

My Mother Tries to Teach Me How to Garden

On Saturdays we knelt, too—
I watched you make holes
in the unforgiving New England dirt,
then fill them with the seeds you carried
like Communion. I heard you pray
for cooperative weather, then confess
you were not a patient woman.

This must be why I first confused *impatiens*
with *hurrying*, with *impulsive*—though unsurprisingly,
the root of *impatiens* does not wait—
the seed pods burst open if touched. The root
of garden is *enclosure*, and in this way I became
like you, leaving home before the first
nodding buds of Spring. I never

busied my hands with beauty—
instead, I taught myself to see
the fastened slipstitch of a flower's
anther to filament, the ghost apple
suspended long after the ice storm

departs. Here, in this small
southern town, so far from anything
I call home, a whole grove flourishes
within an abandoned building, restless
like a greenhouse that has shaken off its glass.