

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Shooting a deer is a common rite of initiation for boys in Maine. But in today's sonnet, by Thomas Carper of Cornish, the initiation has gone very wrong.

The Solemn Son

by Thomas Carper

“It’s his.” They’ll weigh it out behind the store.
Harry Nason writes the boy’s name, Steve
Burnell. The boy looks solemnly at the floor,
Trying to work it out. It’s hard to believe
That in one deafening moment in the woods,
At daybreak, as he shivered from the cold,
So much could change. He overhears his dad’s
Words as Harry has the story told.
“Two shots...the heart.” He’d hardly time to see
The buck before the crashing blasts that killed
Him rang in his ears so overpoweringly
That just when he was sure he’d be fulfilled
He felt dazed and deserted. Now the son
Hears Harry’s voice from miles away. “Well done.”

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