

Shoshanna Rockman

I found my friend in a flowerbed —

of an elevated balcony garden. I had no notion
it was her. Saw some stockinged shins dangling —
and the hinged right-angles of navy knees

attached to thighs. A torso supine amongst petals.
(And dirt.) I was careering wet pathways to school.
For assembly. And I knew my daughter was waiting,

snapping her gaze between tall gates and wristwatch,
measuring my punctuality (— and my commitment)
to her grade-five cause. But I stopped. Enquired.

My friend sat up. Moaned. Regarded me. Demanded
Nurofen and water, said it was a hamstring. Asked
me to wait with her, for her husband already en route.

When he showed, I witnessed a stretch of their co-
joined shuffle toward his c(h)ar(iot). She wincing —
leaning hard on his shoulder. Secure in constancy,

in his forbearance. His frame — hers to muscle in on,
mobilize, manoeuvre. Standing alone before flowers,
I admitted to long green blades of envy prickling

the soles of my feet, as though I'd been picking
my way through scrubby summer grass — untamed
and full of wicked burrs. Still, I felt glad (for her

and) for myself that such partnerships exist, that some
connections extend beyond bedrooms, spill out onto
streets at peak hour, are insoluble under rainfall,

in fresh mud and amongst the fragrant crush of multi-
colours. Ironic. Following my errant entrance (to assembly),
and just days after my friend bedded down in flowers,

my grounding densified. Shortly, I met someone who
talked longevity, someone tall who could easily lift me from
a garden — should I require (or allow) such indignity.