

# The Metal and the Flower

By P. K. Page

Intractable between them grows  
a garden of barbed wire and roses.  
Burning briars like flames devour  
their too innocent attire.  
Dare they meet, the blackened wire  
tears the intervening air.

Trespassers have wandered through  
texture of flesh and petals.  
Dogs like arrows moved along  
pathways that their noses knew.  
While the two who laid it out  
find the metal and the flower  
fatal underfoot.

Black and white at midnight glows  
this garden of barbed wire and roses.  
Doused with darkness roses burn  
coolly as a rainy moon:  
beneath a rainy moon or none  
silver the sheath on barb and thorn.

Change the garden, scale and plan;  
wall it, make it annual.  
There the briary flower grew.  
There the brambled wire ran.  
While they sleep the garden grows,  
deepest wish annuls the will:  
perfect still the wire and rose.

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Source: *The Hidden Room* (The Porcupine's Quill, 1997)



Patricia Kathleen Page was born in England and moved to Alberta, Canada at the age of four. She was educated in Winnipeg and Calgary, and also studied art in New York and Brazil. A novelist and short story writer, Page has also written an autobiography, several works for children, and painted under the name P.K. Irwin. Her work is often praised for its wit, wisdom, moral sensibility, and passionate yet objective viewpoint of human nature and relationships. In the poem "Deaf Mute in the Pear Tree," for example, Page uses vivid nature imagery to show a loving relationship between a husband and wife.