

Water for Flowers

Grant McMillan

Grant McMillan is a first year PhD student in UND's English Department. Grant moved to Grand Forks from the Appalachian region of North Carolina and spent his first North Dakota winter growing herbs and tending to his house plants. As the weather has gotten warmer, he has been reviving the old garden bed next to where he lives and is looking forward to growing summer veggies.

In 2nd grade,
it was your turn to recite the Act of Contrition
in front of the class:

*My God, my God,
I am heartily sorry for having offended thee.
I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of Hell...
I firmly resolve to confess my sins, to do the punishment—*

—Sister May admonishes you, in 2nd grade,

Penance, not punishment! Don't you understand the difference?

....

Your partner's hand reaches to turn the doorknob,
as their other hand presses a giftbag to your palm.
Their voice states simply, without flourish and as fact:

You deserve to wear flowers on your feet too.

Five rolled-up pairs of pattern socks,
bursting colors, unfurling vines, sunshine sewn in.
Petals dance up and down

as you sit to pull on a mismatched pair.

A soft smile as you shut the door behind them.

You stand alone in your apartment.
Tears water the flowers on your feet.

