

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

The late Philip Booth, a resident of Castine, lived in a house that had been in his family for five generations. Here, he describes an encounter with a fellow townsman and childhood friend.

Fog-Talk

by Philip Booth

Walking the heaved cement sidewalk down Main Street,
I end up where the town bottoms out: a parking lot
thick with sea-fog. There's Wister, my boyhood friend,

parked on the passenger side of his old Dodge pick-up.
He's waiting for Lucia, the girl who drives him around
and feeds him, the one who takes care of him at home.

Wister got married late. Wifeless now, no kids, he's near
sixty-eight. Like me. Watching the ebb, looking out into
the fog. Fog so thick that if you got shingling your roof

you'd shingle three or four courses out onto
the fog before you fell off or sun came. Wister knows
that old joke. Not much else, not any more. His mind drifts

every whichway. When I start over to his old pick-up,
he waves to my wave coming toward him, his window half up,
half down. He forgets how to work it. I put my head

up close. Wister, I say, you got your compass with you
to steer her home through the fog? Wister smiles at me with
all sorts of joy, nodding yes. He says I don't know.

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