

Sweet Hatred

Out of spilled coffee grounds
And banana slime
Beside the compost bin
A gangly vine grew
Twisting
Out of shadow
Into slats of light
Between the boards
Of the deck above

I hated the way tough thorns
Of Rubus drew blood
Whenever I passed
The way a suckering root
Held clay and stone
In a thousand fingers
Never letting go / choking the softer roots
Of elderberry and cherry
Stealing water from roses and sweet shrub
And milkweed that fed the monarch

This bramble this briar patch
Of demon weed was killing my garden
So I investigated
Poisons / *triclopyr* kills
Dicots / leaving grasses alone
But would kill the roses
And azaleas and maybe
Me / but still I was crazed
With hatred for this weed

I scythed mowed axed
Hoed trimmed yanked
And eyed with vicious intent
This intruder eating my garden
But the satanic bramble would not die

Then in the spring of the fourth year of my war
The arching canes ventured small white blossoms
Whose yellow stamens attracted bees

And in midsummer green berries
Turned red then black
And a tanager perched on the compost bin
Feasted on the dark
Drupes / the berries tasted sweet
the hard seeds insistent on my tongue
I resisted pleasure / then succumbed