

Loci

Sonia Overall

the borders shiver
wind bent salt licked
skinned fingers of saplings
tender as marsh samphire against blue sky-tide

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low walls and paths
the archaeological remains of a lost pleasure palace
a cloister
a courtyard
alcoves and pedestals
stucco of cement spirals
cave niches beneath bowed walkways

a grotto of echoing wave and footfall
damp-cornered
rust-ceilinged
a hollow
an ear to capture the sea and repeat its washes crashes

rock-spine remnants of castellation
sockets of flower and foliage secreted scant-rooted between the bones

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a temple on the terrace:
memorial seat and stone offerings
shrine of silk flowers fairy lights
script shell statuary

parterre with waterless pools
daisy shoals in the grass
shallow steps down to dip a sandaled toe

an apothecary's garden
medicinal incense of flowering sage and rosemary
bolts of lavender honey-headed broom

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sunflower snapdragon
holly holm oak hollyhock
cabbage palm exotic against the cottage garden haze
of mallow marigold cornflower
a porcelain tea set of white roses

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staircases sweep to hidden horizons
one a minstrels' gallery of gull cries and sparrow clatter
one of magpie screech and rattle
the tinfoil tssk of blackbird turning dry leaf litter
a huzz of bees on candy-pink hebe

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stalk to stem
show of petals swift to seed head catkin thistledown

spears of stripped stalks
sentinels of mullein lambs' ear giant echium
blackened teeth on the dragon tree
the swollen flesh of sedum and bladder-podded senna

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by the shaded boundary
marked by a cypress bare-backed against sea lashes
the pleasure-seekers have returned
lighting fires
burning offerings
pouring libations
breaking stones
challenging each other to shows of strength
serious play

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oyster shells and bottle caps
the leavings of some private festival

unclasped daisy-chains and chalk rubble
a single baby bootie of white fleece
balanced on stone plinth

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the gardens sink descending into dusk