

Out in the Garden

Dykes To Watch Out For

By Alison Bechdel

Kathie Sawyer

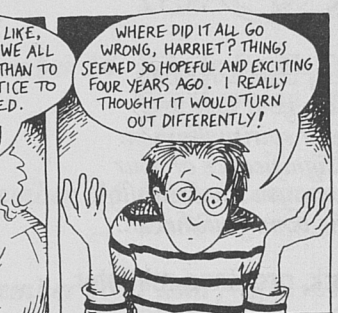
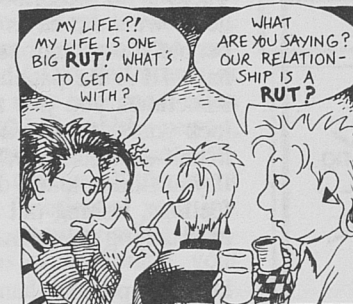
My garden exists most completely in my head. The planted spaces throughout my property are mere attempts to recreate what I see in my mind's eye. Each gardener I know spends lots of time explaining what things will look like when finished. I've heard stories of trellises on order, walls to be built, ponds in the planning. We all seem to live in our own individual visions of a garden.

Last week I walked through the ever-developing gardens of my friend, Craig. He always seems to be building, creating, and planting three months behind his visions. I often wonder how he lives through the winter, burning with his dreams of creating. I began to ponder the differences, the unique personal themes that each of us develops.

I welcome the spreading and self-sowing to the messy abandon of my gardens. The more the evening primrose reproduces, the more I have to move about, placing it here and there, welcoming the bright cheery yellow of its flower and the rosy warmth of the frost-changed stems and leaves. My friend Rique speaks of quiet Japanese gardens. He translates his dreams into beautifully shaped bonsai. A common roadside apple tree enhances my rock garden, thanks to the beauty of his dreams.

Time always shapes my garden. I consider myself a gardener/hobbyist. To me this requires **only** about forty hours a week. I would gladly work at it full time if it weren't for my employment outside the garden which is needed to pay the bills. The gardener's vision can cause one to gaze on a friend's garden and see only coveted varieties and the perfection of design and planning. This same vision looks at one's own garden and sees spaces, weeds, deadheads, and imperfect mix of color.

I am grateful for the dreams and visions of gardeners. We join together in friendship, exchanging plants and ideas. We share that special space to which we can move when the cruelty and insensitivity of the world wounds us. ▼



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