

Brenda

Johannah Rodgers

She was in the garden planting. The daffodils over for the year. Ground cover. On her knees. Roses in June, her grandmother's favorite. Not detached, exactly, impotent. Soldiers in Iraq, in Afghanistan. The U.S. Army behind in its recruiting targets. Why shouldn't she be angry? Something else? Embarrassed, ashamed. Variation of color and texture. And if this goes here, then this. Baghdad, the Tigris, middle school social studies. She doesn't like the tenor of her thoughts at the moment. Anyone out there? The neighbors. The lady reading the gas meters. But whom can she tell? There must be someone. She's started changing her message, how her sentences are shaped. Now they're more forceful, fewer question marks, less accommodating. War here? No, just on television. Never start with and or so, just state the facts: June 9th, 87 degrees, slightly hazy. Calendula, pansies, sweet peas. Fox gloves just ending. You can't eat flowers she'll say to the troops, when they're stationed in her house, on all three floors.

She's flipping through words: A B C D. Death has the same problem, as a word. Did you ever admire Napoleon? Nor I. Hot tempered, among other things. Plus, I don't like kings. What happened to the idea of sharing wealth? Bills. Bees. Insects. Antennae. She stops to consider herself. Not as a dreamy heroine or as an angry one. No revelation per se. No, just something amiss. Disconnected. Loss of correlation between cause and effect. Curtains. Desert. War has not changed. Just called something else now, more temporary, she supposes. Could she just pretend it wasn't happening? She's looking for another word to make her point since "war," she has been told, is too melodramatic. Back to specifics: the garden hose, the de-humidifier. Multiplication tables. Long division. That sinking feeling. But taken to its logical conclusion? Digging for China. Impatiens. She won't find the right word.

On her knees. Not as a dreamy heroine or as an angry one. No revelation per se. No, just something amiss. Disconnected. Loss of correlation between cause and effect. Curtains. Desert. War has not changed. Just called something else now, more temporary, she supposes. Could she just pretend it wasn't happening? She reached a hard place inside her. Lunch? She's looking for another word to make her point. Death has the same problem, as a word. Murder. Inequity. Back to specifics: the garden hose, the de-humidifier. She won't find the right word. Multiplication tables. Long division. That sinking feeling. It doesn't apply to the body as a whole, just the stomach. Leaden.

She stops to consider herself. Nor I. Could she just pretend it wasn't happening? In Prospect Heights. Troops fighting for their own land. The neighbors. She won't find the right word. No revelation per se. You can't eat flowers she'll say to the troops, when they're stationed in her house, on all three floors. I don't like kings. Desert. What happened to the idea of sharing wealth? She's flipping through words: A B C D. No, just something amiss. That sinking feeling. She's started changing her message, how her sentences are shaped. Death has the same problem, as a word.

It doesn't apply to the body as a whole, just the stomach. Lunch? Now they're more forceful, fewer question marks, less accommodating. Roof gardens? I don't like kings. Not as a dreamy heroine or as an angry one. If I move this here then Baghdad, the Tigris, middle school social studies. Just called something else now, more temporary, she supposes. How many trees? On her knees. Fox gloves just ending. Did you ever admire Napoleon? Loss

of correlation between cause and effect. Curtains. Antennae. Anyone out there? Murder. Flowers arranged and delivered.

That sinking feeling. Variation of color and texture. She was in the garden planting. Long division. Desert. The daffodils over for the year. She wasn't tired and she wasn't hungry and her mind was not at rest. Why shouldn't she be angry? Digging for China, she uncovers a tin can. She stops to consider herself. But whom can she tell? Insects. Multiplication tables. She's looking for another word to make her point since the word "war" is too dramatic.

Nor I. She's started changing her message, how her sentences are shaped. Calendula, pansies, sweet peas. She reached a hard place inside her. Nature is also a commodity in the city. Disconnected. No desert here. War has not changed. The lady reading the gas meters. The U.S. Army behind in its recruiting targets. There must be someone. Impatiens. No, just something amiss. The neighbors. Soldiers in Iraq, in Afghanistan. Bees. Not detached, exactly, just impotent. War here? In Prospect Heights.

She doesn't like the tenor of her thoughts at the moment. Hot tempered, among other things. She wasn't tired and she wasn't hungry and her mind was not at rest. Not detached, exactly, just impotent. She won't find the right word. Loss of correlation between cause and effect. Just called something else now, more temporary, she supposes. She's started changing her message, how her sentences are shaped. Murder. She's flipping through words: A B C D. Could she just pretend it wasn't happening? Not as a dreamy heroine or as an angry one.

Fox gloves just ending. What happened to the idea of sharing wealth? Variation of color and texture. Digging for China, she uncovers a tin can. I don't like kings. Curtains. But whom can she tell? No revelation per se. How many trees? Bills. Long division. There must be someone. Leaden. Roof gardens? Desert. No desert here. Should she be running down the street screaming? It doesn't apply to the body as a whole, just the stomach. From her rooftop one hundred and twelve penthouses she can see. Nothing ever happens in graspable pieces; everything's either too small or too large to notice. Ground cover. Inequity. War here? She reached a hard place inside her, a sinking feeling. Back to specifics: the garden hose, the de-humidifier. Soldiers in Iraq, in Afghanistan. She stops to consider herself. Roses in June, her grandmother's favorite. Lunch? No, not just on television. It's all mine they say walking in after the nanny has left splitting the day alone and the children with her. The U.S. Army behind in its recruiting targets. Why shouldn't she be angry?

She's looking for another word to make her point. Bills. Death has the same problem, as a word. Long division. Nothing ever happens in graspable pieces; everything's either too small or too large to notice. Nature is also a commodity in the city. Something else embarrassed or ashamed? Multiplication tables. It doesn't apply to the body as a whole, just the stomach. She won't find the right word. And if this goes here, then this. Never start with and or so, just state the facts: June 9th, 87 degrees, slightly hazy, x number dead. Could she just pretend it wasn't happening?

