

Georgette Unis

In Honor of A Certain Age

They open just enough to tease
hope of a week's survival,
an expensive dozen roses,
sent as a token of affection,
the bouquet presented
in an arranged marriage
of décor by a florist.

The garden rose glories in moonlight,
her petals unfurl in velvet colors,
transparent and opaque all at once
like a Rothko painting,
seductive on a continuum
from bud to full petal bow,

akin to a woman who lives
in the city exposed.
She requires we wear gloves
because she wears thorns
and razor-edge leaves.
Lured by her fragrance,
if we pluck her, we pay.

No wax paper pressings here
into keepsake books.

But the wild rose deserves honor
as Lilith of her species, the original
whose vines climb
wherever they choose
and whose branches gather
into a hedge of untainted blooms

cherished by Van Gogh
her portrait hangs
on his museum wall.

Medusa

Her hair droops,
the strands
almost tangled
but not wild
as she waters mint
in the cool
morning.

Roots
in her rose garden
begin to wither
from underwatered soil.
Her husband
dismisses flowers
as hybrids of nature.
He insists on herbs,
medicinal, hardy,
worth the water.

Each curl extends,
writhes on her head
when she lifts
her face to him.
He catches his breath,
becomes the canyon wall
around her.

Creep

The weeds thrive again
lush with bright green leaves,
jagged and tough,
not as tasty as the new mint
or tender as berginia, both of which
feed an entire neighborhood
of voracious insects.
An army of lizards
will not be enough
to protect my garden.

Nothing eats the weeds.
Maybe some goats
or perhaps some rabbits,
but they will eat
everything else first.
With no other natural predators,
just humans with herbicides
against which the weeds
mutate resistance,
they flourish.

I read that cockroaches
will inherit the earth
after humans extinguish themselves.
I imagine they will scamper
over tattered pages of essays
on the merits of organic gardening.
Weeds will slither their roots hungrily
into our remains and sprout fields
of yellow dandelions
in memoriam.

Georgette Unis writes about the intricacies of relationships in families, friendships and the natural environment. Her poetry has been published in the *California Poetry Quarterly* and in *Poetry Quarterly*. She is a painter and ceramic sculptor with several solo and group exhibitions.