

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Eileen Murphy: Two Poems

Mish (Eileen) Murphy · Wednesday, August 12th, 2020

I Wish

Grandma,
I wish
we could sit down
at your Formica table
in your kitchen in Tampa
and eat grapes
and drink Cokes from the bottle
to keep cool.

You always slipped me
a few bucks
because you knew
money escaped me,

but you didn't mind
the way I was.

I wish I could take you shopping.
I'd buy you
a pair of red shoes.

You always liked shoes.

I wish I could
wrap you
into a piece of bread
and carry you in my purse

and when I needed you,
I'd pull off a piece

and let you
dissolve

on my tongue.

*

Catnip

(label on a jar on top of my refrigerator)

One spring my fiancé
set up our herb garden.
At first, he took it seriously.
We had parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
just like Simon and Garfunkel,
and ginger, mint, dill, and catnip, besides.

But he didn't water,
didn't weed.
(He says he's not *a weeder*.)

It's hot here in Florida.
It's terrible hot.
He put up
this shade contraption,
wooden slats,
a kind of jail for herbs.

Soon they started falling down,
the slats.
And the herbs.

The thyme soon ran out of time.
Poor little dill
keeled over
like wilted asparagus stalks.
Rosemary and sage
never grew enough
to save.

My fiancé loved the mint.
Wanted to know
the recipe
for mint juleps.
And did we have
proper cups.

Sorry, I'm not up to polishing
my silver julep cups these days.
We'll use plastic.

Mint don't mind.
Mint's a weed.

All he had to do
was buy a ginger root
from the organic food store
and stick it in the ground.

His first ginger crop
tasted like horseradish.
He couldn't be
bothered
to stick
any more ginger roots
in the ground.

Goodbye, ginger.

Then it was goodbye, fiancé,

and I thought the herb garden
was finished
when the weeds took over.

But then there's catnip,
a hardy plant.

Catnip's a beacon.

One by one,
the feral cats in our rural neighborhood
strut around and around
the abandoned herb garden
on hot summer nights.

They perch
on a shade-slat amid the weeds
and begin
to yowl.

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