

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

The most popular choice among those who read poetry by the late Kate Barnes at her memorial celebration last September was this poem. In it, she invites us to imagine the world inside a stone.

Inside the Stone

by Kate Barnes

Up in the woods,
in the circle among the beech trees,
last winter one of the lumber horses split a stone
horizontally, with a clip of his big steel shoe.
It had seemed to be a plain gray stone,
but when it was opened a black wall appeared,
rusty at the edges, flecked with pale checks
like unknown constellations, and over all
floated wisps of blue-gray, trailing feathers of clouds.

I brush away the fallen leaves
and stare into the distance inside the stone.
If one could become a bird—
if one could fly into that night—
if one could see the circling of those stars—

and then the woods become very still,
and beech leaves blur at the edge of my vision.
I find I am bending lower and lower.

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