

Silvana Gardner

**ROSEMARY, LAVENDER
AND THYME**

I'll be digging a hole
for a Traveller's Palm in sub-tropics
and the fertility astounds me,
even cuttings strike roots
behind my back! Sprout vines
around my head, if I'm not careful,
till I think life is easy in Queensland,
picking fruit by the bushel, like monkeys,
the more I take, the more will grow.

You can't starve here
yet when I'm stuffed to the limit

I'll catch a whiff of rosemary, lavender
and thyme along a barren coastline
and I'm not imagining naked terraces
sunbaked with herbs, oleate in the breeze,
however faint, I inhale deeply
and sigh with peasants packing soil
with bare hands, backs breaking
after torrential rain.

And my head's clear (rosemary will do this)
and my nerves are calm (lavender and thyme),
monkey talk is gibberish, no one knows Illyria,
not even Dalmatian hills grown bald with despair.