Cutting Rhubarb in the Rain

by Linda Simoni-Wastila

Cutting rhubarb in the rain,
the mottled leaves thick with mud
and slugs, I wonder if these plants,
robust now, will stand another
season in this shaded corner.

If not, next spring my husband
will surprise me bearing rhizomes,
and plant them so my garden
will be as my mother's, and
her mother's and, perhaps, all
our mothers' before.

I'll slice the stalks into chunks
for pie, mine has strawberries,
though she says berries ruin
the rhubarb; she makes sauce
and eats from the pot, still warm,
spoon clanking against the sides,
a smile trespassing her face.

Tendering these stalks, making the pie,
heralds me a holder of apron
strings, honoring our history
unmarked with words or trophies,
thus all the more important.

I wonder how my daughter
will grow her rhubarb.

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