

Irises

A Poem By Carole Poustie

I passed the house today.
The irises were blooming –
pushed their way through
the long grass of 'I don't care',
through weeds of 'you don't exist'.
Nodded their heads
when a whiff of wind
whispered my secret.
We were in cahoots —
the wind and I.
'You can't ignore the irises',
we said.

I walked up Byron Street,
past that block of flats
with the jacaranda.
I hoped she'd be there —
the old Chinese lady
with the poodle. Always
weeding her garden.
Except today.
I wanted to tell
someone about the irises.

On Hemp Avenue
the house with the magnolia
that reminds me of holidays in Eden
has high fence posts along the front
and palings piled in the drive.
Tomorrow it will be
a private magnolia.

I was crossing Henry Street
to walk through the park
to sit on the seat near the duck pond.
I wanted to feel the morning sun
soak into my dark places.
Wanted to upend my urn of grief,
watch the wind scatter the ashes –
flotsam and jetsam of
another life, another time.

A stranger's arm tugged at my own;
The ute was on my blind side.
I was still thinking
about the irises.
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