

MELISSA GWYN

Fabergenic (Jr Miss), 2015
Oil on Panel, 36 x 24 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

ALEX CHERNOW

kindergarden

Roll your body in the dirt until your skin forgets its name,
plant seeds in your pores, rows of tomatoes in the soft crevices
of your body.
You are beautiful like the soil is beautiful, like the dirt that
feeds the roses—
Good things find their way out from within you,
appear like magic.

Or maybe you are the magic, like a seed
(some of us are)
small and plain but holding secrets tall as redwoods
with concentrated life bundled tight inside the smallness that
is your being,
ready to unfurl.

I want to hear the gospel according to the soft slope between
your shoulder blades,
to bury myself in you and emerge a woman strong enough
to let herself let go.

If you go to the garden in my grandmother's yard where she
would grow radishes I only got to taste once a year,
you will find me buried there,
just beneath the orderly rows and the seed packages on
popsicle sticks that served as labels,
tangled and lawless as the veiny roots that cling to the earth
like children cling to their mothers.

Ask me what it is like to be a womanchild and I will have
no answers

but even in deserts, things find a way to

bloom

Alex Chernow is a poet, nurse, and birth doula from Maryland, currently residing in New Orleans. She holds degrees from NYU and Johns Hopkins University, and was the winner of *Boulevard* magazine's 2014 Contest for Emerging Poets. She is currently working on her first poetry collection, *It wouldn't be called longing if you only did it for a little while*.