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## Tomato Fields: Champ de tomates

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## Tomato Fields

My father pulled weeds  
around the field of Roma Tomatoes  
bathed in morning's spray  
while I tied branches to stakes  
with mother's old nylon leggings  
and felt dry from the silence between us.

In that fog we were distantly working,  
tending to the family garden  
that would bleed in autumn  
the "fruits of our labor". But that labor  
tasted bitter when we did not talk  
for hours. My father could never  
strike up a conversation. That day  
I dared not break the silence that kept

me and my father together  
in the Roma Tomato field.

*Mark Vanderlinde-Abernathy*

## Champ de tomates

Mon père arrachait les mauvaises herbes  
autour du champ de tomates romaines  
baigné sous le jet du matin  
alors que moi, je fixais les tiges aux piquets  
avec des bas en nylon rejetés de maman  
ressentant l'aridité du silence entre nous.

Au cœur du brouillard nous labourions à  
distance, cultivant le jardin familial  
qui en automne saignerait  
des « fruits de notre besogne ». Cependant  
ces fruits-là avait goût amer, mûris dans le silence  
des heures et des heures. Mon père n'ayant  
jamais su engager la conversation. Je n'ai osé  
rompre le silence qui nous liait ce jour-là

moi et mon père ensemble  
dans le champ de tomates romaines.

*Translated by Amy Norskog*