

## *Moonflower (in memoriam)*

*By Grace Marcus*



In early April, dreaming of summer,  
I drove to a nursery in search of spring.

Hardy annuals struggled in the windy chill.  
Heads of yellow violets, purple pansies, burnished dahlias  
held sway with trailing vines of vinca and sweet licorice.

The sky was grey, as was the slanted rain,  
blown sideways by the gusts.

The gravel parking lot of pewter pebbles;  
the concrete floor under the counters and displays;  
the metal racks that held the seed packets;  
a continuum of grey.

One spin and I was caught by Moonflower.  
Enchanted, I read its promise on the back:  
blooms at night  
fragrant, white.

In early spring, on the second floor,  
In my cold kitchen  
under fluorescent lights  
I spilled the seeds into a cup of water,  
and left them overnight to soak and swell.  
Little mysteries.

Next day, I buried each in a loamy plot  
under a plastic dome  
and set them on top the fridge  
away from the cats  
to sprout.

Each night before the mail and messages  
I looked, impatient.

Within the week, the ones that leafed  
stood in a glass-topped box  
on a patch on linoleum  
favored by the morning sun.

In May, I set the four that thrived  
in a large square pot  
under a teepee of bamboo sticks.  
They joined the dahlias and geraniums  
and the wax begonias  
out on the wooden deck.

All June July the glossy leaves  
climbed up the bamboo sticks,

adding their green whisper to the  
colorful chorus  
but I never heard their song.

Lulled now by August's heat and hum,  
I drifted as did they  
in sheets of sunlight and of rain.  
and forgot their promised show.

Until September,  
when in the smoke-filled night,  
of that darkest day,  
appeared the vibrant moonlit face  
of one perfect blossom.

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*Bio: Brooklyn native Grace Marcus's poetry has been published in The Bucks County Writer Magazine, Calyx and Journey. Her novel, Visible Signs, was a semi-finalist in the 2007 William Faulkner Writing Competition. She lives in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and is working on a collection of short stories and a second novel.*