

# TAKE HEART

## A Conversation in Poetry

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

Carl Little of Somesville is both a poet and widely published interpreter of Maine painting. He bases today's entry on a remark once made by the New Hampshire resident and former US Poet Laureate, Charles Simic, a relentless reviser of his poems.

### Last Writes

*by Carl Little*

“ I tinker with most of my poems even after publication. I expect to be revising in my coffin as it is being lowered into the ground.”

— Charles Simic

At the wake for the ex-U.S. poet laureate  
at the Hotel Fin du Monde someone swore  
he heard a scratching sound in the casket

and later, as we wedged the box into  
a rocky corner of a New Hampshire bone orchard,  
one of the pall bearers, a pallid poet with

acute hearing, caught the sibilant sound  
of the words being crossed out ----“kissing”  
substituted for “praying”, perhaps, or

“lover” for “beloved”----the gentle rub  
of eraser, the whisper of a breath  
to remove residue from the paper

and the click of the miner's lamp  
Simic insisted wearing on his head  
in lieu of the standard issue laurel wreath.

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