

PAMELA HOBART CARTER

Marvel

Grow wild. Delight
in shadowy places.
Flower in May or June.
Seed hopes of a sweet
and warming quality.
Be all manner of comforts
every morning. Let a syrup—
made with juice and sugar—
be kept in every house.
Mind the heart. Help expel
melancholy spirits. Remedy
the stings of a scorpion,
the bitings of mad dogs.
Sit in a surfeit of mushrooms.
Take nourishment
to persons with fevers.
Root in gardens.
Add a word or two to the wind.

Virtues follow—honey to vinegar.

ABOUT THE POEM

“Marvel” was created from the *Complete Herbal* by Nicholas Culpeper (1653). About the poem and the process of composing it, Pamela Hobart Carter writes:

I pulled each word, unchanged and in (almost) the same sequence it appears, from the Avens through Beans sections of Culpeper’s *Complete Herbal*. All punctuation, line breaks, and stanza choices are mine. I had fun mixing practical imperatives with oddball ones and selecting for the upbeat.

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