

DORA MALECH

Flourish

Clematis, sweet pea, sweet alyssum,
sweet asylum,

adornment's adamant
heaven scent

to bed an arbor's
ardor,

trellis's
yes this

reaching toward
its own reward,

sweet re-aching might redeem
what seems

a frail unfurling to refuge
instead, re-fugue

played in contrapuntal context
shows some pragmatist's *thanks*

thriving
not only as noun and verb, but *stem*, climbing

aster and hydrangea, honeysuckle,
wisteria, twine and tendril

reaching skyward
toward

as if to pick
a warden's lock,

as if jazz hands, spirit fingers,
fireworks, as our shared shards glitter

on this floodlit stage left empty and the river rising like ovation
out of whose rush and rake and raze and refuse grows again

these petals, pleats, sequins,
pirouettes, curtsies, and klieg-eyed bowers, sure-fired lines

run to sun's stunning
statement piece, peals on which an hour slips under

the higher wire
and over

the big top we make
of what's at stake,

tensile
tendrils

corkscrewing up to pour more sunlight,
celebrate

the act
we make of the temporary fact of us.