

## PUTTING THE GARDEN TO BED

See, it's not dark yet, there's a rim of light  
behind the mountain and to the east  
a flush of pink beneath clouds. I'm going

to trim your stems, pull out dead vines and roots,  
hack down the heavy shocks and sunflower trunks.  
You were protected by spread burlap,

plastic sheets. It's true some of you were softened  
in early frost. others pocked by birds. After I rake  
you'll feel better. And there'll be some upheaval

in turning of turf, picking out stones, forking  
in manure. I'll bring a last drink of water.  
Try to think of the coming white blanket

as protection, the whine and shriek of wind  
creak and crash of branches as lullabies,  
songs for a new morning, a stronger dawn.

It will be a softer light, the summons  
of bells to a different life you won't recall  
to repeat what happened before.

*by* Dona Luongo Stein