

# TAKE HEART

## A Conversation in Poetry

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

Stuart Kestenbaum of Deer Isle writes that today's poem came from what he ate one day for lunch, namely, alphabet soup -- "the perfect meal for a writer."

### Prayer for Joy

*by Stuart Kestenbaum*

What was it we wanted  
to say anyhow, like today  
when there were all the letters  
in my alphabet soup and suddenly  
the 'j' rises to the surface.  
The 'j', a letter that might be  
great for scrabble, but not really  
used for much else, unless  
we need to jump for joy,  
and then all of a sudden  
it's there and ready to  
help us soar and to open up  
our hearts at the same time,  
this simple line with a curved bottom,  
an upside down cane that helps  
us walk in a new way into this  
forest of language, where all the letters  
are beginning to speak,  
finding each other in just  
the right combination  
to be understood.

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