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Category: Poetry

Another Eden

ANOTHER EDEN

I met my grandmother's God in her garden. He was plucking cherry tomatoes from the bush, mangling them with His teeth. I said, *God, those are not your tomatoes.* And God nodded, tomato seeds caught in His beard. I said, *God, what are you doing in my grandmother's garden anyway?* He crushed the tomatoes over the mouth of a chalice, communion wine dripping where the juice should be, and I said, *God, I am not getting drunk with you at 10:45am in my grandmother's garden.*

I met my grandmother's God in her garden and He offered me wine and looked puzzled when I wouldn't drink it. I wonder what would happen if I encountered God in a back alley on a dark night instead of here in the sun, if I offered Him a joint. My grandmother got high, sucking on the morphine my mother administered to her through a plastic syringe. That was her first substance since my brother saw the smoke while she pushed him in his stroller. My grandmother had not had a drink in thirty years. And here was God in her garden, holding out a glass of consecrated grape juice. I wanted to say, *God, this garden is not yours!* I wanted to remind Him what happened the last time He messed around with gardens.

When my grandmother stopped breathing at 10:45am on a Tuesday I wanted to say, *God, my grandmother is not yours!* I wanted to remind Him that *He* belonged to *her*. Looming over my grandmother's garden, God asked me how it was so wild, yet somehow tamer than His own. I replied, *God, aren't you supposed to know everything?* And God shrugged. I showed God how we pull out the weeds. How to lift the frail new tomato branches onto the metal trellis. To use the mist setting when watering the young plants, and how much to drench the earth. I will not let God flood my grandmother's garden. I will not let someone else's God wash away my only keepsake. I showed God how we make life come up from the soil. When God set down His trowel, the tomatoes went limp, rotten. The ground beneath my feet turned to shapeless mud. I asked Him, *God, what are you transforming her into?* I asked, *God, are you transforming everything?* And God then

was gone, a trick of the light, not a trace of holiness,
not one broken stem where He had stood.