

Wendell Smith

Ben Watkins' Photo of His Friend's Garden

His camera catches
the cabbages and carrots,
corn,
beans, peas, onions,
lettuces and leeks,
tomatoes, squashes,
broccoli and beets.
Arranged at right angles
to the weathered barns
and weeded clean
they give the scene
a renaissance perspective.

The photo's instant
instantly provokes my tears,
my tears for what?
The photo's artistry in praise of art:
the garden that with fall will fade
to be obliterated by the spade
yet resurrected be
from spring to spring
until the gardener become a shade.

And when the sun expands
into our orbit
what will be left of this
our garden, earth?
Anything of which it might be asked,
"Was it worth the blood we've shed,
over who would own the keys
to our 'finely drawn infinities'?" [1]

[1] See "The Clown Dances in the Clearing by Night" in *Maximum Security Ward and Other Poems* by Ramon Guthrie, edited by Sally M. Gall, Persea Books, New York, 1984