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# The Herb Garden

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# The Herb Garden

## **Abstract**

My mother before she died insisted I should have a herb garden  
Something in her English soul amid rough  
South Africans Called for the tenderness of mint  
The old scent of lavender and sage

## The Herb Garden

My mother before she died insisted  
I should have a herb garden  
Something in her English soul  
amid rough South Africans  
Called for the tenderness of mint  
The old scent of lavender and sage

They arrived in soggy pages of *The Star*  
With a spade taller than herself  
She dug them into my backyard  
Before I was ready for them  
A cigarette tightly in her lips  
Explaining chives made life worthwhile

That is how she died in her own  
Garden of sweet remembrance  
Very frail then with a bucket and spade  
The size we children used for play  
Always finding the sun too hot the soil  
Far too dry for the gentler herbs

Today after the long heart-stopping drought  
My mother's bed of lost spices  
Has so flourished I have cut it back  
And the mint is in the crevices of fingers  
The sage under my very nails  
And I remember her every gesture.