

Beautiful Things

a weekly online magazine of micro-essays



These Italian Pastries

April 13, 2020

By Amy Suardi

These Italian pastries were decorated by an 87-year-old woman in a drawn-out process involving almond paste and mandarin oranges. I bought them at a cliffside stand in a cellophane bag tied with red curling ribbon on the Sicilian island of Lipari.

They were too beautiful to eat, and yet what else was I going to do with them? Perishable: the word death is baked into them. They were created to be destroyed.

As we climbed the volcanoes of Sicily, bathed in its seas, and drove through its undulating burnt fields of wheat, I thought of all the civilizations that had possessed this land — the Greeks, Romans, Africans, Arabs, French, Spanish, and so on. These peoples had smelled the same briny breezes, felt the same pounding heat. But of their dramas, their loves, their wars and empires, only a toppled column remains here, a rack of souvenirs there, a palace empty of kings but flocked with tourists, like crows picking over wish bones and candy wrappers.

And yet I have often clung to much smaller things. I have tried to deny that fireworks end, children grow. Accepting change is like giving up a fight. When I finally accept fleetingness, I feel soft, a part of the ever-morphing universe.

I understood what the pastries were trying to tell me: everything is special, but nothing lasts. Don't cling — enjoy, and eat.

Amy Suardi lives in Washington, D.C. with her family. Since the arrival of the pandemic, she has been writing micro-memoirs, poems, and slice-of-life essays on her new blog [Painting a Life with Words](#).



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Eagle Eyes

By Abigail Wasserman
He tells me he has “eagle eyes,” able to see far, to notice what others miss. He spots two wasps weaving around the swing set, a red-tailed hawk slicing across the sky above the playground...

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Ten Minutes

By Robin Kocerginski
My daughter’s body tenses in the bath chair. Fists tight, knees drawn, chin tucked, the full clench she gives anything she hasn’t decided about yet...

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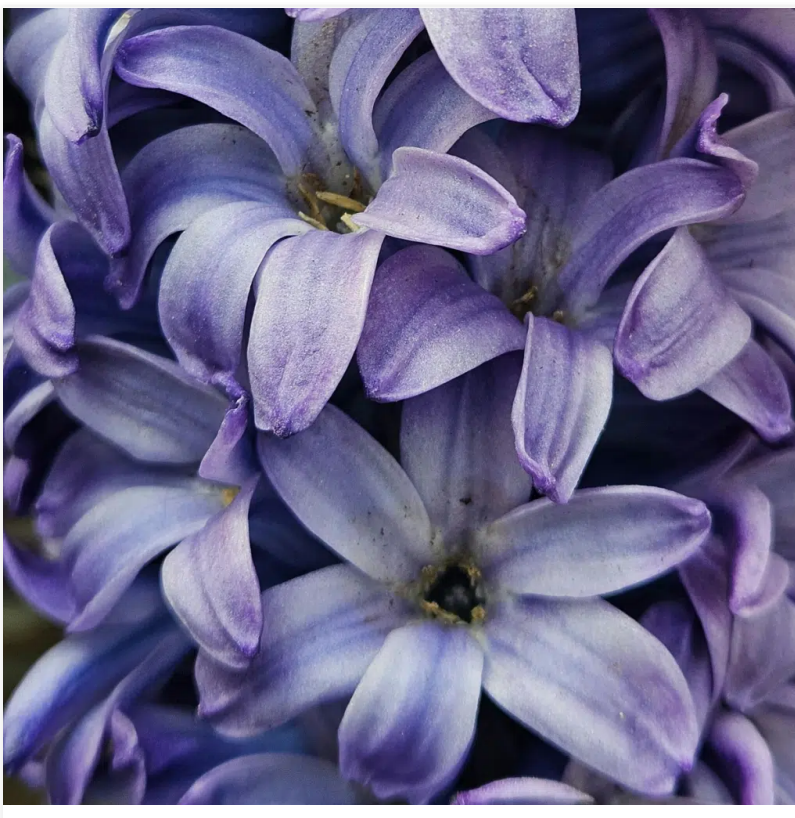


The Shirt Stays Crooked

By Grady Johnson
Grandad was trying to button his shirt. His vision had mostly gone and his hands shook now. Still, he pressed at the fabric...

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Planting Hyacinth Bulbs

By Orah Dawn Levin-Minder
When brittle leaves begin to fade and fall, my four-year-old son and I go out to plant hyacinth bulbs...

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