

ŒH &13 ODW

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The Sound of Rhubarb

It is dark. Perfect blackness expands over the whole field, an area of approximately ten by twenty meters. The soil feels nice and humid. It is soft to the touch and bounces back under light pressure. There is the looming impression that it does not go deep. It sits on something hard. Maybe there is concrete below, or brick; the same cold moist material like the walls and the ceiling. The temperature in the field is even, agreeable. There is no wind. The stalks crack.

Every now and then men enter the shed. They have placed candles all over the field. The ceiling is very low so the men hunch over. They walk around touching the plants, inspecting them, cutting them. The candles flicker despite the lack of a breeze. Hunchback shadows dance along the walls in adoration of the pink fruit. Then they leave again.

In the mere darkness, the rhubarb stalks strive for light. They grow and grow and grow. In hope for sunlight, in hope of relief, the plants reach out from the soil with their fleshy pink stalks. The heads are not dark green and big-leafed but tiny, curly, pale-green crowns. They look synthetic, like plastic. They are shiny and flawless. The rhubarb pushes so hard you can hear them grow. You hear their longing. The stalks crack.

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