MENTHA SPICATA

Elizabeth Switaj

The Wisdom of Silence By Mahsan Ghazianzad

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Mentha Spicata

mint sprig she gave me expanded to twenty pots
whittled from broken down water
jugs and she
got married before the first die back
and the mint came back
three times on the island—the sprig
cannot be separated from her offspring, no matter how we split
—she came back

to the island, never me

and every girl whose lipstick shamed me
grew up to claim neurodivergence
she will never be alone like me
& the mint that can only reproduce herself

no, of course I don't want to gatekeep ND
to deny another's disability—of course I am
like other girls
tell me
my subcosmopolitan distribution is wrong

hybridization occurs naturally where species' ranges overlap
I love like fired clay
holding me far from others' ranges
every time I try to spread I die
and if I want to be adult, I must admit that it's a little bit my fault
empathy is a two-body problem mint doesn't have two bodies

she gave me the sprig to banish trauma into leaves
I didn't understand
how many leaves have died since then
falling, always, in opposite pairs