

“The Liz Christy-Bowery Houston Garden”

Two thousand varieties of plants grow in this garden
where the child on her back, conversing with the leaves,

suddenly laughs. A patchwork of light spangles
the ecstatic movements of her limbs,

as she waves and kicks at the sky.

I watch a Green Guerilla harvest tomatoes; another

tidies an orchard of cherry, peach and plum trees.

Before their industry, I feel my unemployment

is a disfigurement, not the sweet luxury I'd planned.

Because I took her for a normal child

and am embarrassed by her enormous teeth and
little howls, because she reminds me of my sister

and the epilepsy that took her from the row house streets
of childhood to the corridors of strange clinics,

I must accept my day's accomplishment:

gratitude to the volunteer who placed this child

on a tarp, by the fish pond, and shame
at my heart's refusal to acknowledge

the many forms of neglected beauty
with which we might identify, from which we run.