

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/3

Alice Kliewer

What Lies Beneath the Garden Bed

What lies beneath the garden bed—
What lies beneath the flowers?
A root above the buried dead,
To bloom in heaven's showers.

What murmurs in the solemn night—
What murmurs through the flowers?
A wandering soul in search of light
Beyond the garden bowers.

What gentle wind may touch the leaves—
What gently holds the flowers?
A lonely woman still believes
It be unearthly powers.

Who kneels to grace a weary sky—
Who kneels to grace the flowers?
She says it be the spirits high,
Who light the starry towers.

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Two Maiden Lovers

The garden holds a hidden place
Where two young maids in eve,
Now fallen in a sweet embrace,
May find no will to leave.

Where laughing those two leapt and fell,
Now silent have they found
A nervousness has come to dwell
Upon this floral ground.

Their hands are still and intertwined,
Their eyes are open wide,
And both contain a racing mind
That neither may well hide.

Their lips in odd excitement part,
Two shoulders touch, and there,
One heart upon one beating heart
Desires—but will she dare?

Embraced in flowers, neither knows
What led their laughter here,
Yet when their lashes tightly close,
What follows seems so clear.

One holds the other. Leaning in,
She steals a gentle kiss,
And may not help herself but grin
From strangeness, shock, and bliss,

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Yet tilts her head and lingers on
Her blushing maid in peace.
She darts not back— their lips are drawn
To meet in love's release.

Through eve, all worry vanishes,
All thought to question why,
All save the need once more to kiss,
To touch, and O, to sigh.

The night may fall— what do they care?
The Ursas look upon
Our maiden lovers resting where
They'll wake in rosy dawn.

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Another Letter

Many a name is driven through
My mind when laid in bed:
The towns, the faces we once knew
Before I found you dead.

Your brother years ago moved west
To live out on his own—
My sister with you went to rest,
And now I am alone.

As time moves forward, so do friends,
Yet I am standing still,
Pretending nothing ever ends
And nothing ever will.

You knew in life my fantasies,
My lost and pathless mind,
That now, in fading memories,
The world has left behind.

These letters I still write because
I heard it's good for me
To speak to you on all that was,
And all that is to be.

Yet dwell I purely on the past,
As that is all I know:
The years I couldn't fix to last
So very long ago.

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I couldn't make your brother stay,
My sister, yes, she died,
And friends, they drifted far away,
And left you from my side.

Remaining are these empty halls
I am abandoned to,
Beyond where stand the earthy walls
That hold both she and you.

I wander here—through silence and
Through shadows I have crossed,
To find and take and kiss your hand,
Yet seems I still am lost.