

Cornelia Veenendaal

## THE ROSE GARDEN

We had artichokes for lunch. Donald said,  
“I’ll tell my students I am late because  
my American cousin is visiting.” Then to his wife,  
“You should take Cornelia to Bagatelle.”

We took a bus, Odile, the two children, and I,  
to the rose garden, and the afternoon passed  
in geometric paths among so many rose bushes,  
reading the names of so many famous persons.

We returned on the bus and drank chocolate.  
It was June. It was an end and a beginning,  
and I did not think very much about it then.

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## THE RIDE

Hands on the wheel minutely correcting,  
have the woods ever been grayer, a shatter  
of fallen branches over old snow;  
now the road performs its downward trail,  
and down we go. On a smoother route,  
watch for a blue ribbon nailed to the tree  
where a girl left her disabled car one night  
and went into the woods.

We are heading for Woodsville,  
Ocean State Job Lots and the big Walmart;  
pass the one-alley bowling alley to a bridge  
spanning the narrow Connecticut,  
and we're in Vermont.  
It's good to step out into fresh air,  
gray as it is, but the next moment we are in  
Mustardseed, a white farmhouse.

The air is not fresh in here, and I don't need  
old winter jackets, pants, tops, children's clothes,  
worn toys, old kitchen utensils, stacks of crockery.  
My friends are experts in the thrift trade,  
but they, too, don't need these. They show their  
respect, however, sorting through roomfulls  
faithfully sown by parisioners of the white church  
across the green.

## MY TAKE

“Take it easy.”

“Take care.”

“a man lodges. . .

wheresoever the night taketh him.”

In the Shorter Oxford Dictionary,  
I count seven columns of fine print  
for *take*,

and take up Johnson's dictionary,

where 18<sup>th</sup> Century Scottish scribes  
recorded *tell*, and *temporize*, and *thole*,  
(from Anglo Saxon *tholian*;) )

no *take*.

In our time, Seamus Heaney

remembered *thole*

as his aunt's word for *suffer*,

brought to Ulster by colonists;

by colonists, carried to Appalachia,

where it stayed,

and must have been still there,

when John Crowe Ransome wrote,

“Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom,  
and toughly, I hope, ye may thole.” \*

\* from Seamus Heaney's introduction to his translation of Beowulf