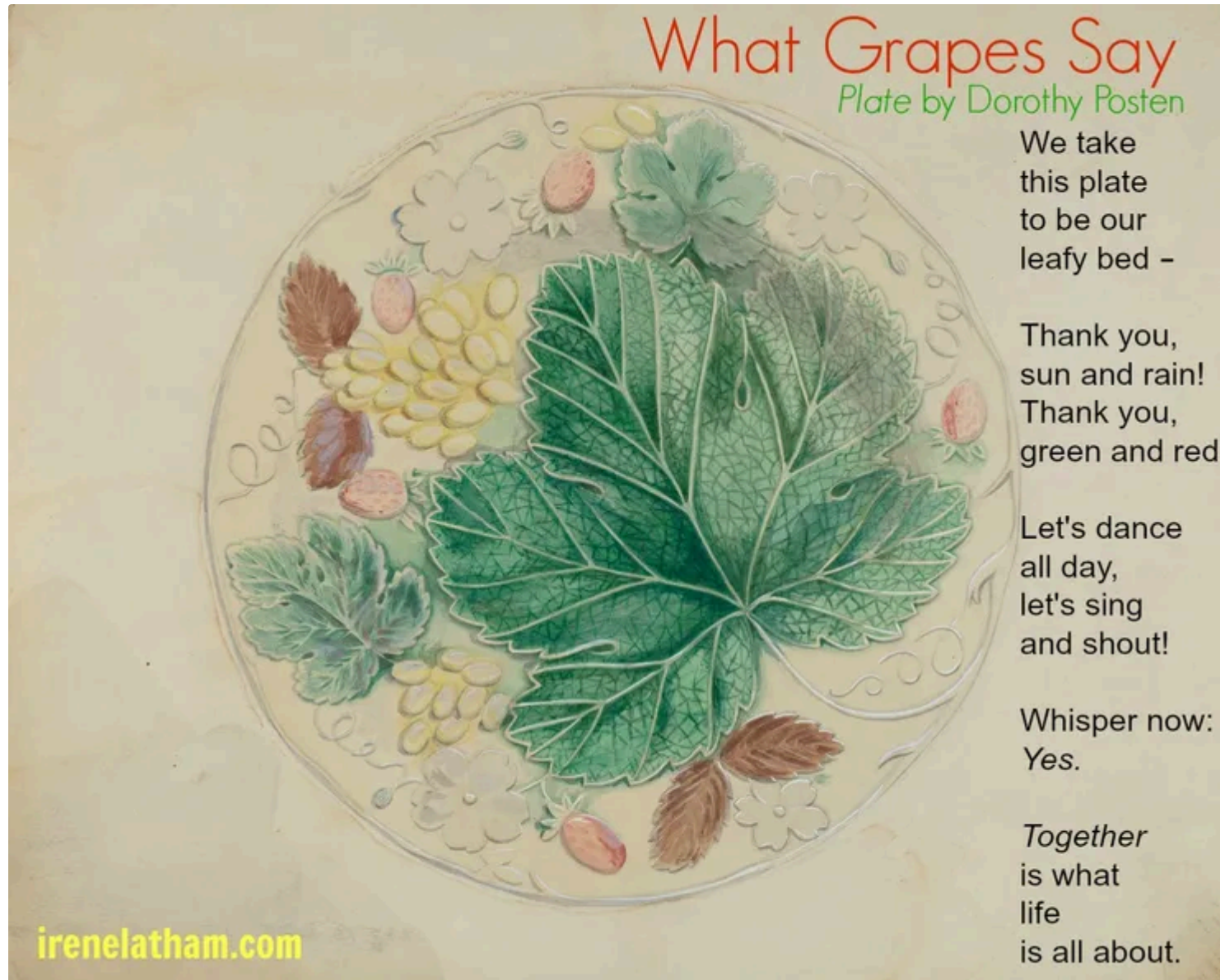


Irene Latham

ARTSPEAK! Plant. Grow. Eat.

Irene Latham's 2016 National Poetry Month Poem-a-Day project





Math Lesson (from the Garden)

Still Life of Oranges and Lemons with Blue Gloves

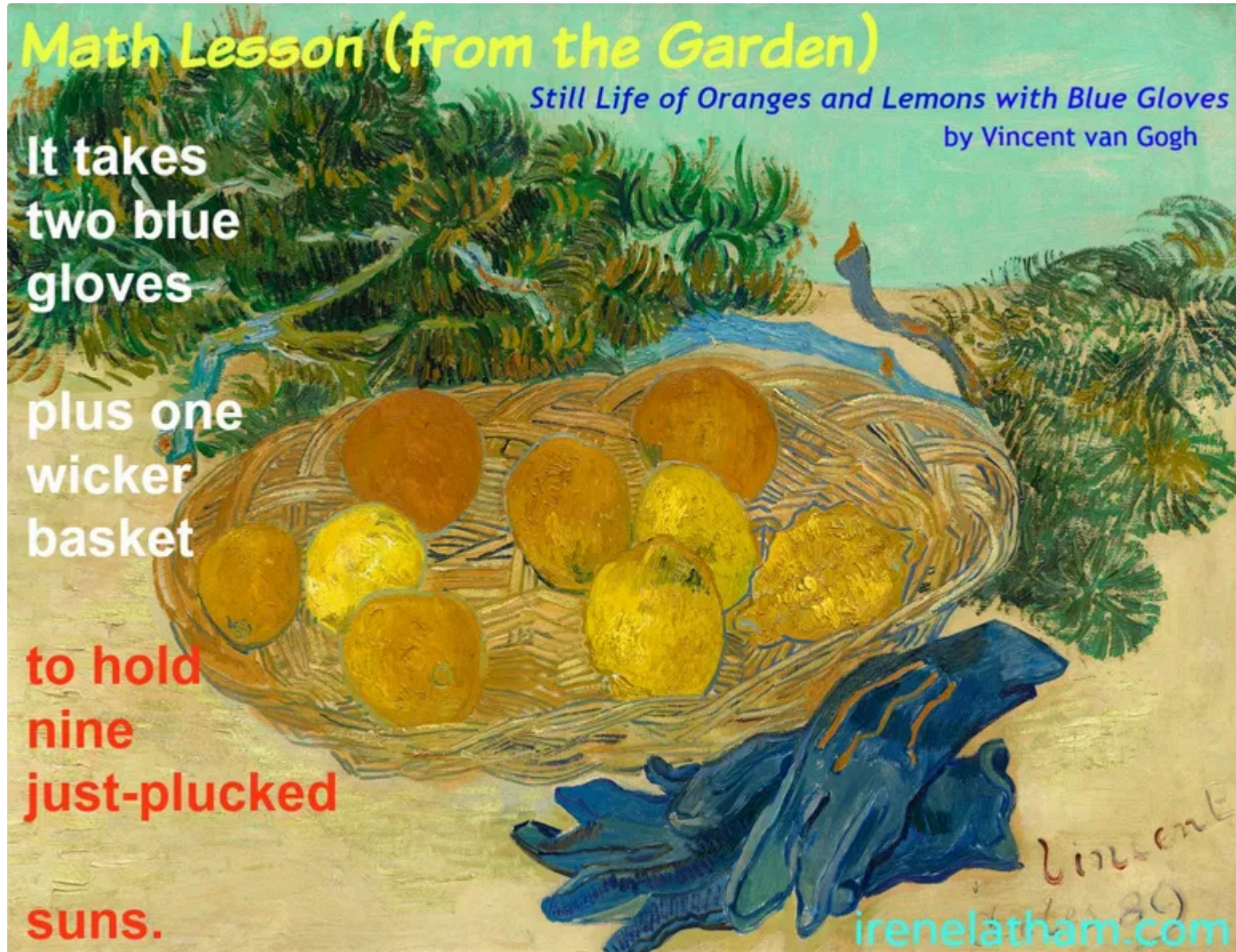
by Vincent van Gogh

It takes
two blue
gloves

plus one
wicker
basket

to hold
nine
just-plucked

suns.



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Garden Rabbit's Dream

Garden Figure (Rabbit) by Maurice Van Felix

My whiskers twitch
when you're not watching –
my ears flick
like weather vanes.

My eyes grow
round

and rounder,

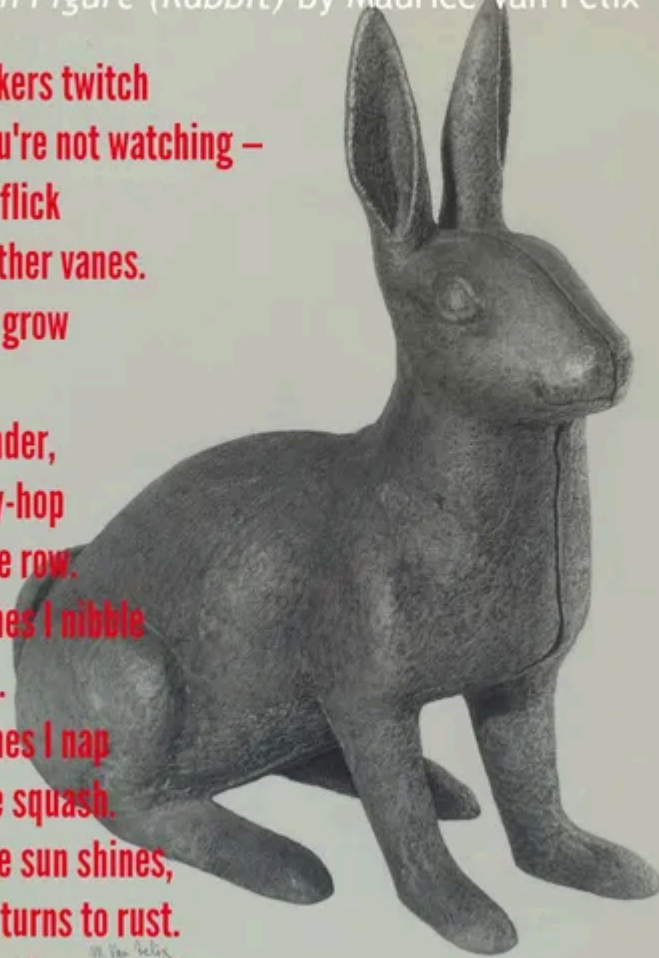
I hippety-hop
along the row.

Sometimes I nibble
cabbage.

Sometimes I nap
amid the squash.

When the sun shines,
my coat turns to rust.

But when the moon glows
I dance!



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Strawberry Basket

Strawberry Basket by William Specker



Call me empty
or call me full

say I'm interesting,
say I'm dull.

I know who I am.
I know what I'm for:

I carry strawberries.

In holding
I am held.

I need nothing more.

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Sunday Afternoon

Madame Monet and Her Son by Auguste Renoir

Mama says we must
rest today -

no more running,
no more chasing chickens.

But Clucky doesn't
understand those words -

she and her chicks
keep clucking and peeping,

squawking and cheeping -

*Come on, they say.
Let's have some fun!*



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Let Us Now Praise Leafy Things

The Gardener - Old Peasant with Cabbage by Camille Pissaro

We'll trim away
the browning leaves,
until all that's left
is supple green.

We'll flavor it
with a flick of pepper,
add shiny tomatoes,
cucumber rounds,
and festive bell pepper.

Finally, a splash
of flavored oil
and we'll graze together -

two old goats who know
each moment,
each bite,
must be savored.

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When We Meet in the Garden

The Artist's Garden in Argenteuil by Claude Monet

The old tree
leans in to listen

and the dahlias
in their Sunday dresses
clamor
for the best view

and I know there
must be sky
and sun
and tiny sprigs and sprouts
shouting *Look at me!*

but all I see
is you.



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Cow at the Gate

Landscape with Open Gate by Pieter Molijn

Cow knows
a closed gate
means graze,
sleep;
its early –
or late.

An open gate
means,
Hurry now,
pick up the pace!
The world
awaits.



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Mary in the Garden

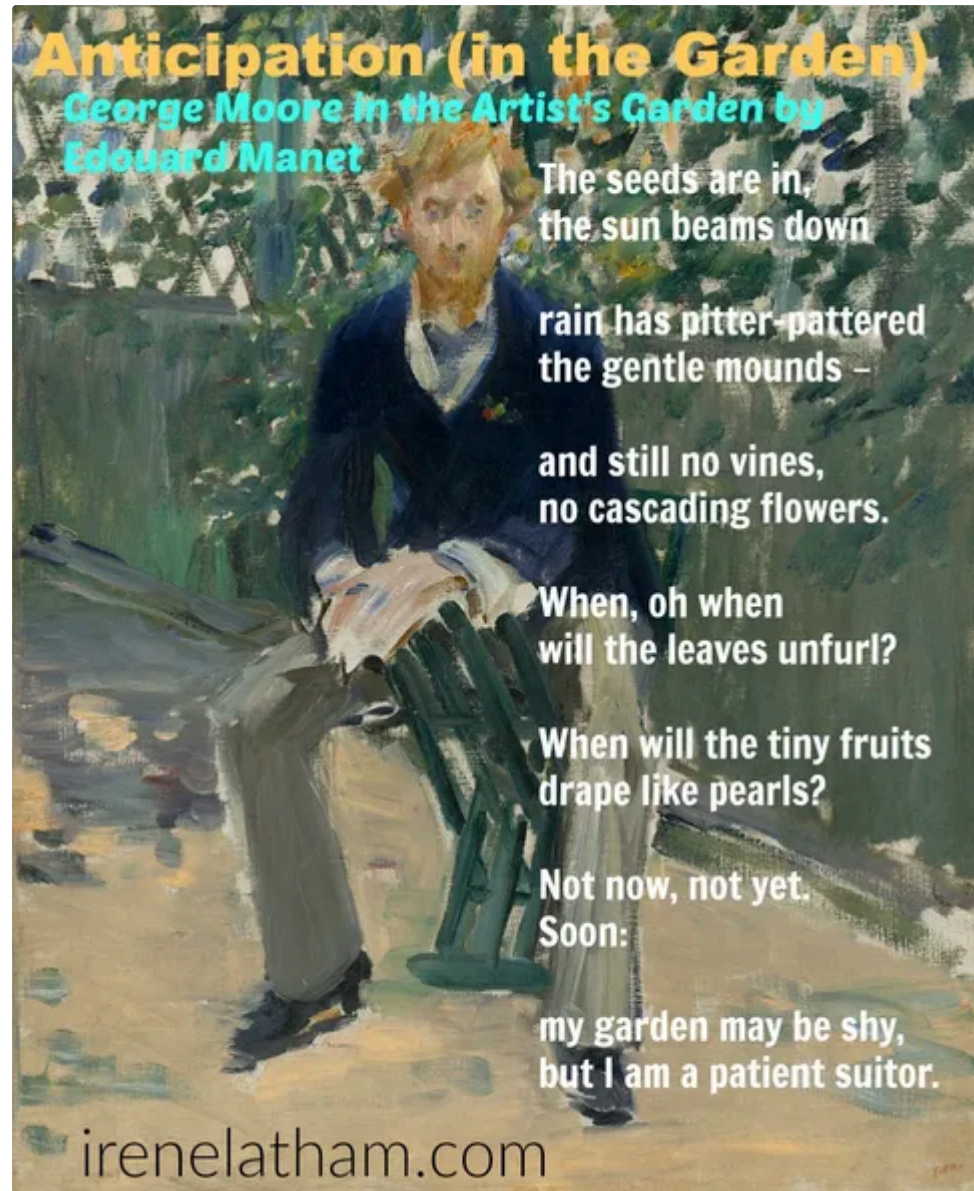
Reading in the Garden by Pompeo Mariani

When I'm contrary
I grab a book
and sit awhile
in the garden.

While I feast
on words,
the plants grow green
and greener.

Some stories
are essential as rain,
and oh,
how they sustain me!

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Gardening Basics

The Watering Can (Emblems: The Garden) by Roger de La Fresnaye

Even without
rowel
and scythe

the garden
gets dressed
in a fuzzy
green vest

that soon
pops
its buttons.



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Gathering Fruit

Gathering Fruit by Mary Cassatt

Skirts swish
awake
the day

as she climbs
the ladder

and pears
peal
like churchbells:

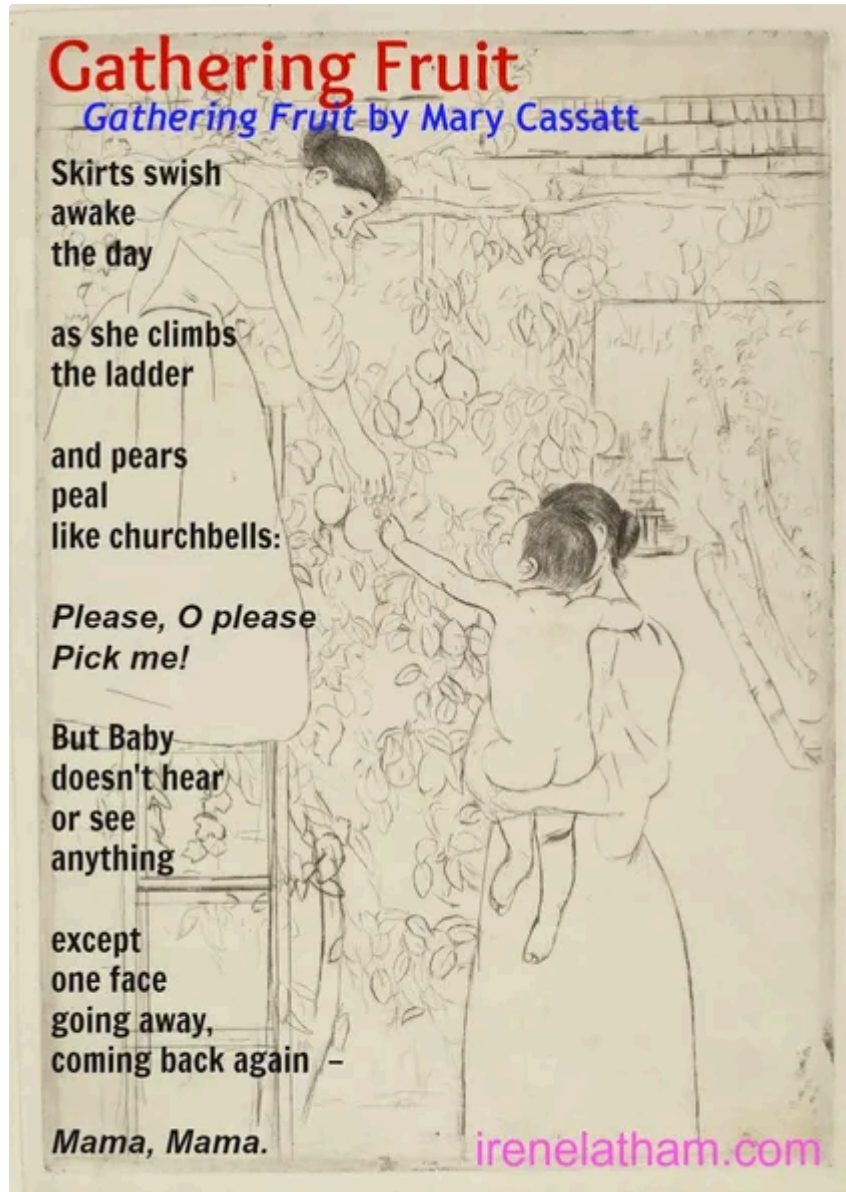
*Please, O please
Pick me!*

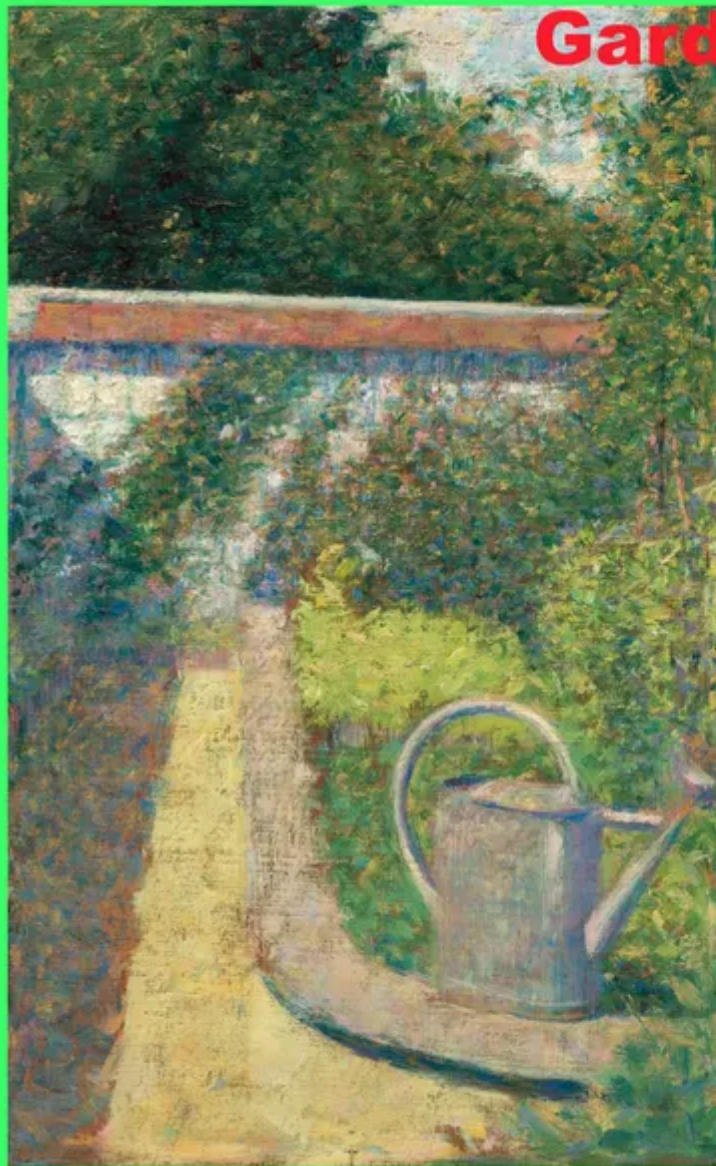
But Baby
doesn't hear
or see
anything

except
one face
going away,
coming back again -

Mama, Mama.

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Gardener's Companion

The Watering Can by **Georges Seurat**

**I wait for the gardener
through the afternoon heat -**

**I go where the hosepipe
cannot reach.**

**Sometimes I spring a leak,
but even then,**

I never speak.

**When the sun beams
down**

**my skin gleams
like a leaping silver fish.**

**I have but one wish:
come now,**

**take me into your hands -
I am a watering can.**

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A DREAM OF SHEEP

Warm Afternoon by Winslow Homer

Sometimes I think
a sheep

has the life
meant for me:

how untroubled
the days

in the shade
of this old tree.

I like their wooly coats,
the way they bleat

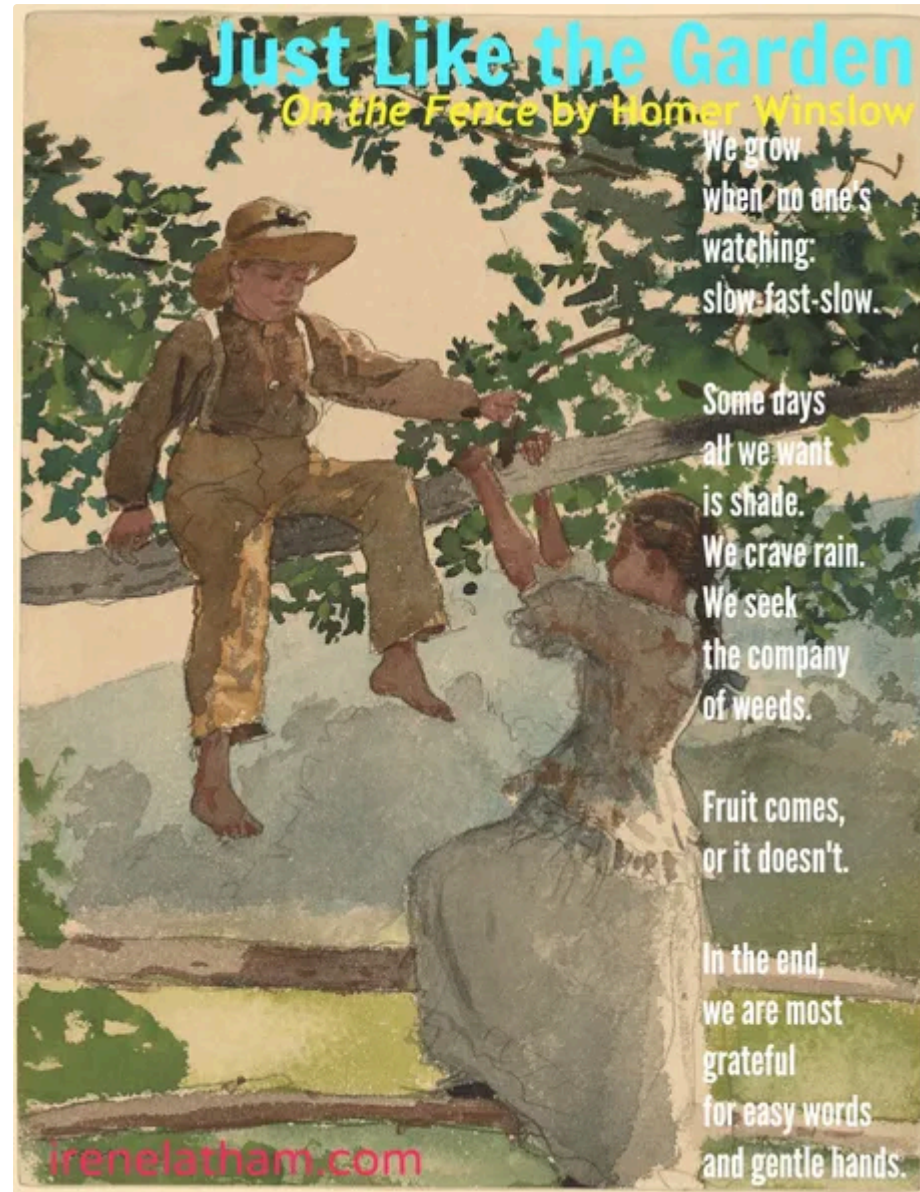
and how they eat
whenever they please.

Yes, I should have been
a sheep.

But then who -
or what -

would have been me?

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Fruit Jar

Fruit Jar by J. Howard Iams

When winter
comes

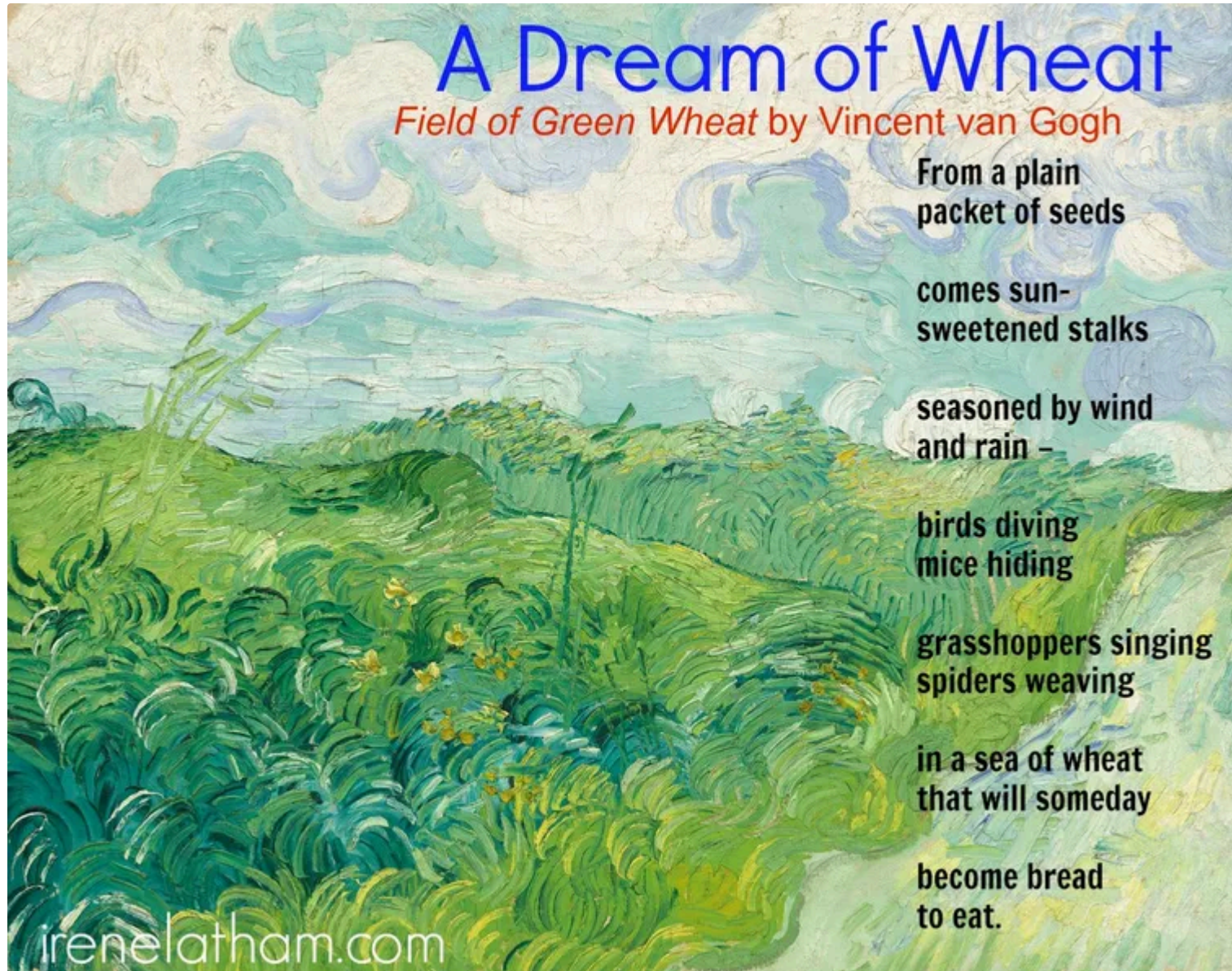
pull me
from the shelf

pop
open the top

and catch
a sudden

breath
of summer.

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A Dream of Wheat

Field of Green Wheat by Vincent van Gogh

From a plain
packet of seeds

comes sun-
sweetened stalks

seasoned by wind
and rain -

birds diving
mice hiding

grasshoppers singing
spiders weaving

in a sea of wheat
that will someday

become bread
to eat.

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Child in the Garden

The Artist's Garden at Vetheuil
by Claude Monet

Sometimes Papa
calls me Flower

but I am drab
compared to these
sun-topped towers

that swoop and sway
and rustle and droop –

all day they whisper
to each other

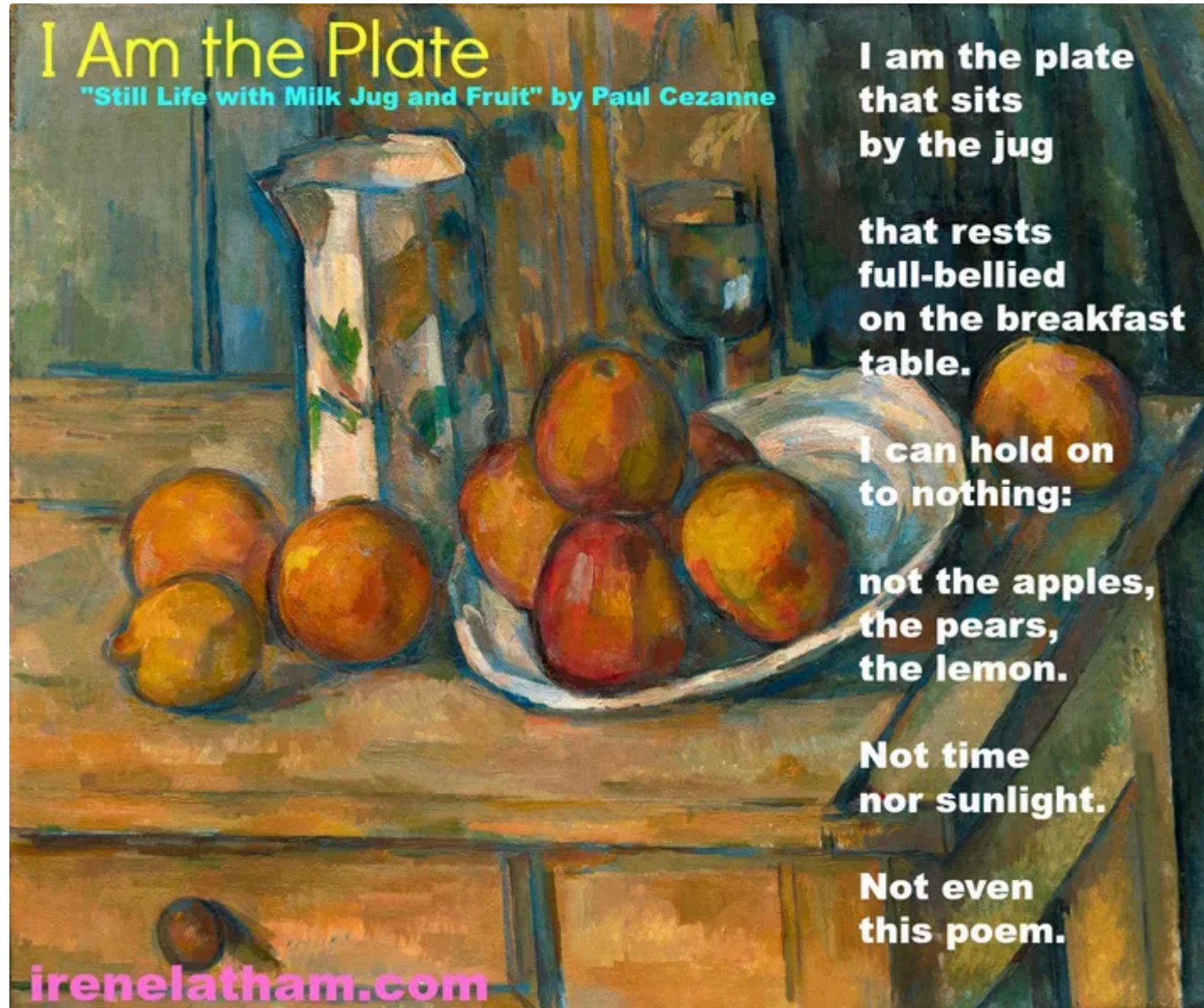
while I walk
unnoticed
beneath them.

I want to tell them
the sky isn't always
blue,

the same dirt
that cradles their roots
sleeps between
my toes –

I have secrets, too.

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Orchard Barber Shop

Gardener Pruning a Tree by Jacques Callot

**Gardener turns barber
when trees needs a trim -**

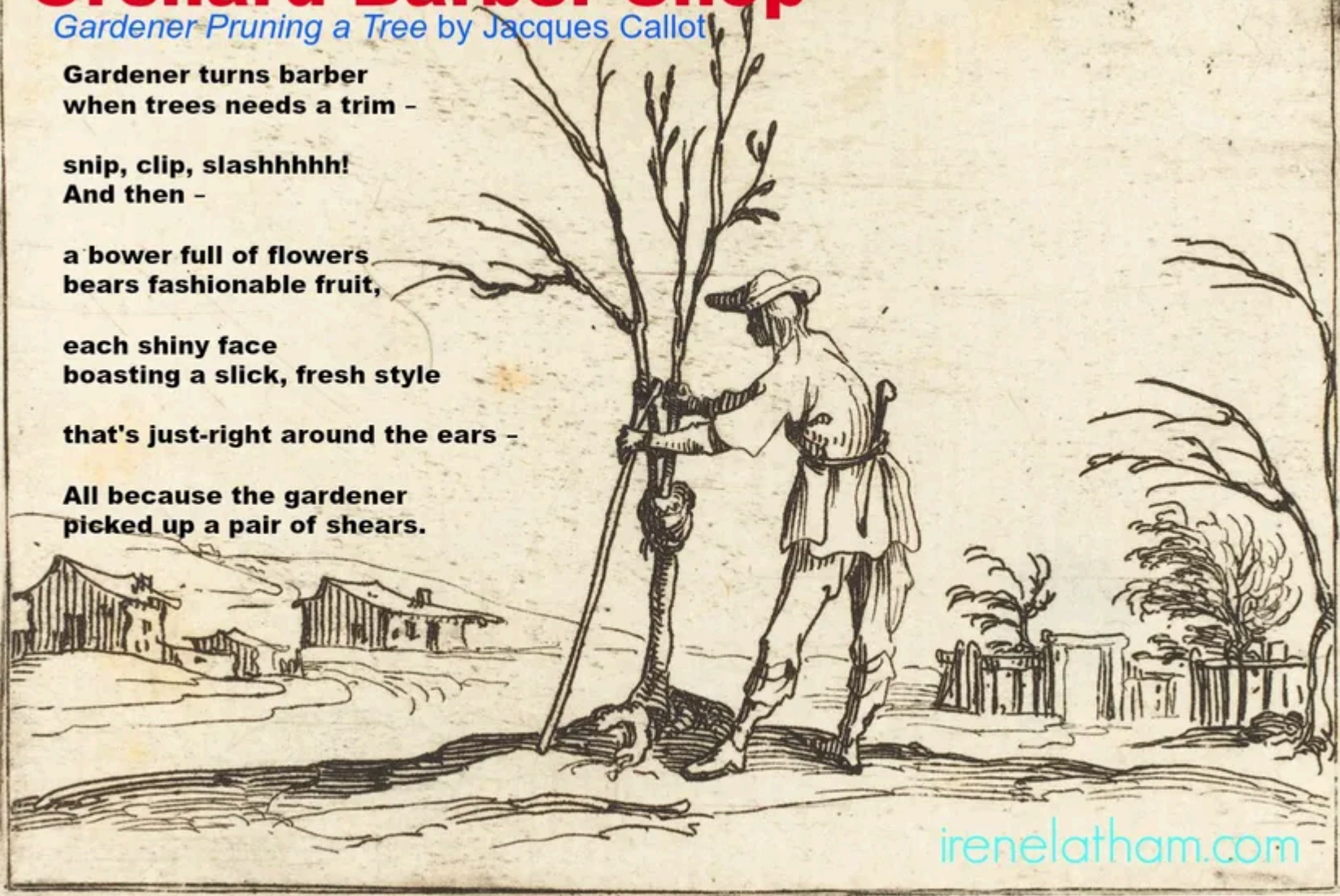
**snip, clip, slashhhhh!
And then -**

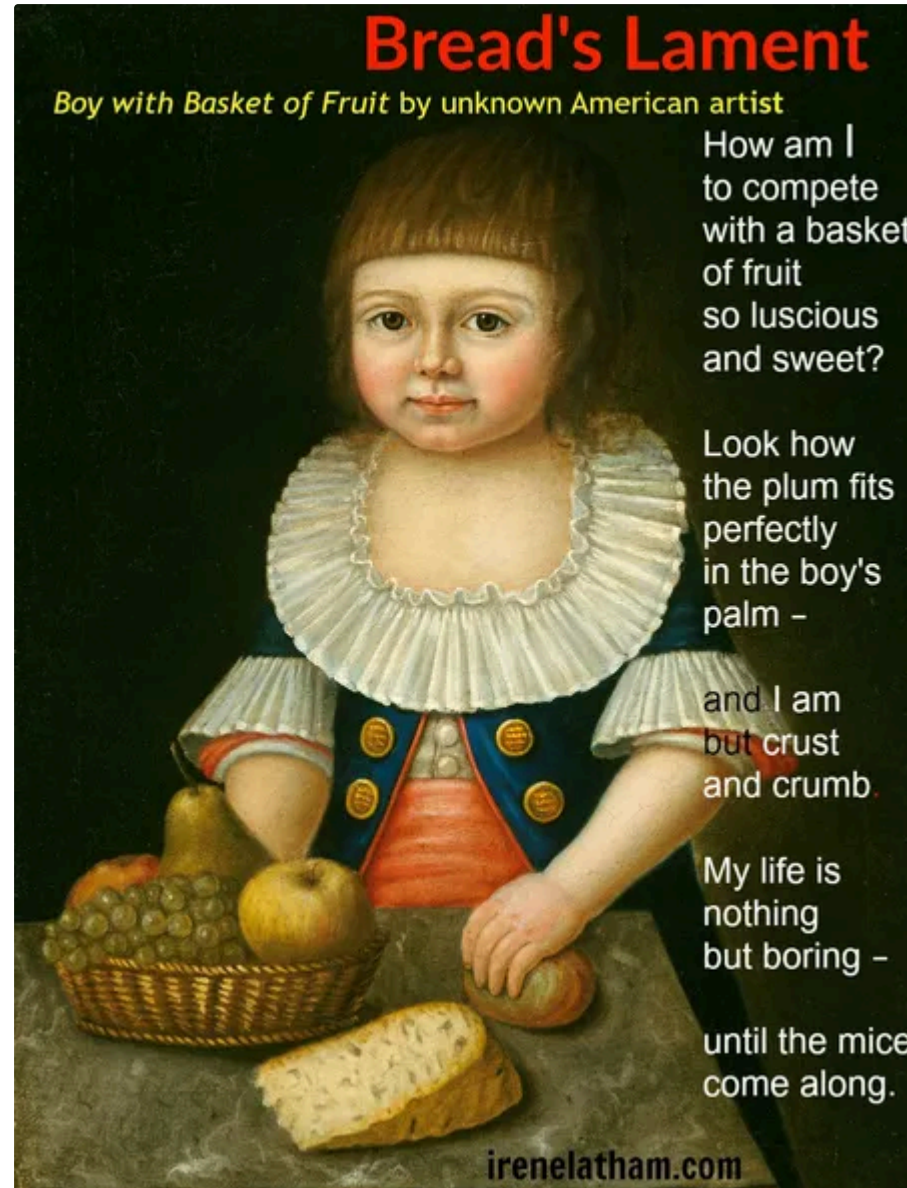
**a bower full of flowers
bears fashionable fruit,**

**each shiny face
boasting a slick, fresh style**

that's just-right around the ears -

**All because the gardener
picked up a pair of shears.**







12.10.12 - n° 2

jeune femme au bonnet
à la mode

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This Wheelbarrow

A Woman Emptying a Wheelbarrow
by Camille Pissarro

It could be any color,
this wheelbarrow
that rolls with me
across the mornings
of whack and weed
and shuck.

Sometimes we both
get stuck –
I blow the hair
out of my eyes
and we sit
together for a while
under the hickory tree.

Soon a breeze lifts
my bonnet
and the wheels
shift once again,
each squeal and groan
an affirmation:

you can do it,
yes, you can.

Triolet for Planting Day

The Artist's Garden at Eragny by Camille Pissarro

This is the way we plant the seeds
on a quiet April morning:

Poke, press, cover is our mantra, our creed.

This is the way we plant the seeds,
as soil favors gentleness over speed.

Later, weeds may offer warning,
but today, this is the way we plant the seeds.
The garden starts on a quiet April morning.

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At the Vegetable Market

Mama says,
never go to the market
hungry.

Vegetable Market at Pontoise
by Camille Pissarro

She says I can't say
I want I want
or Pleeeeeeeease.

no matter how blue
the blueberries
or how perfect
the potato.

But I don't care
about money,
and I am always hungry.

So I smile wider than
a watermelon rind
and my cheeks
turn round as tomatoes

when the lady with the basket
leans in close,
says, want a taste?

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Man, Reading

Denoisel Reading in the Garden

by James Tissot

And this bench
is where I shall meet
the one who'll make
a garden of my life –

I'll be reading
(in my dapper suit)
and she'll say,
you're reading that one?
Me too!

And not a blossom
in the garden
shall compare
to the bounty we find there –

the two of us,
now a pair,
sharing a bench,
talking about books.

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Courtship (According to the Cat)

Rustic Courtship (in the Garden) by Winslow Homer

He comes
tucked in those suspenders,

carrying
that pitchfork –

my cue to slink away.

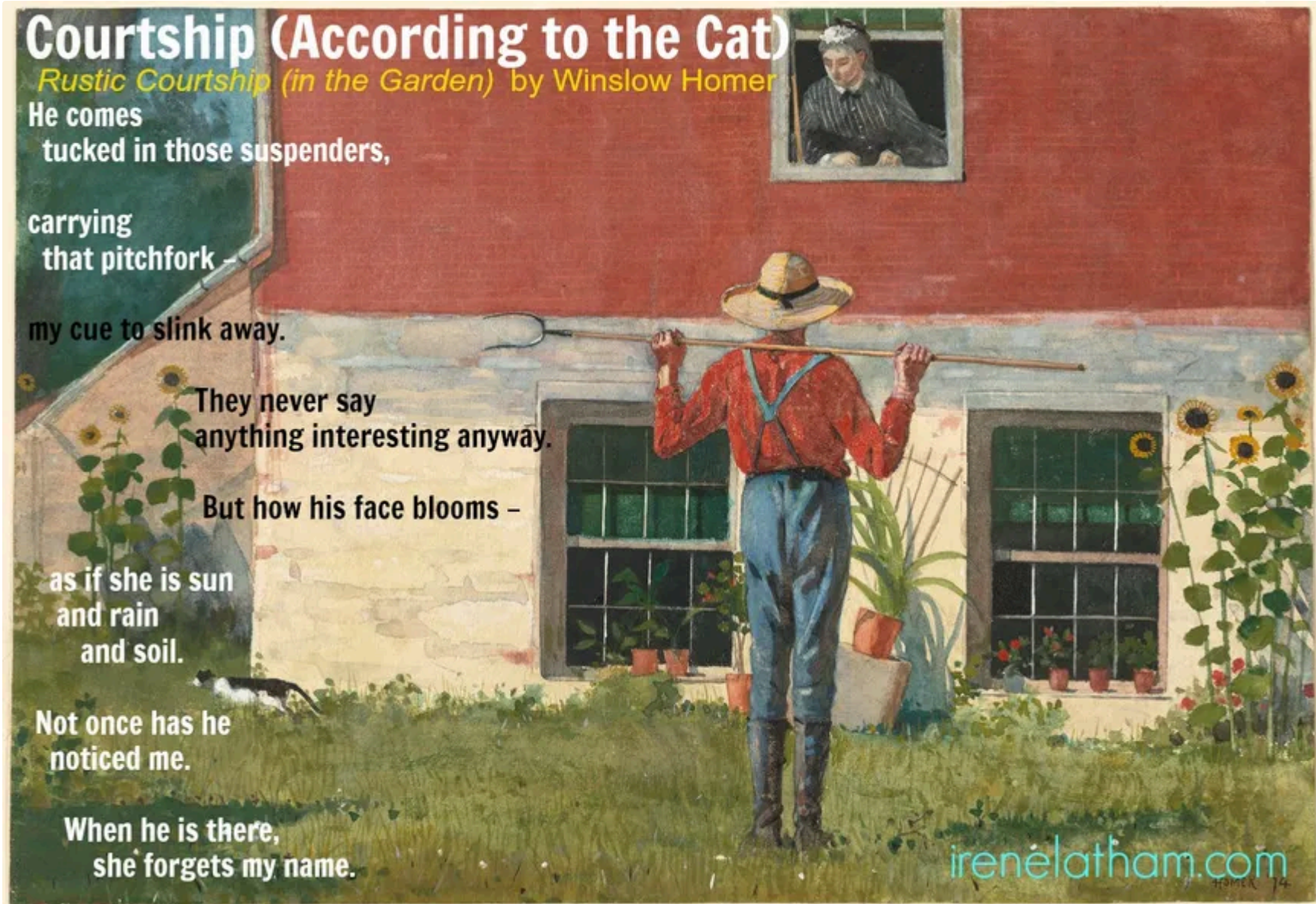
They never say
anything interesting anyway.

But how his face blooms –

as if she is sun
and rain
and soil.

Not once has he
noticed me.

When he is there,
she forgets my name.



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Courage

Planting Corn by Stanley Mazur

The seed
in the apron
pocket
doesn't know
it will grow
into corn

yet it never
complains
about the dark
or the dirt
or the farmer's
calloused hands –

instead
it simply
waits
for light.



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