

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

This week's poem, by Dave Morrison of Camden, uses the traditional approach of rhyme and meter for a contemporary subject: last call in a night club.

Closing Time

by Dave Morrison

The bartender has just announced last call.
It feels like bedtime did when we were young;
we act surprised, and then we act appalled.
It's much too soon, and we aren't nearly done,
but just like then, no matter what we say,
we have to move along, we cannot stay.

The bouncer has a sideshow barker's call:
"Come on people, drink 'em up, let's go,
it's hotel-motel time, the clock on the wall
says that this bar ain't open any more..."
When lights come on it's unnerving to see
the club in all its tattered misery.

The soundman coils the cables on the stage
just like a sailor making fast his ship.
The weary waitress starts to feel her age
and rubs her temples while she counts her tips.
The barback lugs the cases up the stairs
and fills the coolers with tomorrow's beers.

The sadness of anonymous goodbyes —
we drain our drinks and shuffle out the door
to make our way back to whatever lives
we left to come here several hours before.
Unfinished business always seems to shape
our attempts at transformation and escape.

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