



LIMBSWOONUNDERGRAFT

## THE GEORGICS (BOOK 2) (ca. 29 BC)

Vergil

trans. Arthur S. Way

There be methods in which by her own path man's experience came:  
 One seventh cuttings of trees from the moth's tender frame,  
 And setteth in furrows: another grower will earth up a line  
 Of root-stocks, stakes four-cleft, or pales to a point cut fine.  
 While some plantations await green arches of layered shoots  
 And living nurseries clinging to earth with unsecured roots,  
 There be others that need no root, nor the pruner doubts to restore  
 To the earth her own, and to trust to her lap top-shoots that he shore.  
 Nay more, men cleave into truncheons an olive-stem – wondrous to say –  
 And an oil-bearing root from the dry wood soon is pushing its way.  
 And we oft see one tree's branched – and none the less will they bear –  
 Transferred to another, see grafter apples borne on a pear.  
 Transformed, see stony cornels with red plums flashing fair.

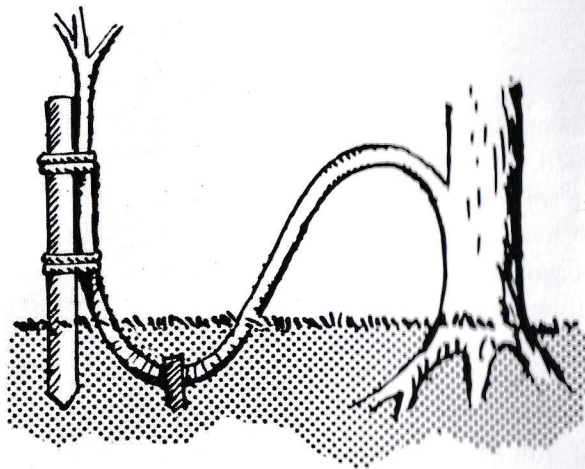
[...]

Such plants as uplift themselves unbidden to borders of day,  
 Fruitless indeed, but lusty and strong in their springing art they:  
 For under the soil stirs nature's strength. Yet even these,  
 If ye graft, or transplant into spade-worked trenches the natural trees,  
 Cast off their wildwood spirit: by tillage untiring controlled  
 Will they follow thee unreluctant, reshaped as they will may mould.  
 Nay, barren suckers withal, at the parent's base which stand,  
 Will do this, so they be planted wide upon clear clean land:  
 But now tall frondage and boughs of the mother-tree overgloom  
 And rob it of fruit as it grows, and blast it in act to bloom.  
 Moreover, the tree that springs from seed in the earth's lap laid  
 Groweth slowly: thy far-off children's children perchance shall it shade:  
 Its fruits degenerate, wholly forgetting the savour they bare,  
 And the vine bears clusters unsightly, fit spoil for birds of the air.



[...]

A beech bears chestnuts, a mountain-ash the silver-shine  
Of pear-blossom; under an elm have acorns been crushed by swine.  
Not one and the same are the methods of grafting and insetting "eyes":  
Fir where, pushing forth from the midst of the bark, the soft buds rise,  
And burst their filmy coats, even here in the knot's mid-wood  
Is a slit made: deeply in this form an alien tree is a bud  
Enclosed, and the life of the bark and its sap is it taught to share:  
Or again, cut open are knotless, and a path cleft there  
With wedges into the heart-wood; therein doth the gardener place  
Slips of a fruit-bearing tree: thereafter in no long space  
With fertile branches a noble tree hath skyward grown.  
And marvels at stranger boughs and fruits that seem not her own.



## THE HISTORY OF VIOLETS (1965)

Marosa di Giorgio

trans. Jeannine Marie Pitas

### I

I remember nightfall and your room's open door, the door through which neighbours and angels came in. And the clouds—November evening clouds, drifting in circles over the land. The little trees burdened with jasmine, with doves and droplets of water. That joyous pealing, endless chirping—every evening the same.

And then in the morning, with its tiny dead angels strewn everywhere like paper birds, or the most exquisite of eggshells.

Your dazzling death.

### II

When I look toward the past, I only see perplexing things: sugar, jasmine, white wine, black wine, the strange country school I attended for four years, murders, weddings among the orange blossoms, incestuous couplings.

That towering old woman who walked by our orange trees one night with her long white gown, her hair in a bun. The butterflies that left us when they flew off to chase her.

### IV

This is the night of December lilies. Around ten o'clock, the flowers tremble a little. The nocturnal butterflies fly over them, their wings glittering with tiny gems, and make the flowers kiss each other, marry each other. And this occurs purely through desire. If I wish for something, it will appear. I need only to let go of my hands, my braids. And then I am opened to another landscape and other beings. God presides with his huge wings and black cloak, and then the deceased ancestors, my grandparents. All sit down to devour the great peace like a meal. And from my humble place I too share in this quiet jubilation.