



Of Leaf and Flower: Stories and Poems for Gardeners

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The answers to many gardening questions can be found in how-to manuals and essays, but who can fathom the passions behind the obsession? Why do we get down on our hands and knees in the mud in March or return to the garden for one last look before dark? Only the storytellers and poets can tell us.

The twelve short stories and twelve poems collected here celebrate the irresistible emotions that plants inspire. A beautiful flower arouses the desire to possess in "The Lily" by H. E. Bates and "The Fable of the Rhododendron Stealers" by Sylvia Plath. In William Saroyan's "The Pomegranate Trees" a man plants fruit trees from his native Armenia and then goes to extremes to keep them alive in the California desert. Robert Graves's humorous story, "Earth to Earth", is set during the Second World War and reveals the secret ingredient in uniquely potent compost; and in Billy Collins's "Bonsai" a miniature tree changes our perspective on the whole world. Also included are Mary Austin, Kate Chopin, Amy Clampitt, Eugenia Collier, Mark Doty, Robert Frost, O. Henry, Josephine Jacobsen, Sarah Orne Jewett, Howard Nemerov, Kathleen Raine, Christopher Reid, Saki, James Schuyler, John Updike, Arturo Vivante, Alice Walker, William Carlos Williams, and Cynthia Zarin. Twelve elegant black-and-white sumi paintings of plants by Clyde Wachsberger enhance the collection.

There is no better way to cultivate a gardener's passions during the long winter months than through this beautiful and moving book.

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