

cavare sangue da una rapa

As of late, much of the work to do here is digging. The spades are dull, so I've taken to using my hands.

If you force your hand down deep enough, if you repeat enough times, you can compact so much dirt under your fingernails that it takes a knife to get it all out. The knives I keep sharp.

When I was younger, I used to dig for fun, dig in places that like to be dug: the beach; my grandparents' back yard – I used to be so good at digging that they designated me basil planter.

Sometimes, as a reward, nonno would let me get first pick of the basil leaves and I'd pop them in my mouth like chips. Sometimes, I'd press them in a pile and put them in my pocket for later.

There is no basil here; nothing worthwhile enough to save. To be good is to work. I am good. The land will provide if stewarded properly. The land grinds fingers to nubs.

strange the things you miss

if it were up to me
your ugly rain jacket
would be hung on the coathook by my door
would be drip drying
forming tiny pools on the linoleum.

it is not up to me
and so your jacket – mildew green –
never finds a kinder description
dries on the rack in your hallway
stains the rug.

the hook stays bare
my floor stays dry.
these things, too, are a loss.