

My Garden

by Aron Ryan

Raised a perfect daughter, mother bound me
in a bouquet – no petal out of place –
caged in cold colorless vase. Trapped in glass
smothered by another's fingerprints.

Raised a rose, mother clipped my thorns, carving
scab after scab. Picked my withered petals.
Snipped my wilted stem, leaving less and less
of me. I sheared my hair. Bound my chest.

Raised your little girl, I whittled a man,
paring my own shape. Smaller and smaller,
I couldn't create your perfect sculpture,
bound to one gender like flower to vase.

Raised to be anyone but me, I'm no rose;
I am a garden. I am the earth cradling
broken seeds. I am roses and dandelions,
flowers and weeds. I am boy and girl

and every hue in between. Buried deep,
I never know who I am becoming.