



Two Bedroom One Bath For Sale

The tenant is gone, weeds in full bloom.
The cedar I planted needs trimming.
Ivy and quack grass have spread with neglect
but deer ate all the tulips and bedded down, I'm told,
in the absence of dogs.

Home, a shallow depression in tall grass.

In corners of the yard black plastic pots
spread shadows, spent artifacts of attention, of tending.
Spearmint and blackberry embrace the buckling fence,
further evidence of a widening gulf
that kept me away.

Yet sturdy as a true friend, the star jasmine's trellis
still stands, and the kitchen remodeled by a sometime lover
gleams as yellow

as if I never left. Home
as first love. First home as girl
on fire.

With my mother's early gift of Felco shears
I prune the rose bent double with honeysuckle,
snip the iris stalks aging on the ground.
I patch the walls, scrub the deck clean
of others' lives, itinerants who passed through

like borrowed knives. Beneath the volunteer cherry
my dog reclaims her nest, three turns
and she's home.

Inside, cobwebs. Lone note
the tenant left on her way out. I dust them,
dust them gone.

Home is patched yellow paint in the kitchen,
is the tub with its new necklace of caulk.
Is cedar boughs shrouding my first dogs' ashes,
is the weed where I thrive in the moss.

The unburdened rose.

—Jenny Root