

My Mother Tries to Teach Me How to Garden

On Saturdays we knelt, too—

I watched you make holes, then fill them
with the seeds you carried like Communion.

If these ever grew into anything beautiful,

I never noticed. Instead, I confused *impatiens*
for *impatience*, as if you'd been burying
shortcomings in your garden. Once,
you confessed you were not a patient woman.

To no one's surprise, I grew up and became
not a patient woman. To no surprise,

the root of *impatiens* is impatient—named
for seed pods that burst open if touched.

Irritated by anything that slips through my fingers,

I never learned to make with my hands,
only to marvel at the way gardens
can bloom in the footprint of a field, or flowers

from a fractured sidewalk—and here, so far
from anything I call home—a whole grove
flourishes inside an abandoned building

like a greenhouse that has shaken off its glass,
like the most beautiful thing I have seen.