

things she won't remember missing

'did you know that i've had these flowers since 1986?'
my grandmother asks
as she waters the plants
hidden inside her maze of a garden
beneath a warm, brewing sky
and a hat to hide her age from the sun
a semisweet tang in the air
as she shuffles through the overgrown

'no, i didn't.'
i say as

she tugs and tugs and tugs on the green garden hose
as it grows taut, curling around the bend
like the serpent in Eden she used to know,
wrapped around the tree she can't remember circling
over and over and over again
she smiles at me across the brush
as if we share a secret
but we can't share secrets if she keeps forgetting them

'you okay, grandma?'
i ask as

she turns
and she looks at me, her smile growing wider and wider
the water pooling around her socks
and the browning, neglected garden of her mind
screaming through the silence of her smile
for just a taste of the water she forgot was there

'how long have you been here?

come help me water the garden.'