

Canning Memories

Indian summer Saturday mornings
meant project door screens sat open
waiting for the vegetable truck

No new moons or first frosts
just the horn on an old flatbed
trumpeting the harvest

No almanac announcement, no ads
just a short black farmer in overalls
and mud-caked boots

Grandmothers who still clicked
their tongues, who called up the sound
of a tractor at daybreak
the perfume of fresh turned earth
and the secret location of the best
blackberry patch
like they were remembering
old lovers, planted themselves
a squint away from palming
and weighing potatoes
string beans, kale, turnips, sweet corn
onions and cabbage

They seeded themselves
close enough to see each other
bent low in the fields, pulling weeds

dispensing verbal insecticide
gingham dresses gathered in front
cradling cucumbers and Big Boy tomatoes
destined for kitchen windowsills
and mason jars

They break sacred ground far away
from these acres of red brick
and concrete neighbors
close enough to the earth
to know

*if all city folk plant iz family 'n friends
alls dey gonna gets iz funerals*