

Rosebushes

by Samantha Lê

Waiting for the rosebushes to die, I grow resentful. Why are they holding on? Plucked roses and I already went through a summer without water, passing each other like wind and dust. The time has come for goodbyes.

What do they want: to see another spring arrives with black bugs, like periods ending sentences on their petals; or drops of winter rain to trace their stems, like a lover drawing lifelines on perky leaves? All I have to give is another head clipping from my tired, rusty trimmer. I have become the weary caregiver of demanding rosebushes. Each snip and snap makes my temperature rise—fever, like a schoolboy's ardor at the sight of newly grown cleavage protruding from dresses on the first day of school, seizes me.

Blossoming into life, each bush sprouts leaves and buds of different colors, even in a dehydrated autumn. California autumns have grown mild; and I have grown mild with it, losing all that was wild inside of me. There's not enough bite left in the easiness of days passing days to make a statement for life, but dying here is not an easy task.

With a giant shovel, I dig massive graves beneath the twisted, rose roots; fill them with chemicals like toxic pride, and walk away, feeling the potency of my bitterness triumphing over beauty. Within days, red leaves push through the air to flourish again. Life, it is everywhere. Sweet fragrances linger in my hair; thorn punctures burn raw my flesh; brown sweat-marbles skid down my face; but I cannot bury the part of me that is missing your hands sweeping across my exposed petals.

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