

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

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

Kenneth Rosen of Portland is a veteran poet and the founder of the Stonecoast writers conference. In this week's haunting poem, he remembers workmen from a culture that has been lost.

The Last Lamp-Lighters

By Kenneth Rosen

I saw the last lamp-lighters! Patrolling
The dusk, looking for gas-lamps
Whose lights had gone out. Each held a pole
Forked for lifting the frail pearl-tinted bowl,
And one with a small wheel and flint for casting

A spark. Did all lamps need to be lit? Or just
Those doused by raindrops or errant drafts?
They seemed sad, these doomed men who knew
How to give fog its soft perfume, and the facts
Of our life their necessary, tender, but fatal glow.

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