

A Commonplace Garden

God Almighty first planted a garden.
And indeed, it is the purest
of human pleasures. ~Francis Bacon

A society grows great when old men
plant trees whose shade they know
they shall never sit in. ~Greek proverb

A weed is a plant that has mastered
every survival skill except
for learning how to grow in rows. ~Doug Larson

What is a weed?
A weed is a plant whose virtues
have not yet been discovered.
~Ralph Waldo Emerson

We can complain because rose bushes
have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes
have roses. ~Abraham Lincoln

If you have a garden and a library,
you have everything you need. ~Cicero

Though an old man, I am
but a young gardener. ~Thomas Jefferson

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Gardening Companion

When I was a young girl, Pa always planted a small vegetable garden in the northeast corner of our yard. We would stake out perfectly straight rows with rusty fence posts and twine, planting beans, radishes, spinach, and the like. As the years passed and I could assist with more gardening duties, the garden expanded to accommodate additional rows. I enjoyed the warm spring afternoons planting the garden in the exact way Pa had taught me. My best friend, a yellow lab named Sam, would patiently keep me company while she rested underneath the nearby willow tree. If I left to retrieve seeds or tools from the garden shed, she was never far behind me.

My time in the backyard garden waned during my college years. Although I did my best to return home to assist with gardening tasks, the garden was too much for Pa to tend on his own, even with Sam's assistance. The garden shrank to a smaller plot as Pa seeded grass in the area where we had once planted vegetables.

Last fall, Pa and I were once again digging in the garden. This time, however, we were not planting or harvesting. We were digging a grave, laying our beloved family dog to rest where she had once brought me so much joy. As I sit in the fresh green grass, mourning the loss of my gardening companion, I wish I could return to the old garden. I wish I could glance over my sunburnt shoulder and see Sam watching me from beneath the shade of the old willow tree.



~Kendra Markland ('16 Alum)

The Garden Quarto

Gardening is not outcome-oriented.
A successful harvest is not the end
of a garden's existence, but only
a phase of it. As any gardener knows,
the vitality of a garden does not end
with a harvest. It simply takes
another form. Gardens do not "die"
in the winter but quietly prepare
for another season.
~James P. Carse,
Finite and Infinite Games



Fall 2018

Gerard's Herbal: Of Saint James his Wort

In Latine, Herba S. Jacobi: in English, S. James his Wort: the countrey people call it Stagger-wort and Staner-wort, and Rag-wort, and Rag-weed. In Holdernesse in York-shire they call it Seggrum. Land Rag-wort groweth in untilled pastures, especially neare the borders of fields somewhat moist. Thought a Groundsel, of which there be sundry sorts: some of the pasture, one of the sea; some sweet smelling, some a loathsome savor. Saint James his wort, well known every where, the root is threddy, the first broad leaves like the leaves of common Wormewood, but broader, thicker, of a deep green colour, not whitish or soft, and a chambered, blackish stalk which riseth a cubit high. They floure in July and August, at the top like yellow Marigolds, small floures round the middle button, turne into downe as doth Groundsel. It is Commended by Physitians, good for greene wounds: it healeth them with the juyce, tempered with honey and May Butter, boiled together unto the form of an Unguent. It is commended, not without cause, to helpe old paines in the arms, hips, and legs, boiled in hogs grease to forme an ointment. The decoction gargarised is much set by as a remedy against swellings of the throat. The leaves stamped small, boiled with hogs grease unto a juyce--adding in the boyling a little Masticke & Olibanum--taketh away Sciatica, the old ache in the huckle bones.

~R. Marrs, Gardener

Green pincushion proteas

Green pincushion proteas grow
in my memory, swaying faintly
in today's wind. Memory snags me
through the pink pincushions I bought this morning
from the auntie in the doek by the Kwikspar
who added a king protea to the bunch,
all spikes and pins in reds and maroons,
so regal that as a child I didn't know
they were alive
and did not water them.
My mother's remembering
remembers them into me.

Do you remember, she asks, and then I do,
green pincushion proteas this small?
She slowly makes her fingers turn and bloom
green flowers the size of large coins
that we found here among the rocks and grey sand
under tall trees unnameable in memory, reaching
their roots into the house's foundations,
subtle threads stretching closer and closer.

All tangles and snaggings and swayings,
green pincushion proteas prick into my mind,
thicken themselves stitch by stitch
into a place that was not, but is again.
The grey sand of memory now fervent with colour,
green blooms clamber over the rockery
and we, who did not know their beginnings,
move them to another part of the garden,
and they withdraw, and then withdraw
from memory until now, a new species of green
blossoming and unmoved.
They died, she recalls.
They don't like their roots to be moved.

Do you remember, she asks,
and the green coins bud into the first bush
long preceding us, and careless we wrench them
from their original rocks and they die
a little and then fully.
Why did we move them to another place,
we, who were removed to here?
Do you remember, she asks.

~Gabeba Baderoon

A poet for whom "the soil is a muse."

Author of the poetry collections *The History of Intimacy*,
The Dream in the Next Body, and *A hundred silences*.



From "The Garden"

The gardener sits in lamplight, soberer
than I who mix such lyrical and wild
impossibilities with what a sober man
Considers sense. Yet I, poor poet, I
Am likewise a poor practised gardener
Knowing the Yes and better still the No.
Sense must prevail, nor waste extravagant
Such drunken verse on such December dreams.
Yet I do find it difficult indeed
To break way from visions in this drear
Winter of northern island. I must love
The warmer sun and with nostalgia pine
For those my birthright climates on the coast
Mediterranean of southern Spain.
Homesick we are, and always, for another

Temple Gardens, Kyoto

Arashiyama:
piercing eyes of cormorants
as they fly past us.

At the temple gate,
my guide has fallen silent;
something unseen sings.

Eying a peony,
I find myself surrounded
by genial faces.

It flicks the surface:
carp emerging, descending;
dark water's tension.

Broken pencil's point:
face in a shining kiosk,
the color of slate.

Contorted red pine
on the grounds of the temple;
misshapen, perfect.

Straw raincoat and hat
are hanging outside the door.
So he *is* at home!

Even this beggar
wears a spotless, raffish scarf
and bows politely.

Girl missing one eye ---
from the charcoal heights, just one
drop of rain comes down.

A ragged ember
escaping the chimney's throat
in early darkness.

~Nick Mason-Browne

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*In my garden I spend my days;
in my library I spend my nights. . . .
With the flower I am in the present;
with the book I am in the past.*

~Alexander Smith (1863)

And different world.

And so the traveler

Down the long avenue of memory
Sees in perfection that was never theirs
Gardens he knew, and takes his steps of thought
Down paths that, half-imagined and half-real,
Are wholly lovely with a loveliness
Suffering neither fault, neglect, nor flaw;
By visible hands not tended, but by angels
Or by St. Phocas, gentlest patron saint
Of gardeners . . . Such wisdom of perfection
Never was ours in fact though ours in faith,
And since we live in fabric of delusion
Faith may well serve a turn in place of fact.

~Vita Sackville-West (1946)