

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Through the haunting voice of this week's poem, Tom Sexton of Eastport remembers the vanished world of sardine packers in the canneries of Lubec, Maine.

Sardine Packer

by Tom Sexton

The moon drew the bay to itself
like a lover at full tide
when I was young and full of life.
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

Silver fish spilled from every net,
and all my days were buttery
when I worked at the cannery.
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

My children came to see me work.
I was the fastest on the line.
They liked to slide in herring slime.
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

The new owner won't come to town
to watch us nip and cut and pack.
He bought and gave us all the sack.
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

My daughter's made her final bow.
My grandson's crying on my knee.
But they can't live on scenery.
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

Summer people come here now
to walk along the quiet bay.
I had my time. I had my day.
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

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