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### Gardening the Desert

In this time of pain,  
the ground is so barren,  
dust sticks in my throat.  
I labor to breathe,  
But I planted the seeds.  
I watered my garden  
all this windy spring.

Oh yes, pain still knocks me down.  
The blind executioner  
slashes about  
with his God-damned sword.  
Doubts and changing times,  
friends long gone away,  
and restless nights alone.  
But look,  
the garden is up and growing,  
already bearing hot radishes, lettuce,  
crisp kohlrabi, summer squash.

Five rows of corn stood the high wind.  
Tomatoes begin to set on  
and melons,  
they will be so sweet in this desert sun.

Pain persists.  
Dust blows down the desert.

With everything changing so fast everywhere  
I may not be here  
to harvest these sweet melons  
so long growing,  
watchfully tended.

Still, I dug the long ditch  
and brought the water down.  
I sculpt the topsoil  
with shovel and hoe and hands.  
I sing to the growing plants.

The mother of us all serenades me  
dresses my basic art with a hundred colors,  
a thousand insects.  
Quail hide behind the cabbages

and pipers in the carrots.

I may not be here for each harvest  
of each plant,  
but still,  
I dug the ditch  
that brought the water down.  
I eat of the garden each day  
and tend the autumn-bearing plants  
with faith,  
still new to me  
that says I needn't eat of the fruit  
to put down the seed,  
to bring down the water,  
to love the growing plants.