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DESI DI NARDO

Ruby Garden

My uncle works outside in his backyard
 In a small garden in urban Toronto.
 It is only enough for a lawn chair or two,
 But there is a field of fury growing there.
 His tomatoes are rubies on felts of lush green,
 Large lettuce heads unfold beguiled by their own size,
 And plump purplish eggplants
 Swing slowly with sense and mellowness.
 He notices all this in the morning

Before young men turn up for work
 In the subway with their angular jaws
 Deep in the morning paper
 How sexy is a man in a suit?
 Especially when he's talking on his cell
 That guy there's got a Walkman on
 An all news radio station leaks out past his ears
*Sunny today with a high of 34 degrees ... Residents are urged
 to avoid watering their lawns again
 For the next few days until the heat wave subsides...*
 Somebody else has got his eyes closed but he is still
 listening.
 My uncle doesn't read the paper. He doesn't have time
 for the news. But he has a cell. His children say,
Just for emergencies—the future looks grim.

It is in the early quiet morning before his coffee
 That he works the land
 Overcome by its fullness
 Spreading manure with a big open hand
 He's wearing muddy work boots that he's left untied
 In case there is a call for him and he must rush inside

Desi Di Nardo is a novelist in Toronto. Her writing has appeared in numerous literary journals. Previously, she worked as an on-air television host and taught English in college.