

First Frost

18x12.25 in. Collagraph. 2024.

Artist: Amy Pretorius

I remember the first year my brother and I had to pick all the tomatoes before the first frost. My mum grew bright red tomatoes on the south side of our house, but they were sensitive plants. The weather had forecast frost, and the tomatoes would not survive the freeze. However, the still-green fruits could be picked to ripen in our windows and thus be saved. So my brother and I were sent outside to pick all the tomatoes we could find. We spent hours picking tomatoes in the chilly fall air, our fingers going numb as we filled our buckets with green, orange and red fruits until the sun set.

I don't live at home anymore, and my brother and I grew apart during our teenage years. My mother's garden was a carefully cultivated space full of life, and when I think of home, I think of the birds chirping in the trees, of reading in the shade, of dinners in the garden eating food my mother grew herself. I find solace in the space of my memories in this print; the shadowy realm of time past; the tomatoes a ghostly structure of my childhood.



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