

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Anyone who has had trouble starting the car on winter mornings in Maine will find encouragement In today's poem by Stuart Kestenbaum of Deer Isle.

Starting the Subaru at Five Below

by Stuart Kestenbaum

After 6 Maine winters and 100,000 miles,
when I take it to be inspected

I search for gas stations where they
just say beep the horn and don't ask me to

put it on the lift, exposing its soft
rusted underbelly. Inside is the record

of commuting: apple cores, a bag from
McDonald's, crusted Dunkin' Donuts cups,

a flashlight that doesn't work and one
that does, gas receipts blurred beyond

recognition. Finger tips numb, nose
hair frozen, I pump the accelerator

and turn the key. The battery cranks,
the engine gives 2 or 3 low groans and

starts. My God it starts. And unlike
my family in the house, the job I'm

headed towards, the poems in my briefcase,
the dreams I had last night, there is

no question about what makes sense.
White exhaust billowing from the tail pipe,

heater blowing, this car is going to
move me, it's going to take me places.

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