

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Bruce Guernsey is a poet from Bethel appearing for the second time in this column. His unusual poem features the hands of a married couple, which express at night a closeness the couple can no longer manage in the daytime.

The Hands

By Bruce Guernsey

The only time we touch now
is in our sleep, as if our hands,
finding each other,
have lives of their own.

Joined to our surprise every morning,
they are full of longing,
like a one-armed man
trying to pray.

We pull them apart
starting the day, yours
to your work, mine to mine:
purses, pockets, change.

How they love the night,
the cool of linen, the underside
of pillows — sneaking out,
meeting without us in the dark.

Theirs is a language we've forgotten,
a way of speaking now their own:
touching, whispering,
making plans.

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