



Pause for poetry:  
Willow Loveday Little /2

## Description

# Girlhood Extinct

By **Willow Loveday Little**

Remember?  
That old swing-set in the backyard  
Whose shadow cascaded into  
Woods beyond.

Cardigan wrapped tightly, bunched  
Up wrists, we traipsed  
In wellington boots passing trees  
Drenched auriferous by a sun  
Setting like egg yolk spilling into  
Solid white cloud.

We understood the song of speckled starling,  
Could read elements in plants and  
Knew acidity of soil changed hydrangea  
Fervent pink, blue, pale yellow.  
Our lips a litmus test to the magic of  
Thicket at night. Incorruptible as dusk flower.

We laughed at how easy the knowledge  
Was; While our classmates drew  
Red mushrooms dotted with white,  
We saw their innocence; knew the  
Fungi in question, deadly *fly agaric*—



Venal as nightshade.

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We foraged for spongy morels, elegant  
Trumpets of chanterelle, boletus,  
Gorged upon chicken-of-the-woods  
Which jutted forth in coral shelves.  
Always present the thrill of  
Misdiagnosis, of poisoned breath  
Collapsing catatonic—  
Claimed by wildflowers, each one a corpuscle  
Of the forest's anatomy.

We escaped into a world where we  
Were peasants, baked mud pies,  
Dug glass bottles from ancient  
Market paths, marvelled at  
The lunar moth, emerged ephemeral  
From our cocoons amid the frenzy of  
Ants beneath the moon, rubbed  
Our skin with lavender, rinsed feet  
In brooks whose babble grew husky  
At the advent of stars, and  
Metamorphosed into women.

Blouses tightly buttoned in class  
The following days we knew life  
Had been bowdlerized, reduced to  
The whisper of an innuendo. Felt  
It in every white blood cell of our  
Chaste bodies, each mote of dust  
Hovering in the air between us and  
The blackboard was an invitation.  
But memory of hooded foxglove  
And faces knit from gnarled bark  
Began to fade.

Stubborn, we wrote goblins and greenery  
Into our essays until we could no longer.

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**Willow Loveday Little** is Montreal-based writer and poet whose work has appeared in *The Dalhousie Review* and *on Write or Die Tribe*. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University and is a contributor to *Graphite Publications* and *Medium*. You can find her on [Medium](#), or at Instagram handle [@willowloveday](#)



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### Date Created

March 2019