

A Gardener in February Thinks About June

by Gita M. Smith

I want to be that daring gardener who ploughs up her front yard --
to the horror of the Neighborhood Association -- and plants Birds of
Paradise, waist high.

I want the confusion of their orange and purple plumage to lure the
staid widow woman across the street from her manicured veranda.
She will enter my jungle yard, throw up her skirt and dance like a
cossack's bride.

I want musicians to gather on my porch in late afternoon, get
drunk on the perfume of four o'clocks, and play their revolutionary
love songs into the night.

I want my neighbors to abandon their mowers
and bland green lawns
and plant old strains of corn and persimmon trees
and share their harvests as freely as they now share scowls and
prohibitions.

When autumn comes, I want to walk among my Birds of Paradise,
push their firm stalks aside,
and find the widow lying with the banjo player,
their bodies tightly curled like roots of passion flowers.

