

# TAKE HEART

## A Conversation in Poetry

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

In this week's poem Elizabeth Garber, a former poet laureate of Belfast, explores the sighting of an Elvis look-alike in a Maine town.

### The Man Who Looked Like Elvis

*by Elizabeth W. Garber*

No one remembers when the man with the pomade-combed crescendo of jet black hair first appeared, but we all quietly pay attention to him. Two summers ago a guitar was strapped over his back when we eyed him wandering miles along Route 1. Last year, when his hair was bleached reddish blond, we wondered to ourselves if he'd given up on Elvis. This spring, his hair is black again. All over town, we nod the same nod: Elvis is back. Passing him on High Street we notice his carefully shaved long sideburns, before our gaze shifts to the nearby shop windows. He leaves the supermarket as we arrive. A strange discomfort twists our faces away. Opening night of Hairspray, in the art deco neon glow of the movie theater, the crowd is thick with bleached-blond beehive contestants, sculpted hair rising like curvaceous mounds of soft ice cream. Elvis appears with his blunt, heavy brows, the rough-carved mouth, the deep-plowed wrinkles under his eternal pompadour. In the competition for the biggest, tallest hair, we cheer for rhinestone glasses, pedal pushers, bobby socks. Later, when we chat and smile, trying to hide the hunger of our loneliness, he slips through the forest of lacquered hair, a silent king passing among us, searching for his subjects, his promised land, a place where he, too, will be recognized.

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