

Heirloom

Dad always grew tomatoes
They were his pride and joy
So when the lady outside Home Depot
Offered me the box and said,
'Do you have a garden?'
I didn't say no, though I should have
I said, 'We have a theatre...'
And somehow that was just as good.
It grows like a weed in Hollywood
In the cracks between Film and Industry
It was a grease monkey's garage, then a shooting range
But only now
Can we call the people who run it clowns.

We put the tomatoes out
On the air conditioning supply unit
To try to add some poetry to that phrase.
Today is tomatoes in the parking lot
Tomorrow is white roof, filtered water, solar
panels, cycle racks, urban garden, green
building, public plaza, artist's village
To build a cultural heritage for the city
I once heard described as 'Hell's parking lot'
Tomato by tomato
Because nobody dreams as hard as poets
And nobody works as hard as clowns.

Brian Sonia-Wallace is an artist living and working in Los Angeles after a lengthy sojourn studying sustainability in Scotland. This creative expression, the poem *Heirloom*, is about a project he is currently involved in that works toward the 'green' refurbishment and growth of Art/Works Theatre on Santa Monica Boulevard in Hollywood. Heirloom is defined as a valued possession passed down through future generations, or a plant cultivar that is open-pollinated (non-commercial) and so has exhibits superior flavour and unusual coloration. The theatre may be considered an heirloom, in both senses.

This poem touches nearly all of the environments discussed in *Unpaving Our Future*, as the built environment of a green theatre is also a reflection of the environmental, cultural and economic realities of a city built on cars and film. The gift of tomatoes that sparked this poem was a gesture that had significance not only on the levels urban gardening and food, but also in a broader personal and cultural context as an expression of community and caring. This poem is about first steps toward a better world.

You can find more information on the artist and his projects at briansoniawallace.tumblr.com.

And more information about the projects at Art/Works Theatre at www.artworkstheatre.com.