

EROS ANNE CARSON
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the prosecution of that desire. It is not a choice open to human beings, nor to any organism that is committed to living in time. Organisms struck by desire, however, tend to misprize this commitment, as we have seen. Plato gives us one further image of what happens when they do so.

Gardening for Fun and Profit

It is an image of gardens (276b-77a). Lovers and writers and cicadas are not the only ones who find themselves at odds with time. Gardeners also have occasion to wish to evade, manipulate, and defy temporal conditions. The occasions are festive ones and, according to Sokrates, on such occasions gardeners become playful and gardening does not follow serious rules. Plato introduces the subject of gardens in order to make a point about the art of writing, whose seriousness he wishes to put into question. Let us consider first the play of gardening and then the play of writing. Plato brings them into erotic intersection in the so-called "gardens of Adonis."

The gardens of Adonis were a feature of Athenian religious observance in the fifth century. During annual rituals in honor of Adonis, seeds of wheat, barley, and fennel were sown in small pots and forced to grow unseasonably fast for enjoyment during the eight days of the festival. The plants had no roots. They bloomed briefly, withered almost at once, and were pitched out the day after the festival. Their hectic lives were meant to reflect that of Adonis himself, plucked in the bloom of his youth by the goddess Aphrodite, dead in his prime as a result (Diogenes Laertius 1.14; Gow 1952, 2:295). It is the fast and beautiful career of the ideal beloved.

Sokrates adduces these gardens of Adonis as an analogy for the written word, seductive and ephemeral as it is, a simulation of living discourse. In the midst of his appraisal of writing, he turns to Phaedrus with the question:

τόδε δὴ μοι εἶπέ· ὁ νοῦν ἔχων γεωργός, ὧν σπερμάτων κήδοιτο καὶ ἔγκαρπα βούλοιτο γενέσθαι, πότερα σπουδῇ ἂν θέρους εἰς Ἀδώνιδος κήπους ἄρων χείροι θεωρῶν καλοῦς ἐν ἡμέραισιν ὀκτῶ γιγνομένου, ἢ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ παιδιᾶς τε καὶ ἑορτῆς χάριν δρῶν ἂν. ὅτε καὶ ποιοῖ· ἐφ' οἷς δὲ ἐσπούδακεν, τῇ γεωργικῇ χρώμενος ἂν τέχνῃ, σπείρας εἰς τὸ προσῆκον, ἀγαπῶν ἂν ἐν ὀγδόῳ μηνί ὅσα ἐσπείρειν τέλος λαβόντα:

Now tell me this. Do you think a sensible gardener, who cared for his seeds and wished to see them bear fruit, would plant them with serious intention in gardens of Adonis at high summer and take pleasure in watching them grow beautiful in a space of eight days? Or would he do that sort of thing, when he did it at all, only for fun or a festival? And, when he was serious, would he not apply his skill as a gardener and sow in fitting soil and be gratified when the seeds he had sown came to full bloom in the eighth month? (276b)

No gardener serious about growing plants would indulge in the hasty, cosmetic agriculture of the gardens of Adonis, Sokrates and Phaedrus proceed to agree. By the same token, no thinker serious about communicating thoughts would choose to "sow them in ink with a reed-pen" (276c). Gardens of letters, like gardens of Adonis, are sown for fun (276d). Serious thoughts need different cultivation and time to grow; planted as seeds of living speech in the ground of an appropriate soul, they will take root, ripen, and bear fruit as knowledge in due season (276e-277a). At this point in the dialogue Sokrates lays his belief candidly and emphatically before Phaedrus: serious thoughts and knowledge have their real life in philosophical conversation, not in the games of reading and writing.

Like his analogy from the tomb of Midas, Plato's analogy from gardens tells specifically against the *logos* of

Lysias with its peculiarly inorganic style of rhetoric, and generally against the cultivation of letters as a substitute for dialectic. The gardens draw our attention, even more pointedly than Midas' inscription, to the factor of time that is at the core of Plato's worry about reading and writing. Written texts make available the notion that one *knows* what one has merely *read*. For Plato this notion is a dangerous delusion; he believes the reach for knowledge to be a process that is necessarily lived out in space and time. Attempts to shortcut the process, or package it for convenient reuse, as in the form of a written treatise, are a denial of our commitment to time and cannot be taken seriously. Plants that bloom for eight days with no roots are an image of this quick-access *sophia*. At the same time, the urgent agriculture of Adonis reminds us of Lysias' erotic *logos*, which starts where it should end and achieves its rhetorical and conceptual purposes by a violent shortcut through the beginning stages of love. In their wish to control time, then, writers and gardeners intersect in Plato's analogy. But let us look closer at the analogy. There is a third angle here and, as with the myth of Midas, it unfolds in an image of the damage that lovers can do to those they love.

Consider the plants of Adonis, forced too quickly to their *akmē*, held at the peak of their bloom while the festival lasts, discarded the next day: this is an image of how the conventional *erastēs* uses his *paidika*. It is an image of one human being exploiting another by controlling the time of his life.

ἔτι τοίνυν ἀγαμον, ἀπαιδα, ἀοικον ὅτι πλείστον χρόνον παιδικὰ ἔραστῆς εὐξαιτ' ἂν γενέσθαι, τὸ αὐτοῦ γλυκὺ ὡς πλείστον χρόνον καρποῦσθαι ἐπιθυμῶν.

The lover will passionately wish his *paidika* to remain unmarried and childless and homeless for as long a time as possible, since it is his desire to reap