

The Desired Fragrance

My mother would light a half used cigarette just to watch
the flames flicker and burn away,
her finger tips permanently marked
the same way her heart had been for years.

A side effect of trying to hold onto hope,
hope for her fifteen-year marriage that failed
because of my father's illness that caused him to desire the
fragrance of freshly bloomed roses, a perfume
that my mother was unable to find.

No matter how many times she bathed herself
in Botox and creams, she never smelled like a fresh rose.
There's an expiration date etched in her forehead
that marks a life half lived.
A reminder that she, too, will eventually be
plucked, unwanted like a wilted flower.

A Mother's Touch

I dig my hands deep
into the earth, basking
in the familiarity that even
worms seek the comfort
of another as they curve
into the crevices between
my fingers sticking to me even as
I pull my hands up from the ground
reminding me of how I would
cling to the leg of my mother fearing
the winds harsh hisses as they drew
closer. I start to shake the small creatures off
momentarily feeling bad as they plummet a
good distance for them to the ground, only to
watch mesmerized as bruised and battered
leaves fall from the tree only to
cover the poor worms like a blanket.