

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

How does one write a poem? Taking his cue from an ancient Chinese poet, Martin Steingesser of Portland offers this advice.

Fishing

by Martin Steingesser

*"Sometimes words come hard—they resist me
till I pluck them from deep water like hooked fish..."
—Lu Ji (261-303)*

You have to be willing
to wait days and days with nothing
biting.

Wait

while the far leaves, the sky change
blues and greens, and birdcalls,
wind, river become the sound of thinking.
This line you cast
reaches into different music.

A murmur flutters over the water—
be more still. . .

Sometimes a moment happens
when what moves
doesn't, when the trees and grasses
along the riverbank seem to hold their breath,
and it is the stones that breathe. . .

The fish you want
is rising in another world.

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