

Poetry Corner

The Gardener

by Joan Peterson

You walk into a garden looking for last year's imperfect beds of annuals the ones you encircled with wood shavings and leaves, bordered by sweet woodruff. All you find is a sea of miner's lettuce and rye grass. Everything overgrown is draped in a blanket of green. No trails to follow no sparkling blossoms reaching out to be plucked into bouquets. You want to be a gardener but you are a dreamer.

All winter you read books on landscaping and cottage gardens. You turn pages of perfect pathways carefully constructed mounds of violets and black-eyed Susans, beds of bright red tulips and white narcissus. You picture your garden as one of these pages: trapezoids of natural grasses, a riverbed of stones and boulders, bird baths and gazebos placed in perfect harmony.

Today you walk into the garden where the dogs have dug up the lavender and the rhododendron buds are burned with frost. In a corner, a wheelbarrow is posed with a few limp tulips peering over the sides. Straggly grapevines sprawl along the fence and the compost is the focal point from every perspective. Time is running out. You have a small window to work in, transform this plot of tangled weeds into paradise. Listen.

You hear a peacock calling from the trees. "Help," she screams, "help." It's already spring.

Ed. Note: Joan Peterson has recently published a book of poems, Looking for a Place to Write, through Wellstone Press, 2014 (wellstonepress.com).

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