

## Silhouette

*After Robert Minervini's "Improvised Garden II (Water Street)"*

more and more of my friends  
are becoming parents or partners  
to plants

i have lived long and short enough  
to remember the homegirls who  
danced non-stop until three a.m.  
the moon a parabola to our party  
i've grown up enough  
to see them sing their favorite slow songs  
to herbs and succulents on their windowsills  
in homes they sowed from dreams

the same sister who once dug a heel into  
a man's oblique now steals thyme with me  
off of suburban bushes after brunch  
in my neighborhood

when a friend locked herself out—  
the same person who loses wallets &  
laptop chargers & saves my broken earrings  
with a hot-glue gun in her backpack—  
this pinay macguyver  
has me breaking into her house at night  
where we be tiptoeing over her  
forest of planted avocado jars  
into her dark room to find warmth

the one whose living room and bedroom  
once resembled a flea market  
or a super fly thrift store  
and sometimes ikea—  
the one who let me stay  
she pays full price for potters &  
vases—pronounced with the short  
& therefore expensive 'a' sound

one womxn named her garden  
“grown and sexy”  
bringing new meaning  
to the phrase garden hoe.

another who tops burritos with  
white sauce dots like queen anne's lace  
also commits the crime of eating  
one half at a time, you know, meal planning  
with a sweet tooth, she drinks all of her horchata  
& knows how  
my family loves orchids &

she brings me them for my birthday  
or any other tuesday  
just because.

my mentee once congratulated me with  
mint & basil & lavender & rosemary—  
sweet aromas gifted when i  
was leaving a job that left me to rot  
for another that was not an office  
with no windows, no green

the women in my life reroot  
over oceans & provinces & planes to cultivate  
a geography of trunks & limbs  
reminding me that to decompose  
is the chance to live again

my mother's rose bushes open wide this spring  
in her backyard without her  
my mother's body is buried in a plot  
of other bodies without mine  
isn't a cemetery a garden  
of all we've loved?

and isn't a garden full  
of already dead things?  
those who bury their beloved  
put the gentlest parts  
of themselves into soil  
my mother is a seed  
    the first woman i cannot unplant  
    cannot pull or twist back into my hands  
her orchids bloom reaching  
how delicately the petals hang off  
their stakes like gold, glass bangles on wrists  
against disco lights against the ambiance of a food truck menu  
like lip gloss how bougainvillea spill onto sidewalks  
like how the sun stays lit  
during an eclipse

the flowers in my garden grow lively  
& loving & hungry from pods & cinderblocks  
my friends are florists  
they water & cry & bloom & sleep  
from loss & clay & unfolded laundry  
sometimes we grow tired & tough  
sometimes you have to open a cactus to cut  
pieces off so we don't grow stuck

arranging the flowers  
in my garden  
is a lattice  
a life lesson  
on how  
to grow  
up.

## Credit

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