

Poetry Corner

The Gardener

by Joan Peterson

You walk into a garden looking
for last year's imperfect beds of annuals
the ones you encircled with wood shavings
and leaves, bordered by sweet woodruff.

All you find is a sea of miner's lettuce
and rye grass. Everything overgrown is draped
in a blanket of green. No trails to follow
no sparkling blossoms reaching out to be plucked
into bouquets. You want to be a gardener
but you are a dreamer.

All winter you read books
on landscaping and cottage gardens.
You turn pages of perfect pathways
carefully constructed mounds of violets
and black-eyed Susans, beds of bright red tulips
and white narcissus. You picture your garden
as one of these pages: trapezoids
of natural grasses, a river bed of stones
and boulders; bird baths and gazebos
placed in perfect harmony.

Today you walk into the garden
where the dogs have dug up the lavender
and the rhododendron buds are burned
with frost. In a corner, a wheelbarrow
is posed with a few limp tulips peering over
the sides. Straggly grape vines sprawl along
the fence and the compost is the focal point
from every perspective. Time is running out.
You have a small window to work in, transform
this plot of tangled weeds into paradise. Listen.

You hear a peacock calling from the trees.
"Help," she screams, "help." It's already spring.