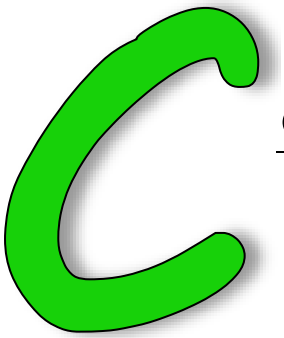
The Garden

Perennial Reflections on Beginnings and Ends



ontents

"Garden as though you will live forever."
Thomas Moore

Preface xi
Chapter 1: Seasons.....14
Chapter 2: Ground 16
Chapter 3: Watering.....17
Chapter 4: Beautiful Flowers.....19
Chapter 5: Weeds.....20
Chapter 6: Mumbo Jumbo 21
Chapter 7: Perennials and Annuals.....22
Chapter 8: Choosing Plants 23
Chapter 9: Vegetables.....24
Chapter 10: Herbs 28
Chapter 11: Roots, Stems, Branches, Buds, Leaves.31
Chapter 12: Species Response.....40
Chapter 13: Stages of Growth 46
Chapter 14: Spirituality and Aesthetics.....49
Chapter 15: Beginnings and Ends 54
Chapter 16: Vigils.....56
Chapter 17: Deep Roots.....58
Chapter 18: Memory.....59
Chapter 19: Hands 61
Chapter 20: Mumbo Jumbo: A Slight Return.....65
Chapter 21: Anyway 68

Chapter 22: Every Flower.....69
Chapter 23: Palimpsest 72
Chapter 24: Moon 75
Chapter 25: Wonder.....72
Chapter 26: Longing, Love, and Loss 77
Chapter 27: *Sat-Chit-Ananda* 86
Chapter 28: Thank You 89
Chapter 29: Smiles.....92
Chapter 30: Gifts.....94
Chapter 31: Trees.....97
Chapter 32: Garden Poems 101
Chapter 33: What's Left?.....112
Chapter 34: Tips.....114
Chapter 35: Gardening As Metaphor.....116
Chapter 36: The Garden Basket.....121
Chapter 37: Letting Go 126
Chapter 38: How to Grow a Garden.....127
Chapter 35: Prayer and Practice 132
Chapter 36: Security and Change 135
Chapter 33: Dignity, Humility, Work.....136
Chapter 34: Healing.....138
Chapter 35: Accumulations 140
Chapter 36: Tears.....142
Chapter 36: Security and Change 135
Chapter 33: Dignity, Humility, Work.....136
Chapter 34: Healing.....138
Chapter 35: Accumulations 140
Chapter 36: Tears.....142
Chapter 37: Time-Keeping 144
Chapter 38: For Sale 147
Chapter 35: Silence.....148
Chapter 36: Look for the Positive.....149
Chapter 37: Demonic Mind 151
Chapter 38: Thoreau's "The Bean Field".....153
Chapter 35: Look at Your Garden 155
Chapter 36: Listen to Your Garden 156
Chapter 36: Touch Your Garden 157
Chapter 33: Humility Again 136
Chapter 34: Does it Matter 138
Chapter 35: The End.....140

Preface

"Traveling through the world
To and fro, to and fro,
Harrowing the small field"
Basho

Gardens and gardening are analogues and metaphors for life and death, beginnings and ends. There is a ground in which our seeds are sown. There is the daily nurturing of water, food, care, and love. There are the chronic dangers of disease, insects, disaster, disregard, and drought. There is a harvest of food and beauty. And ultimately there is the season's change, a withering and passing of all that is beautiful and good. And then, a return back to the ground from which it all arose in its time. From which we all arose in our time. What better teacher than the garden? Its seasons, its demands, its lessons, its rewards.

I had been ready and eager to start serious work on my 5th collection of short writings, a collection of vignettes, entitled, *Quirks: Petite Vignettes of Sadness, Longing, and Bliss*. The concept of quirks and the connotation and sound of the word had intrigued me, and I had already created several vignettes and fiddled with them in varying arrangements as I usually do to get started on a book. But the years of gardening that my dear wife and I had shared (most recently to enliven a barren yard around our new downsized house) germinated in me such a strong and unexpected emotional and cognitive attraction to our shared gardening, that I realized quickly that *Quirks* would have to wait while I followed gardening to where it was already sprouting up and blossoming in its own way and time. It was exciting to outline all the points of thought, growth, and vigor around gardening, and once a table of contents appeared on my screen, I knew I had committed to *The Garden*.





Our hands and arms and poor backs have suffered through all the latest episodes of gardening. Digging holes in clayey soil full of million-year old river rock; lugging black plastic pots of day lilies, hostas, butterfly bushes, tomatoes, forsythias, lilac, pines and other evergreens, dogwood, roses, numerous lacy perennials flowers, and bamboos; loading grey and brown pavers, landscaping block, and bags of sand from The Home Depot into our obliging long-suffering Expedition, then unloading into my creaking contractor's wheel barrow, and finally stacking that load piece-by-piece close to the scene of the action; and finally cutting open countless bags of soil and dumping that warm humus into hole after hole.



It's no coincidence that my interest and passion for gardening has increased and matured along with my 31 years of marriage with my wife, Elvira. Each of the 5 houses we have owned over the past 30 years has motivated us to find a space we could turn into a garden. Remove grass and put in roses, a Meyer lemon, a nopal cactus, a jasmine arbor, bamboo, a small water feature with horsetail. Plant tulips along a barren backyard fence line. Plant a trio of shade-giving flowering pear trees. Learn the hard way the difference between perennials and annuals; agree that the beauty of perennials and their cost effectiveness is too compelling to ignore. Create garden boxes, bring in soil, plant tomatoes, chiles, a variety of basils, thyme, marjoram, and oregano, then watch what survives and what doesn't. Let the beauty of flowering crabapple blossoms convince us to plant two dozen of them, then watch borers and fire blight slowly destroy our little grove of trees. Watch the marvel of oriental poppies unfolding, lupines spreading, and cut so many clusters of red grapes that we run out of counter space to warehouse basketfuls of sweet fruit picked each week.



My wife and I now locate in our shared memory the houses we have lived in by reminiscing about specific garden areas, the flowers, mini-gardens, trees, vegetables, herbs and fruit we grew there. What a wonderful focal point of discussion between two loving garden mates? Every year the garden is renewed, and in those renewals, our relationship grows deeper,