

# TAKE HEART

## A Conversation in Poetry

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

Today Bruce Guernsey of Bethel recalls the phone he once bought for his aging mother, whose experience with it, he writes, was for him both comic and “immensely poignant.”

### The Present

*by Bruce Guernsey*

For her birthday that year  
I bought my mother  
one of those portable phones,  
a new kind you could carry  
all over the house  
so she wouldn't be alone  
anywhere anymore,

except she couldn't remember  
where she's left it  
most of the time those days  
and hurried in her slippers  
from one room to the next  
only to hear it ringing  
somewhere down the hall

and opens the front door  
to no one there  
or still on the phone  
when she finally found it  
where she never put it,  
the house getting bigger  
as she gets smaller

but no less busy  
than she was before  
with us six kids  
and my father at work, or war—  
this new phone like having us  
still around, calling from somewhere,  
upstairs or down.

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