

The Root Hunters · *Sandra McPherson*

after Rimbaud

We are three ingénues, the birdlike Dini, the robust Bonnie,
And I, who spend an evening once a week
In a room of tiles our spills won't bleach.
We seat Bonnie—so as to be taller than she—

And begin with never-before-discovered parts in her hair.
If she wishes to be beautiful
There is nothing we can do but accede
To make her hair like ours. My fingers open the way

For Dini's swab and its anitseptic smell:
It disinfects but we couldn't care less—
It also kills the germs of what Bonnie thinks
She is. She feels the gold

Splurge . . . "A European country,"
Whispers Dini about Bonnie, "with a crowned head!"
"The European continent," I say cruelly,
"With the sun rising." Then we do

For each other what Bonnie will need us for next week:
Bring roots up to date, white
Gold, an ivory gold. All this is at night;
Bonnie alone among us yearns for the first rays of the sun.