

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Grant Quackenbush: “Houseplant”

Grant Quackenbush · Wednesday, October 14th, 2020

“Houseplant” is a wonderfully well-made poem. From the beginning, we are told that something odd, wonderful, and magical is happening, “I water my ficus with milk.” Every line that follows delivers what is promised in the first. As a reader, I cannot stop reading the poem because each turn and twist is enjoyable and fun.

The pacing is perfect, and the humor is on key with the subject and theme of the poem, “‘Kick his ass!’ my wife says to the ficus. // She laughs, spreads her legs. Says c’mere.” Nothing is wasted in this poem: the lines, the words, the punctuation (e.g. ‘c’mere’). Oh, let’s not talk about that ending as I’m easily embarrassed. This is such a joy ride of a poem!

— Bunkong Tuon

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## Houseplant

I water my ficus with milk. It grows  
a mouth, sharp teeth. It yells at me.  
“Asshole!” it shouts. “Put some Miracle-

Gro in here! Put me in a bigger pot!”  
I do, and give it more milk. I feed it  
meatloaf, bacon, porterhouse steak. Its roots

branch out the bottom and break  
into legs, two twigs into muscular arms.  
It sprouts a monstrous cock, hikes

its pot up like a soiled diaper. Smokes bud,  
walks around. Does finger push-ups  
on the ground. It opens my wallet,

removes a twenty. Dons my leather jacket.  
When I rush to stop it, it shoves me.

“Kick his ass!” my wife says to the ficus.

She laughs, spreads her legs. Says c'mere  
with her middle finger. The ficus grins. It enters  
the bedroom. It plants in her its seed.

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