

## On Returning

Back from a country where it is still raining  
and temperatures continue cool,  
I sit in my garden, where it is almost summer  
and the white magnolias open again.

Today, there is none of the scrub jay's swooping  
or screeching. He moves low to the ground,  
his only sounds the rustle of wings amidst lavender,  
the roll of a pebble as he skitters across the path.

I have just filled the bird bath—  
left dry while I was gone—  
and wait for the birds that pass through this place  
to discover water here again.

To make this garden, I had to dig up stubborn  
Bermuda grass, and haul from the dirt  
the heavy, complicated roots of trees.  
What grows here now I mostly planted myself.

Back in the home of my ancestors, it is still raining,  
temperatures continue cool,  
and the pains of the dead remain deep and unforgiven.  
I return to my garden where joy may be made.

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