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Lost Songs

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LOST SONGS

John Mahoney

before the wreckers come I will
go back to the doomed garden and find
your lost songs of tender boots and sad
surprises even if I have to brave the weft
the black and orange spider spread across
the deadly nightshade under which perhaps
you hid them
quickly I'll go back to the garden where
you sang songs of autumn in Ottumwa springtime
in Sprucemont and winter in Wimbledon
all the summer long in a voice as tiny
as tinkling of glass chimes in tea gardens
taking no time to put on gloves I will
poke among the spines of Painted Damask
for your songs and though I cannot
save the garden that belonged to us
that summer more than to its distant landlord
I will at least find the songs
you sang there and wrote down on bark
of birches before chain saws and
bulldozers have laid waste
that garden