

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Today Barrie Shepherd of Scarborough asks us to consider the forgotten witnesses of the Christmas scene at the holy manger.

The Silent Seers

by J. Barrie Sheperd

Of all the witnesses
around that holy manger
perhaps it was the animals
who saw best what lay ahead,
for they had paced the aching roads
slept in the wet and hungry fields
known the sharp sting of sticks
and thorns and curses
endured the constant bruise
of burdens not their own,
the tendency of men to use
and then discard rather than meet
and pay the debt of gratitude.
For them the future also held
the knacker's rope, the flayer's blade,
the tearing of their bodies
for the sparing of a race.
In the shadows of that stable
might it be his warmest welcome
lay within their quiet comprehending gaze?

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