



ALWAYS PLOTTING SOMETHING

Sunflowers in Daddy's Garden

On the corner of Irving and Humbolt,
I grew in a vegetable patch
where you planted sunflower seeds
because they were, and still are, my favorite.

I collected tiny, silky inchworms
shaded by tall, green stalks
supporting slender, yellow petals
surrounding fuzzy, brown pupils,
my sunny, florid friends.

I helped you plant tomato seeds,
dirtying a smaller, smoother version of your callused hand.
I found my place there.
There—in your organic canvas,
a portrait tinged by your green thumb,
a photosynthetic masterpiece of
lettuces, radishes, rosemary, Italian parsley, basil,
onions, carrots, cucumbers, chives,
and sweet pea pods—
cultivated in botanic symphony.

A medley of peppers,
like Chinese Tai Dragons of red and green,
which you made my boyfriends eat raw
as a sort of hot but sweet initiation,
perhaps for your own amusement—
perhaps for ours.
(Little did they know

the green ones are the hottest.)

When I go home
to the corner of Irving and Humbolt,
I will still find you
swaddled in tangling tomato vines
where we scattered seeds so many years ago.
I'll crawl back
into our jungle of coiling, climbing tendrils
to meet you under our six-foot sunflowers,
the ones you grow
for me
every summer.

~ MMB, 1999