



Clearing the Garden

Now the end is near, I heave a sigh,
drag the barrel around the house,
pull scraggly lettuce, going to seed,
sprouting against the sinking sun.

Beans, once glorious, have dried,
dangle below yellow leaves,
hiding a green-spotted toad,
who leaps startled into light.

Small fruits on the pepper plant
wobble in the wind, still young,
but the plant slips from the soil,
as if relieved its time has come.

Hardest to pull are tomatoes,
tightly tangled around supports.
They break their limbs in protest,
make me yank to pull the roots.

Above me a crow screams.
I scrape up blighted leaves,
satisfied to see clean ground,
already planning for the spring.

— Susan Coultrap-McQuin

[image info](#)