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Suzanne Gourley

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Wistful Garden

Suzanne Gourley

Prose

The garden sat facing the eastern sun, basking in its glory, stealing every glance from the lush green grass extending beyond its parameter. The north end of the garden is a mixture of green hues. Not a speck of discoloration to be seen, alluding to the firm and enduring roots holding on below. The vines grow vegetables of all shapes, sizes, and colors, ignorantly exposing their beauty and youthfulness. Little do they know that they will be picked and prodded, sliced and diced, burned by the unforgiving sun that gave them life, taken advantage of by bugs, flooded from the very rain they require for survival and shriveled by neglect. But they know none of this. They grow from the damp soil, sullied by the chalky dirt, yet pure from the menaces of the world. Again, they know none of this. The fate for what lies in this garden is unknown. The newness in the spring is the novelty after the harshness of winter. That, and what they provide. Sustenance, the end of a trivial season, and hunger, health, and offerings. Anymore, the simplicity of being alive is not beautiful, and being beautiful is not being alive.

The southern plot lays overrun with forget-me-nots. They stand taller than most vines snaking through the northern patch and at the same height as the premature stalks. Their colors are just as vibrant but in a more serene and seasoned way. Each year, the perennials grow back. Their consistency is revered but ignored. They are not marveled upon like the vegetables and fruits that sprout with flavor because their cultivation is much simpler and their existence more abundant. But in a world where abundance is sought after, they still remain unseen even in their delicate beauty. So, there they sit in the shadows of the illuminated garden. Leaning not towards the sun but towards the plot to their left.

The forget-me-nots look wistfully upon their neighbors who have purpose and juvenescence. They once were freshly planted seeds that enamored those who gazed upon them. They once were the same plant that was the center of attention, and the grass was overlooked and walked over to get to the forget-me-nots. Their beauty was wild and free, and now it is shadowed by the transactional lens of which everything is seen.

The forget-me-nots look so forgotten, but the grass even more so. It is the foundation of which the garden sits, therefore a part of it. And yet, no one pays it any mind and has not been for a long time. While the forget-me-nots reverence slowly decayed, the grass became a nuisance. It is there and not needed, except for the winter months when the grass browns and dies. Even with their decaying leaves from the frigid temperatures, their resilience is shown in the springtime when they come back in full bloom. As spring breaks through winter, the seeds for vegetables and fruits have to be replanted and catered for. Unfortunately, the forget-me-nots and the grass, which deserve more attention than they receive, require less effort. And the ugly truth, shown apparently in this garden, is that the less effort you require, the less effort you get.

Oh, to be young, and new, and ignorant.