

## CATALOG OF CURES IN ORDINARY TIME

By Aileen Cassinetta

---

There's a prayer for every malady  
in ordinary time if you know where to look,  
said my father, and though he kept his daily  
devotions and entreaties to himself, I found  
a psalter in his pocket the final summer  
he rescued clusters of sungold tomatoes  
from early blight. Like little sunsets, like a song  
of ascents, I wish to remember my father.  
Not my recollections of blossoms and blossom-end rot  
which are fading evenly, but the whole  
inventory of days when my father picked  
early corn in late August, milk stage of kernels,  
brown silks for corn silk tea that was meant to be  
anti-inflammatory. In the end,  
it was fast and metastatic, and I've learned  
that what grows from seed to seed is a lesson

in acceptance. What was fallow ground, for instance,  
has been broken up. Here lie the barkflies and the dead moths  
and aphids, repelled by my summer savory—  
beloved of honeybees, peppery  
and a good remedy for too salty  
recipes—also sweet costmary, green  
and silvery (but remember to use  
sparingly). Lemon balm, in remembrance of my father,  
is the hardiest and longest-lived of them  
all, growing back each year with a resolve  
that is rigid and almost a respite  
from the grief that is lodged in the split between my heartbeats.

---

*Aileen Cassinetta was a laureate fellow of the Academy of American Poets in 2021 and co-editor of The Nature of Our Times: Poems on America's Lands, Waters, Wildlife, and Other Natural Wonders.*

