



Perennials

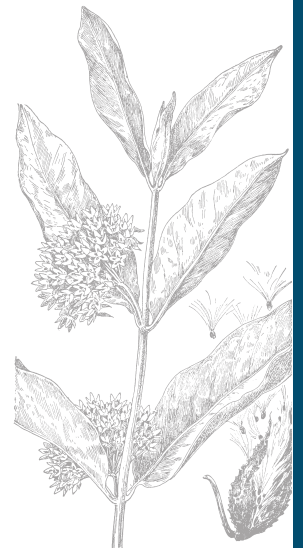
Let us tend to this city like a garden.
Listen to our roots and honor those who planted the seeds.
Shield it from the harsh winds of divide.
Plant the milkweed next to the bearded iris.
Our differences will only make us stronger.

Let us pollinate our city with love.
Cover it with grass clippings and leaves.
Make it livable for the Eastern swallowtails and black bumblebees.
This is all of our homes.

Let us drench our city with hope.
So, when there are seasons of drought,
our spirits will not sag,
but stand tall with the promise of rain.

Let us fertilize our city with compassion,
so the soil remains rich
and budding with life.

Let us prune our beliefs so new ideas can grow,
and watch as our future unfurls before us like flower petals.
Our children will harvest the fruit we've grown,
save the seeds,
and build their own gardens,
lush with possibilities.



2024 Roanoke Youth Poet Laureate
ELANI SPENCER

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Inaugural Poem
roanokearts.org/ypl