

## The garden gate

Tiny urban plot becomes a sanctuary for bleeding hearts



Imaginary fireflies and brittle brown magnolia leaves make sense to Nicki Eybel

I can't seem to leave my garden. I've been there since Sept. 11. Day 17. Day 18. Day 19. Earthquakes generally rumble out of the earth and into buildings. On Sept. 11, 3,000 short miles away, an unspeakable force cracked from unimaginably tall buildings into the earth. Into our glorious planet. Into my garden. This garden is the only place in the whole wide world that makes any sense to me: in the dusty, obstinate clay under the weeping birch; the delicious, rich humus under the firs; dappled sunshine that always delights. This is a friendly place of infinite ideas and buried plans. My humble contribution to evolution is a tiny blink of heaven that will forget me the moment I am gone.

I cannot seem to leave this safe place of green, gray, brown and white. This is my back garden with only two entrances, one private and one public. My necessary place of yin. A quiet, dark place, secluded, slow and patient. This is a mysterious place where all manner of cats congregate in the shadows and sunny spots to study and sleep. Clever cats I do not even recognize. Cats who try to replace my gone cat, Luna. There is comforting magic here. My garden is too real for CNN to take root.

I tend this garden as a refuge—a sanctuary for all beings. I want us all to be safe in this

tiny urban plot. To find comfort among the ferns and be cozy under the vine maple. We can snuggle next to these compost bins and be sheltered, offering all our worries and pains to the corydalis and bleeding hearts. Let the flowering nicotianas heal us.

I can't leave my little piece of heaven just yet. I cannot open the garden gate and walk down the driveway. I cannot move out into a world I so fiercely love. I cannot imagine visiting with the wise, older neighbors I once enjoyed. Not yet. I can't find the balance to walk along streets lined with glorious, nurtured gardens. My eyes are not ready for autumn's bold palette.

I don't recognize myself in these times. I did not see any of this coming. My hair turning gray, my body growing tired and soft. The passion of enormous anger toppling buildings. I cannot sleep.

So, it is enough for me that moths make sense. Pine siskins and slugs make sense.

Shards of moving sunlight make sense. Wandering cats and busy squirrels make sense. Imaginary fireflies and brittle brown magnolia leaves make sense.

Welcomed is the tonic of time.

Blessed are the patient gardeners.

Did I just hear the garden gate sigh open a wee bit? ☺

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NICKI EYBEL lives and grows in Northeast Portland with her partner, who recently planted a hot tub under the weeping birch. They are still in search of a kitty.

*My humble contribution to evolution is a tiny blink of heaven that will forget me the moment I am gone*

OUT LOUD  
BY  
NICKI  
EYBEL

## Laughing Flower Music presents... Diversity! New Years Eve Dance

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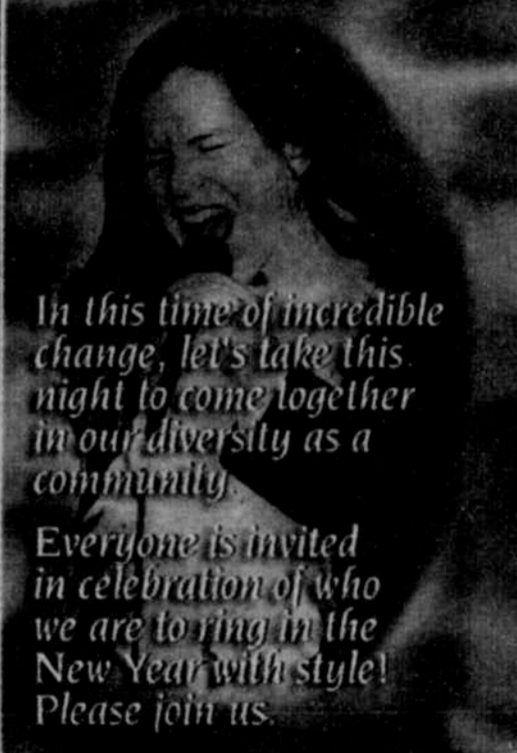
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