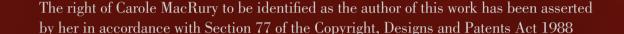


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## The Tang of Nasturtiums



on my tongue
the tang of nasturtiums—
the memory
of a brief affair
surfaces in my salad

in my closet clothes for all occasions yet the years it took to be comfortable in my own skin spring fever—
the sap in the maple
is ready to tap
and you, love
are looking younger

in the soft tones of his voice fighting a fish the familiar sounds of a seduction this moment
between heaven and earth
in full bloom
our red camellia bush
and the white wolf moon

this beach glass scoured a cloudy blue so like your eyes fading and emptying to a relentless tide morning sun dances over your gift of greengage plums even at times of grieving little flickers of joy in this tin box
of unmatched buttons
one baby tooth—
her lifelong attachment
for things detached

even the dog
has developed a limp . . .
together, we walk
the cracked pavement
of October dusk

deadheading
the herb garden . . .
our anniversary
scented with basil and
lemon-thyme kisses

a light rain
upon leaf mulch—
an old grief
mingles with the scent
of late autumn

a bitter winter . . . what would I do without your pinch of salt and my pinch of sugar over morning porridge

a glass vase filled with out-of-season tulips oh, how we tried to force-feed spring into her winter decline at life's end you left us spare keys with nothing to open unmatched buttons with nothing to close a requiem
for she who loved apricot—
the color, the bloom
and the way the fruit
clung lightly to the stone

all that's left of the old homestead . . . a foundation filled with flax, larkspur and prairie grasses

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"a requiem" won Second Prize in The Saigyo Awards for Tanka 2010

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