

# TAKE HEART

## A Conversation in Poetry

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

One of life's most intimate events is the recounting of a personal dream. In this week's intimate poem, Christian Barter of Bar Harbor recounts his dream of a ride on a school bus.

### The School Bus

*by Christian Barter*

In the dream I was getting on the school bus  
from the back of the bus for some reason, only this time  
instead of jeers and everyone sliding over  
to the aisle-side so I couldn't sit down, someone said,  
"There's a seat up here, Chris." It was

next to Mary Jo Stillwell, pretty as she was  
in eighth grade, who had slid to the window  
to let me sit, and when a kid put me in a headlock  
I simply lifted him over my head and set him  
in the seat in front of me, said, "Stay there,"

and a little boy had grabbed a little girl  
by the hair, only this time I pulled him off  
and sat him down, saying, "You don't ever grab a girl,"  
and sat her down, too, and asked her if she was all right.  
No one jeered at this, or swore at me,

or threatened my life for disrupting the ways things  
were supposed to be on the school bus going to  
Mountain View Middle School in Sullivan, Maine—  
if that's even where we were going—  
and when I sat back in my seat, Mary Jo leaned forward

in a very serious manner, and I kissed her  
as though it were the most natural thing to do  
with Mary Jo—short, serious kisses—on that  
school bus that was nothing like any school bus I had ever ridden,  
that was exactly like every school bus I have ever ridden,

and when she started kissing my neck in a way that tickled,  
I woke up exactly in my life.

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