

# TAKE HEART

## A Conversation in Poetry

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

This reader's choice poem from a past column comes from Allison Williams of Alfred. She writes: "'Sardine Packer' is posted over my desk because it states exactly what packing sardines was like. I never did it but a friend did; her picture and obituary is posted with the poem."

### Sardine Packer

*by Tom Sexton*

The moon drew the bay to itself  
like a lover at full tide  
when I was young and full of life.  
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

Silver fish spilled from every net,  
and all my days were buttery  
when I worked at the cannery.  
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

My children came to see me work.  
I was the fastest on the line.  
They liked to slide in herring slime.  
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

The new owner won't come to town  
to watch us nip and cut and pack.  
He bought and gave us all the sack.  
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

My daughter's made her final bow.  
My grandson's crying on my knee.  
But they can't live on scenery.  
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

Summer people come here now  
to walk along the quiet bay.  
I had my time. I had my day.  
Oh, I could make my scissors dance.

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