

# TAKE HEART

## A Conversation in Poetry

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

Gold stars are normally awarded for good behavior, but not always. This week's poem by Rachel Flynn of Gorham explains.

### Gold Stars

*by Rachel Contreni Flynn*

It was forbidden to touch  
the Hummels in my aunt's pretty house,  
arranged just so and shut  
in the glass cabinet, pigeon-toed,  
rosy-faced, holding kittens or balloons,  
their porcelain bellies bulging  
under pinafores and overalls...

and it was wrong to kiss  
the high-school janitor after track practice  
against the concrete wall  
in the band room vestibule  
where a fake velvet blanket draped  
the old upright piano,  
and a long row of trombones tilted  
in their shiny black cases...

but these  
were the gold stars I gave myself  
when I thought no one was watching  
and nothing would get broken,  
and I was brilliant: easing

the little brass latches  
and reaching in.

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