

# TAKE HEART

## A Conversation in Poetry

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

Edward Rielly of Westbrook writes of today's poem: "Growing up on a small farm...I enlisted the pine trees in our yard as baseball teammates. Pine cones abounded, and although they did not carry as well as a baseball, I never had to retrieve them."

### Homering Among the Pines

*by Edward J. Rielly*

With my old, pockmarked bat,  
but without a ball, I played  
the game as perfectly as any  
summer hero. I used, instead,

the pine cones that dropped  
at random from the pines overhead  
littering the lawn, shooting out  
of the lawnmower against my legs

as I mowed, but ready to fill  
the air with home runs when I  
turned to sport. The small dry cones  
whizzed like insects at the moment

I stroked them, fluttering like  
butterflies when their velocity  
suddenly declined. Oh, how I hit  
those brown cones, and sometimes,

lining one just right with my bat  
between layers of wind, I sent it  
high up through dark branches,  
returning to whence it came, and all

the invisible baseball spirits  
on all my invisible bases raced  
for home as I dropped my bat  
and waved to the surrounding wind.

---

*Take Heart: A Conversation in Poetry* is produced in collaboration with the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance. Poem copyright © 2007 Edward J. Rielly. Reprinted from *Old Whitman Loved Baseball and Other Baseball Poems*, Moon Pie Press, 2007, by permission of Edward J. Rielly. Please note that the column is no longer accepting submissions; comments about it may be directed to special consultant to the poet laureate, Gibson Fay-LeBlanc, at [mainepoetlaureate@gmail.com](mailto:mainepoetlaureate@gmail.com) or 207-228-8263. *Take Heart: Poems from Maine*, an anthology collecting the first two years of this column, is now available from Down East Books.