

Francis Farley, Middleburg

Valerie's Gardens

Valerie raised her children in other people's houses.
She put them to bed under borrowed roofs.
In every landlord's yard Valerie planted a Garden.
She was forced to move on before roots and blossoms
Could flourish under her tender care.

Roses and Lilacs and Lily of the Valley,
Flowers her Mother had taught her to grow,
Peony, Iris, Lavender and Larkspur,
From her heart's Garden
Valerie planted sweet memories
Of her lost home.

Her children grew and bloomed like flowers.
From place to place they transplanted well.
Valerie tended children and flowers in sun and rain,
In each rented house, in each Garden yard.
Valerie grew older, wilted and withered.
No showers of love washed her petals and leaves.

Patiently Valerie packed their belongings,
Moving from one house on to another,
She planted Gardens for those who came next.
She who placed tender roots in deep places
Carefully blending earth and loam
Was ever uprooted and torn from her bed.

Valerie prayed for a home for her children.
For a home and a Garden that would be their own.
No more cardboard cartons, no more hateful landlords,
No more scattered like petals blown on strange winds.
On her knees planting roses Valerie wondered
If God had a Garden of Unanswered Prayers.