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Mary, Mary

Kathy Callaway

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MARY, MARY

When I lived on the alley I was
flush with growing things.
I made a garden right away, could feel
lettuce and dill in their two-way stretch,
one arm proliferating downward, the other
fluting open with light. I gave them
everything they wanted.
I was faithful.

The neighborhood on my alley, old toms,
a moon-mad dogpack, berry-drunk
cedar waxwings, all came to see my garden.
And one old man who likes to watch me
preen the aphids at noon. "Things
mostly stop, where I go," he said. Each night
he closed the bars in his DeSoto,
keeping us safe, like a clock.

One night I had two visitors. At eight,
a man asking for his friend. He held his
arms out, touched the screen door
with pulley-hooks for hands, ashamed
of my fear, an old falling-away.
Together we didn't look where his
hands had been. The garden
was alive behind us.

At midnight, a woman in jodhpurs.
She looked like me, surprised, held
a polished bridle in her right hand,
rosettes embossed on the joinings.
We stood there, I was happy.
"Wrong house," she said,
the horse between us missing,
my garden growing.