

*Andrea S. Ponce*

## **WHY I AM NOT A GARDENER**

I am not a gardener, I am a teacher.  
Why? Well, I think it's because  
I don't have the green thumb to keep plants alive.

One day I think about planting herbs—  
I like them, they are green,  
they belong in salads  
I don't plant them. Instead, I explain  
similes and metaphors to my students.  
Tell them a poem is like a seed,  
or a garden, or something.  
They look at me, waiting for more,  
an explanation. A week later I buy a tomato plant and  
it sits in my kitchen bright and red  
a kind of promise. I water it at first then,  
I forget. The leaves turn yellow, the tomatoes brown  
I meant to use them for dinner.

Meanwhile, my students are writing stories about  
video games, adventures, even their pets.  
I read their pages, and in some way  
everything is growing  
weeks go by, months pass, my plant is dead,  
the pot cracked and dry.  
But the pages in my students' notebooks  
keep sprouting new stories,

new creativity, new poems,  
vibrant and colorful,  
like something I had planted  
without realizing their academic germination.