

Wilderness House Literary Review 18/2

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The Flower Farmer

THERE WAS AN OLD FARMER who only grew flowers. He never sold them, but he tended them everyday. He made sure they had enough sunlight, water, and weeded them thoroughly. No one around understood why the farmer gave so much care to these flowers.

Everyday he walked out with a watering can in hand and a belt that held his weeding tools. He went to each plot that held different kinds of colorful flowers and cared for every flower individually. He spent all day with his flowers and sometimes he didn't go back to his home until it was dark and cold.

One day a passerby saw the old farmer tending to his field. The passerby waved to the farmer and asked, "How much for a bouquet? I would love to put some of your flowers in my home."

The farmer recoiled slightly and responded, "I'm sorry but these flowers are not for sale." The passerby looked perplexed and left dejected.

The next day, when the farmer came out of his home, a little boy was waiting at his fence line. The boy looked eager to see him. "Good morning!" said the little boy.

"Good morning," said the old farmer, "what brings you all the way out here?"

"I wanted to see your flowers," said the boy.

"Well that's nice son" replied the farmer.

"You know they call you the crazy flower farmer back in town?" blurted the boy. He gained an ashamed look on his face soon after.

The farmer asked, "well what makes them say that?"

The boy responded, "Well, they say anyone who spends as much time farming as you do ought to sell their crops. They say there's no point in wasting your time like that."

"Well maybe I am crazy then," replied the old farmer, now looking at his flowers rather than the boy. The boy waited for a few minutes and then ran off back in the direction of the town.

Another day, a young farmer came to the old farmer's home. It was early in the morning but the old farmer was dressed and ready for his day of tending to the flowers. The young farmer said to him, "I have passed your farm everytime I go to the town for years now. I want to buy your land and I have made enough money with my own farm to give you a generous offer."

The farmer responded quickly and said, "I'm sorry sir but my land is not for sale."

The young farmer didn't seem to understand. "You know the talk around is that you never sell your flowers. A farmer that never sells his crops and won't sell his land? You must be crazy old man." The young farmer stepped off the old farmer's porch before he could say a word.

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The next day the farmer went out to his field, not with his usual watering can and weeding tools, but with a pair of small shears. He went to the first of his plots and cut two chrysanthemums. At the next plot he took a handful of daffodils. He went on to pick a dahlia, some daisies, and a few sprigs of lavender. He took his harvest into his home, wrapped their stems together with a length of twine, and tied it off neatly. He walked slowly to the edge of the outcrop of trees that surrounded his home and land. When he reached the edge of the trees he took off his hat, kneeled down, and moved a bushel of dried flowers that sat in front of a large stone. He took the new flowers that he was holding close to his chest and placed them where the old bushel sat. "I picked your favorites my dear."