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## The Vernal Pool

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Our Community Garden

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## Our Community Garden

By Wendy Gutierrez

We tend our community garden for our seedlings to sprout.  
Proud, high sunflowers, nurturing fruit trees.  
Dragon fruit, peppers, and mangos from  
Asia, South America, Africa meeting each other and living together.  
But our roots tangle with one another,  
coiling around thin necks and frail limbs, cutting their breaths.

We restless lay in weeds where contempt thrives,  
while dreaming of a bed smeared with roses, daisies, and hydrangea.  
A painter's palette of pastel hues  
to paint over vermilion streams that drip from leaves  
and stain soils.

Bursts and explosions  
of strawberry and peach nectar should erupt,  
not shots and fire that massacre.  
Seeds are torn from mangled slices  
and flung across the earth into graves—  
unable to germinate again.

Cores are dismembered from the flesh  
as double-crossed roots cross breed  
shriveled, stems deprived of love  
and stand no more now  
lay on drenched soil, the color of the setting Sun they share—  
only the strong can photosynthesize.

Buds wilt down at the genocide,  
checking for a pulse to keep them lifted.  
The deceased are replanted into new Earth,  
bodies bodies dropped into planters made from bullet shells.  
Made in X,  
Product of USA.