

A Gifting Economy

If I were a farmer
barefoot in the soil

I would wonder whether a bag of lettuce
be enough for this poem.

Or I would understand
that some exchanges
do not reduce themselves to trade.

A trade I would make quite happily.

Not because I am a farmer.

Rather a gardener, you see.

A small patch of earth
given over to milkweed,
bergamot,
goldenrod,
asters
and all the quiet names
that belong here.

I plant so bees can linger.

So butterflies have somewhere to begin
and somewhere to return.

So birds arrive without invitation.

So the unseen work
of the living world

can continue
without asking permission of me.

Perhaps that is my own small participation
in a gifting economy.

The flowers offer nectar.

The insects carry futures.

The birds scatter songs.

The soil keeps its ancient bargains.

I do little more
than make room
and witness.

Your poem reminded me
that resistance does not always raise its voice.

Sometimes it kneels in the dirt.

Sometimes it trusts a seed
to remember what to become.

Sometimes it believes
that making space
is its own kind of courage.

So yes.

A bag of lettuce
would be a fair exchange.

Though I suspect

you would also leave
with a handful of native seeds.

Not as payment.

As an invitation.

Because poems and gardens
seem to practice the same faith.

That if we care for one small corner
of this world,

something beautiful,
unexpected,
and entirely beyond us

will find its way home.

Thank you for trusting me
with your words.

I read them slowly.

The way one walks through a meadow
that is alive.

~ Tim Hogue