

Fork Garden

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With Mum and Dad gone we were cleaning the house
Where they'd lived since they'd moved there in '78
There were his clothes and her clothes and hundreds of photos
And dozens of medicines long out of date
The *shabis menorah* was there on the mantle
The Passover cups in a cabinet nearby
A drawer of *taleysim* in bags of blue velvet
Two bottles, unopened, of Crown Royal rye.

Then my little daughter came up and said, "Daddy
"Come see the 'fork garden' I found over here" —
We went to the kitchen where Mum had grown houseplants
In splendid profusion for many's a year
My daughter then pointed to pieces of silverware
Stuck in the soil round the rim of each pot
And mem'ries rushed into my mind as I realized
What I was seeing and had almost forgot.

I said to her, "Sweetheart, when I was just little
"I'd make a mistake and I'd use the wrong fork:
"Milkhig for *fleyshig* and *fleyshig* for *milkhig*
"I'd just grab whatever utensil would work
"So *Bobie* would bury it out in the garden
"And after three days it was *kosher* again
"And as *Zeyda* got older, he too got forgetful
"And kept *Bobie* busy right through till the end."

My daughter's grown into a lovely young woman
Too young to remember her *bobie* back then
But often when we're telling old family stories
She mentions her *bobie's* fork garden again.
Sometimes a monument needn't be made out of
Marble and stand in a big public square
Sometimes it only takes forks stuck in potting soil
To call up a life of devotion and care.

It's *bobie's* fork garden
My mother's fork garden
It's *Bushie's* fork garden