

Wisteria

You were like that wild vine
We called the Devil-Weed
That diabolically grew
And crept unchecked,
Probing here, testing there,
Grasping at gutters and downspouts,
Twining up to the balcony
Of our home by the river.

And I fought the green devil,
Grappled for control and order,
Snipping and pruning to make it conform,
Sawing at stems where they sprouted about,
At last hacking away on the wood with an ax.
I chopped it away but
It wouldn't be stopped,
Springing up in new places
And sending long tentacles out overnight,
To cling to the railings and
Tug at the eaves,
Pry at the moldings
And pull with its weight ever greater each day
To drag down the structure.

But – oh -- the sultry summer morning
I found those few delicate pale blooms,
Dangling like paper lanterns from the pergola,
And I learned your true name and discovered your nature,
And inhaled the light perfume from intricate flowers,
The lavender blossoms exquisitely formed,
Their light tracery suspended by gossamer tendrils,
Till they faded and shriveled in the hot breath of August
And tenuous threads grasped the desiccant florets
That shrank down to wisps,
And to granules of sand,
To a powder that finally wafted away.

So from that season on and each year, every spring,
I nurtured and trained
And encouraged the creeper,
Coiled strands through the balusters,
Plaited green braids
Woven into the railings and wound around posts,
And I waited:
Eager
Expectant
Hopeful.
But you never bloomed again.