger than what any body can hold until there is only this way of knowing, this touch that leads me, blind as the starfish, to become what I cannot see.

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