

Flower Songs

Poetry Collection by Marianne Mersereau

A Bundle of Gladioli

“I must have flowers, always, and always.”

~Claude Monet

Standing on the platform by his seat
I rode with my dad on the red Ford tractor
down our gravel driveway onto the paved road
toward a farm by the river

where a widow grew acres of flowers
among vegetables, tall deep red, magenta,
orange, yellow, violet and purple gladioli.
She cut a large bundle and handed it to me

so thick I could hardly embrace it,
the stalks almost as tall as me
the colors painted on my memory making
that the moment I knew I could not live
without flowers. It was the moment
Monet's obsession became mine.

Day Flowers

I'm glad I asked your favorite
flower and song before
the day that you were gone. Your answers
were the simplest: Jesus Loves
Me and the morning glory – a wild
flower some call a weed.
Shades of blue violet magenta with
star shaped centers climbing the
fence row tangled in barbed
wire blooming and dying in a single
day. And you, like them, acquainted
with the night, rose each
day to embrace the light.

At Twilight

In summer,
he performs the evening ritual -
stops the tractor in the meadow
to pick a bouquet of wildflowers
purple Ironweed
black-eyed Susan and
field daisies.

Never mind the cows
waiting for their supper. He gathers
the blooms before pitching
the hay, holds them up in
fading light – flowers for my mother,
his Gracie.

He finds a mason jar, fills it with
water from the spigot and
carries it into the kitchen
where she stands
stirring soup beans on the stove.

He kisses her and sets the jar
on the table – a testimony at the
closing of the day.

Marianne Mersereau grew up in the Southern Highlands of Appalachia and currently resides in the Pacific Northwest. She is the author of a chapbook, "Timbre!" (Finishing Line Press, 2013). Her writing has appeared in The Hollins Critic, Bella Grace, Entropy, Still Point Arts Quarterly, The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature, Deep South Magazine and Seattle's Poetry on Buses; and is anthologized in Public Poetry Houston's Anthology, Enough. She was awarded a Second Place Prize in Artists Embassy International's Dancing Poetry Contest in 2018.

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