

It Used to Be My Lavender

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Once she was finally here, I knew no better way to care
For her exhausted parents on Sunday afternoon than my lavender
Bread rising in the oven, defrosted lasagna on fresh dishes
Cleaned with my distant childbirth memories, the pain that trampled my own body
Five times, but once I saw their faces all suffering was forgotten.
As soon as this new sweet face grew older

We too would scrounge the blistering hillside, looking for older
Bushes that crawled and trellised, too enchanted by their beauty to care
About the peacock that ate our sandwich, the dead flowers we forgot
To water. I would tell her to *clip the stem here*, bags of lavender
Taller than my granddaughter's own tip-toed body.
From the house, we smelled panettone, whiffs of yesterday's dishes

Because I couldn't remember the little things, like the dishes,
Or why the children lost interest in the ladybug puzzle as they grew older
And the hillside grew colder. The harvest became too hard on my body,
It wilted, maybe instead I could ask someone if they cared
Enough to trim back my canyon of rambunctious lavender,
While I went to the store instead, we had no bread, I must have forgotten.

Next week they said *you need to move mom, you are starting to forget*
They took me to a new place, where some people barely moved and others did the
dishes.

Those ones who told me *this is your room, we know you like lavender.*
The sheets smelled good, a little bit of home, and next to my old
Bed I saw my boogie board, for writing in the redwoods, but I didn't care
For the topiary garden outside my window or all the unfamiliar bodies.

One by one, I learned each of their stories, some of these bodies
Spoke of lives of birdwatching and beach cabins, some had already forgotten
But they all treated my rock collection with care.
One of them worked at the library each Wednesday, the rest of us never did the
dishes
Because compared to the people that did, we were much older.
They would never tell me where they put my lavender.

I soon asked *what's that smell?* To a room full of faces. *It's lavender,*
They said, and we looked down at the sheets, but I only saw my body,
A total stranger. I wasn't sure if I knew these people, I knew they were older
This time, kind, I'm sure, although they had clearly forgotten
Basic manners, since they kept trying to feed me from these dishes
Like I was a baby, grabbing my hand as if they didn't even care.

The family that bought the house didn't grow lavender, but the stories were never
forgotten
She sank into the sheets, out of her body, losing sight of the plastic dishes.
I'm so happy it's time for me to be older, she thought, and she knew they cared.