Gilfeather Turnips

[For Carl, who shared his Gilfeather turnip seeds from Vermont with his neighbors.]

Elaine Reardon

They bought the old homestead
on Flower Hill Road,
cleared and planted the back meadow.
Now he could see north to green Vermont hills.

On Flower Hill Road
he saved seeds,
where he could see north to green Vermont hills.
Gilfeather turnips his favorite,

He shared Gilfeather seeds with neighbors,
said they were earthy and sweet.
Gilfeather turnips his favorite,
pulled after frost, saved in the root cellar,

buttery and fragrant right from the garden.
He planted in the cleared back meadow
to bring sweetness to winter.
They bought the old homestead.

Last Harvest

This hushed morning
no crows or jays,
no silent-winged owls
snows are coming.

We harvest the last leeks,
dig turnips, carrots and potatoes,
find three ripe apples, purple grapes,
and chestnuts to roast for supper.

I fill water jugs, bring in firewood,
gather dry kindling for the stove.
We watch at the window and wait
for the first snowflakes to fall.

My Body Welcomes Autumn

Nights are now for sleeping.
Before bed, I shower the day's work
from my skin. Windows are still open –
katydids call through the trees,
toads sing a soft sweet chorus.

The sun arrives later now, rising
above the forest by seven.
Days are cool enough to clear
and rake for winter. I weed,
transplant, and compost.

Peaches and berries are gone,
mostly in my belly. Now apples hang ripe.
Huge squashes lay on the ground,
pregnant with meals to come.
I think of mice and Cinderella.

Soil and air are both dry, and tomatoes
are finally over. In late mornings
black crickets sing, grasshoppers take wing,
and treefrogs jump through the grass.
The field is astir in the cool of September.

Soon maples will turn yellow, orange, purple, and red.
Oak trees hold their green until the last warmth departs.
Leaves will dance away with the wind, and I'll discover
a hummingbird nest hidden in the small oak,
the groundhog hole by the plum tree,
and where the chipmunks get into the garden.

Soon there'll be hoarfrost on the ground.
I'll stomp through for the crunch and the spark.
Jack Frost will visit in the early morning darkness,
and paint ferns on the window. They'll vanish
with the sun. I'll watch them disappear
while I drink the first morning coffee.



Elaine Reardon is a writer, herbalist, artist, and educator who lives in a forest in Massachusetts. Her first chapbook, *The Heart is a Nursery For Hope*, won first honors from Flutter Press in 2016, and her second chapbook, *Look Behind You*, was also published in late 2019 by Flutter Press. Most recently, Elaine's work has been published in The Common, Galway Review, Pensive Journal, and other similar journals. *Stories Told In A Forgotten Tongued*, her newest chapbook, was published in September 2024 by Finishing Line Press. **www.elainereardon.wordpress.com**.