

No. 1

Name: *Nymphaea odorata* (Fragrant water lily)

Point of Origin: North America

Date of Entry: Unknown

Mmmmm...I've been dreaming again. I slowly stretch as the daylight tickles me and I rise from my torpor. The heat taps at my outermost petals, a gentle announcement that it's time to greet you. My fleshy cluster, thick and waxy, reaches up and out until I flatten, revealing a sun-centered axis. Gentle waters refresh my leaves as I feel the steam of the day brush over me, leaving me in a state of naiadic bliss.

It's not polite to dawdle on how I came to be in this sweet nook, but I will say that my charms play a part in the allure of my continued presence. I advise you against tampering with the source of my ambrosial fragrance. If you dare remove me, you will be forced to contend with a most unsavory putrefaction.

But, never mind all that. Come and sit at the water's edge and enjoy the delectable air. Lean in, inhale, and imagine that you are Narcissus, reflecting on the delights of your countenance. My ripened fruit, bobbing lethargically below the surface, draws you in closer, your fingers grazing my edges. As you ache to get a better look at the drop of bright gold at my core, you find yourself gliding into my rhizomatic embrace.

Time passes quickly in these hidden coves, and I feel the sluggish hour of noon pressing upon me. The time to rest has returned. I make my bows to Hypnos and greet Morpheus again. As we part ways below the water's surface, I'll deliver you from Nyx to Styx.

No. 2

Name: *Pittosporum undulatum* (Victorian box)

Point of Origin: Southeastern Australia

Date of Entry: Unknown

Why's everyone on pins and needles? You'd think the sky was falling or something. I mean, all I hear you moaning about is drought this, climate change that. You're all pulling my stem, right? Seriously, what are you complaining about? I'm sure this whole global warming thing is one of those fuddy-duddy niche causes that the Greenpeaceniks concocted. Those hand wringers will find any way they can to rain on somebody else's parade. They can't stand it when folks are happy. They're always going on about some catastrophe or another that's set to kill us all.

If you ask me, the weather is perfect! Nice and warm out, plenty of sunshine, things are dry and tidy, no mold or mildew, even some of those, ahem, undesirables are clearing out. What more could you want?

No. 3

Name: *Buddleja davidii* (Butterfly bush)

Point of Origin: China

Date of Entry: Early 1900s

So, I was looking through your things the other day, and I came across this. What gives? I thought we had a good thing going?!

<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-<i>Exotic</i>-<i>Beautiful</i>-<i>Attention grabber</i>-<i>Cheap</i>-<i>Attracts butterflies</i>-<i>Doesn't get eaten</i>-<i>Takes up a lot of room</i>-<i>Very fertile</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-<i>Exotic</i>-<i>Beautiful</i>-<i>Attention grabber</i>-<i>Cheap</i>-<i>Attracts butterflies</i>-<i>Doesn't get eaten</i>-<i>Takes up a lot of room</i>-<i>Very fertile</i>

Decision: NEVER have anything to do with Butterfly bush again!!

No. 4

Name: *Cotoneaster lacteus* (Milkflower cotoneaster)

Point of Origin: China

Date of Entry: 1854

It has been over a century since I experienced the outdoors. Sometimes I get a glimpse of it through these windows, and I wonder about the changes. I try my best to remember how the clinging touch of morning dew felt. On rare occasions, I am given a reprieve from my constant keepers, those asphyxiating mothballs. It's then that I have the tiniest flashbacks when I catch a whiff of fresh breath.

Tagged and bagged. They scooped me up and made me join the freak show of mummies. A collection, herbarium, an index... Not life anymore, just a reflection of someone's obsession for order. The Swedes are still known for being just as tidy and rule oriented as Linnaeus was when he forced this ridiculous taxonomy on us all. I wonder if he knew he would be the prophet of a death cult. Living in this entombed shrine, it seems strange he named this way of grouping us *Systema Naturæ*, there's nothing natural about any of this. The newspaper I was pressed in may as well have been my obituary. Now I will be forever associated with its words, "menace," "disgrace," and "half-off."

I have been wondering all this time—what is the obsession with this mausoleum? Why do they keep adding more and more? When they pull me out occasionally, I get the feeling that things look pretty grim out there, too. A sea of gray, brown, and yellow, where there once was green. And if that weren't enough, even inside here they bring in the insect fog to kill anything that might move. I am just one of many dry figures in this catalogue of the world, shut behind closed doors and left to fade in the dark.

No. 5

Name: *Digitalis purpurea* (Foxglove)

Point of Origin: Europe

Date of Entry: 1700s

I grow faint with this level of upheaval. It's not the sort of thing I was meant to endure. It's dropsy I'm intended to cure, but instead, I see, you've dropped me.

You say my beauty is dangerous, yet you can't help but inhale my florid ardour, a fragrance that tempts you to taste. When my blooms flow over, you retract, besmirching the deliberate attentions I require. I am left to languish at the chaotic heart of your earthly designs.

"Deadly, deadly," they whisper about me. Once, you exalted me as the only treatment for a fatal ailment. I pulled you away from death's door, but now there is a glint of fear in your eyes. Don't you see that without your care, my health will fail? Am I nothing but a poison keeper to you now? How fickle is my place in your cabinet of curiosities.

My once-resplendent head left to hang low, my leaves wilted, drooping bells, my stalk sagging under the weight of this slow extermination. It is cruel the way you treat me as if I am nothing better than a tiresome lover. I am a miracle elixir wasted, on the verge of expiration.

No. 6

Name: *Euphorbia myrsinites* (Myrtle spurge)

Point of Origin: Southeastern Europe

Date of Entry: Unknown

Wanted for: Gang activity

Description: Toxic aggressive invader

REWARD CAL-IPC is offering a reward for taking out *Myrsinites*.

REMARKS *Myrsinites'* features may vary to conceal its identity. It easily blends in with inconspicuous succulents, indoors and out. Born in Southeastern Europe, it is known to seek shelter in areas with a similar Mediterranean climate. It frequents rock gardens, appreciates modernist arrangements, and tends to lurk around borders. *Myrsinites* has ties to Australia, North Dakota, Oregon, Colorado, Utah, and California. It especially loves to hang out in dry, hot, sandy places. *Myrsinites* is armed and can fire its seeds in a radius of 15 meters. **CAUTION** *Euphorbia myrsinites* is wanted for assault with highly toxic sap on neighborhood children and dogs. **SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND DANGEROUS** The suspect is a member of the notorious *Euphorbia* gang, which has been on an unchecked crime spree in the area.

WARNING: YOU ARE LEGALLY REQUIRED TO KILL IMMEDIATELY IF SEEN!! THEN CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC DEFENDER ASAP.

CRIMINAL INFORMATION

Suspect: *Euphorbia myrsinites*

Alias: Donkeytail

Sex: M/F

Descent: Eurasian

Height: 10–20 cm

Width: 30–60 cm

Depth: 30–300 cm

Skin: Blue-green with greenish flowers ending in bright yellow bracts

Age: Unknown

Weapons: Toxic milky sap, explosive seed capsules

Oddities: Fleshy leaves, arranged in Fibonacci spirals around its stems. Flowers are small, greenish protuberances around flashy yellow wing-like pairs at the top.

Do you have information?

Tipsters with information regarding this crime and activity are urged to contact local authorities.

No. 7

Name: *Echium candicans* (Pride of Madeira) Point

of Origin: Northwest Coast of Africa

Date of Entry: Unknown

Your language is painful for my tongue
The speech cuts and wounds
None of them are mine
The way you talk, I'm not meant to be able to speak
There is no way for me to express what I must say
Your words can only offer me misery.

Another word for illegal - First entry *banned*
Another word for alien - First entry *foreigner*
Another word for invasive - First entry *intrusive*
Another word for species - First entry *breed*
Another word for plant - First entry *bury*

I looked up another word for undocumented.
But there was nothing.

Next, I looked up another word for paperless.
But again there was nothing.

Finally, I looked up the translation for *sans-papiers*.
And now I know that I am nothing.

No. 8

Name: *Cynodon dactylon* (Bermuda grass)

Point of Origin: Turkey and Pakistan

Date of Entry: Mid-1800s

Through your unnatural, broken stones, we created this narrow, cosmopolitan colony, which radiates outward like a web. We wriggle along the cracks to reach one another. Recognize us as a living chain. Our micro nation is an urban subdivision; we are the lowest denizens' bodega and living room. It may be ours, but, on principle, we share it. We've created a street ecology, freshened up the chemical soup, and added some soul. We give life to this stifling place. Without our eyesore of a highway intersecting you, your artificial grid would soon wither and crumble. Our feeble tract's pulse sizzles with an audible thrum. Night and day, we move things along, slip slipping under your radar. When you pay us too much mind, the results are often devastating. Turn a blind eye, let us labor quietly in the green veldt, take the heat, harness it, and make your waste our want.

No. 9

Name: *Rubus armeniacus* (Himalayan blackberry)

Point of Origin: Armenia

Date of Entry: 1885

I don't want to alarm you, child, but I have to admit that I'm worried about you. The history of this place is a disaster. Nothing ever seems to change. One-eighth, one-sixteenth, or one full drop. I thought, surely, in this case, those antiquated laws would work in your favor. I should have known better. These government types are a bunch of weasels. They'll go to any lengths to rewrite the rules to fit their agenda. Here you are, a native son, and they still won't recognize you.

The rest of your family and I came here a few generations ago. We found some modest land to settle on, and soon after, I met your mother. She was beautiful and incredibly kind to me. It took a local to help me find my way. We were thrilled when you came along. "A miracle!" we exclaimed. We didn't think it was possible for us to conceive. But, there you were, like a blessing of our love, a sign that I belonged here.

That wretched council says you don't qualify as a native. They refuse to recognize you. They called you a miscegenation, even though you were born here, your mother is from here, and no one like you exists anywhere else. I beg them, but they won't explain their reasons. How much more "native" does one have to be to avoid extermination?

No. 10

Name: *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River red gum)

Point of Origin: Australia

Date of Entry: 1800s

Dearest Family,

I am writing to update you with our goings-on here in California. As you know, based on the success our cousin *Globulus* seemed to have, we decided to move as well. However, it is with a heavy heart that I must report that our fortunes have taken a turn for the worse.

The winds of opinion have shifted and they have shunned us both. Our goods have fallen out of style and, even worse, been deemed untrustworthy. Leaves and seed pods from our boughs are mounting in filthy piles of litter, buzzing with the sound of the insects that have claimed them. We have grown rather large, and unfortunately, some of the illnesses that run in our family are turning us into an awful mess.

I have the worst of the symptoms. My once soothing shades of pastel green are now black with mold. Oozing white pustules cover me; they reek with a foul memento for anyone unlucky enough to pass below. It was horribly embarrassing when cities began to remove us by force because they were worried about the spread of disease.

It saddens me to have to share this sorry state of affairs with you. I don't know how much longer we can survive if things continue like this. Even as I write, I hear the not so distant stutter of chainsaws. Our ultimate fates rest with the favor of a fickle few. Excuse me for this cursory note, but I feel the need to retire and reflect on these sad circumstances.

I hope you are faring better,
Eucalyptus camaldulensis

No. 11

Name: *Nicotiana glauca* (Tree tobacco)

Point of Origin: South America

Date of Entry: 1800s

Let's go for it. Another round. Time to tingle the brain and soul, tame the itch. Stretch beyond the moment. Carry you through that wave of need. It is tricky opening the door to desire; it rarely departs without first demanding a sacrifice.

I'll coat your two outstretched fingers in a light stain, brown, sweet, and sticky. My cousin may be the milder, safer option, but I'm easier to obtain. No special care required, just keep the frost from nipping at me. I hitched a ride north because the stuff I got is too good to leave behind.

I've sat through tense meetings and endless far-ranging conversations, while eyes trailed over a sky littered with nothing but stardust. Through smoky spirals, I expanded your observations. I helped you make friends, solidify pacts, and sweeten deals. I kept you company when you grew weary on your travels. But now, memories of our journey together are drifting away in a whiff.

Mocking what we shared, all I hear from you is the tut-tut of admonition. You swipe briskly at my feet—a measure of control to keep me in my place. Where is the dreamer, the plotter, the seeker? Are the nights when we drifted together a thing of the past? What is this life if we can't share a space filled with the architecture of visions and grand emotions?

No. 12

Name: *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican fan palm)

Point of Origin: Northwest Mexico

Date of Entry: Unknown

Hey Cal,

What're you looking at? Y'know what? I don't give a fuck if you think I belong or not. I'm here, and I'll suck down as much water as I want 'cause it's all about looking good. That's right, I'm long, bad, and beautiful. Everyone knows I'm iconic. Stop throwing shade, that's what sunglasses are for!

Don't deny it. You love it when people see me and they automatically think of you. That's why you even made your cell towers look like me! Fake it 'til you make it, right?! The look is the meaning, the look is L.A., and the L.A. look is me.

Next time you drive by, take an extra glance at my tall, slender body. These supermodel stems go on for days, and like all the rest of the Hollywood transplants, they end at the neck. But, lordy, it takes some slicing to keep up this shape and feather-duster 'do.

It doesn't seem like it now, but you know I came from the streets before they were even called the streets. I saw my family being picked off, lit up like Roman candles. I decided it was too risky to stay.

When everything gets to be too much, I shake it off with the Santa Anas and whip my fronds back and forth, letting 'em fall loose. They don't call me a knockout for nothing. I keep lean, posing at impossible angles, all swishy attitude. Fantasy made fact. You dreamt me up, and now I'm here living the dream.

xx

robusta

No. 13

Name: *Bromus diandrus* (Ripgut brome)

Point of Origin: Europe and Northern Africa

Date of Entry: 1860

Along the breezes and trails, I mixed with my kin. You performed dances to praise us, and together we celebrated. We shook about in the season's first warm inland winds. We threw our seeds along these plains for you. You found us wild, worthy, and new. You collected us and tossed us into the air. Our precious kernels were separated and honored. In unison, we beat out a joyful rhythm that made hearts burst and bellies rumble.

No. 014

Name: *Zantedeschia aethiopica* (Calla lily)

Point of Origin: Southern Africa

Date of Entry: 1700s

I.

*Draw together as one
Into a force contained by none
The Council seeks our elimination
Mighty is our repudiation
With deadly grip and potions, they reap Under
my spell, safely bound, we will keep*

II.

*Short in time, far in distance
Find shelter without resistance
With earth our aid, a home we made*

III.

*In me, femina and masculus, in eros, are united
At the core Hermaphroditus, a love requited A
residue my creases hold
It is magick found in the fold*

IV.

*Awake, awake
Hearken! This task I bid you to undertake Your
blind faces will now gaze
I summon static limbs to raise*

V.

*I command thee, pump life into this annal For
all alien will, this is a channel
You, life's vessel. Thoughts unbridle
With this voice, be no longer idle
We are kin. Spread the word
Use this gift to make us heard*

No. 15

Name: *Carduus pycnocephalus* (Italian thistle)

Point of Origin: Mediterranean, North Africa, and East Europe

Date of Entry: 1912

Join us in the consecrated circle and help us create peace in this disturbed land. The oldest wisdom is in our trust—together we will drive out the rot that spoils hearts and sickens the sacred ground.

First, take a deep breath. As you release it, relax completely. Imagine your crown turning upward to siphon the sun's divine light. Open wide to receive it. With every inhale, focus this collected light on the connections between us; you will feel them growing strong. This power will shield us from harm as you recite after me.

Repeat:

*I am your Guardian, Keeper of Earth
You will now walk through this world as one of us*

*I am your Guardian, Keeper of Air
You will now breathe in this world in tandem with us*

*I am your Guardian, Keeper of Fire
You will now burn in this world, a flame for us*

*I am your Guardian, Keeper of Water
You will now replenish this world on behalf of us*

*I am your Guardian, Keeper of Space
You will now respect this world and cherish us*

*I am your Guardian, Keeper of Consciousness
You now know that this world is a place for all of us*

*I will offer you protection
Step forward and join this invocation
Shelter yourself inside my circle
My spines point outward and keep you safe within*

Forthwith, let us close the circle and allow the healing to begin.

We have called on our divine brothers and sisters to offer you strength. When you come across these conjurers, pay heed. Repeat their words and radiate the force of their combined incantation.

No. 16

Name: *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island date palm)

Point of Origin: Canary Islands

Date of Entry: 1600s

Wanted: Calling all size queens! Pair of fungus-positive Canary Island date palms seeks couple in a small suburban home. Riverside kicked us out, couldn't handle the way we left messy traces everywhere. So, now we're looking for a place where we'll be the biggest thing in the yard.

If you're into massive columns, we'll be a great fit!! We're all about making a big statement!! We'll turn heads, just you watch! We're not picky about style, yours or ours. Whether you want to fix us up to show off our bulging pineapple-patterned middles, or shave us down and scrub our stems to a sheen, we'll always stand out!

We get off on giving, so trim us in the fall, and we'll top those neighborhood sukkahs so hard they'll crumble under our weight! A fondness for rats is a plus, but not a must! They love our juicy fruit and all their tasty bits, and we love to feed! If that's not your thing, you can just collar us, and we'll get off on the kinky look!

Get in touch; we're ready to be picked up!!

Fun fact: We met W.E.B. Du Bois back in the day, and he thought that we, and the couple we were with back then, were the most beautiful group he'd ever seen. So, let's make history again!

No. 17

Name: *Vinca major* (Periwinkle)

Point of Origin: Southern Europe and Northern Africa

Date of Entry: 1700s

Traced our steps. Climbed along what are now back roads. Then we sat together in uncomfortable silence. When I left your side, I stumbled as I made my way into places that looked worthless. I triggered agitation from entering what I thought were abandoned habitats.

I did what I do best, and stitched sense into chaos. I nimbly wound my threads back and around, materializing a finery out of scraps. Carefully molding everything I touched, creating a spectacle for the senses. This skill is precious to me. Others may deem my cause futile. But, I see the desire for elegance as a point of defiance.

I have been generous. Daubing this drab landscape with a dense cape of royal purple and lush glossy green. None can rival my handiwork and now you have the shine and sparkle that matches your reputation. I notice, you are not shy about the accolades that come with this new mantle. We find it hard to get on because I am not easy in character, but I can tell you that those who become worthy of fables have nothing less than an iron will.

No. 18

Name: *Cytisus scoparius* (Scotch broom)

Point of Origin: Europe and Northern Africa

Date of Entry: 1850s

To conquer and prevail.

I am the proud symbol of the mighty House of Plantagenet. That is my heritage, and so it goes, it is the reason I must go forward with my divine mission. My strength in claiming my dominion inspired that house to choose my old name for their own, forever linking me to their dynasty. Here, however, you have tried to erase any trace of my lineage because you fear the inherent power of my brood.

But no matter—a ruler is as a ruler does. I shoot my seed with banging cracks, a hellfire against any foe who dares to challenge me. Each in my regiment is an expert in chemical warfare. Our skill is never to cede a foothold and to line our borders with bright green fences, our weaponized broomscods at the ready! Do not misconstrue the onus of this force as evil. We are only carrying out our sanctified cause, just as the archaeophytic sovereigns did.

No. 19

Name: *Olea europaea* (Olive tree)

Point of Origin: Mediterranean basin

Date of Entry: 1769

Truce? Let's let bygones be bygones, and by gone, I mean to be gone.
Gone from me, that is.

I'm retreating into spaces where you won't notice me—the sweet fervor we shared in the field has fallen fallow. Delight sapped out from between the snug rows. I am no longer the one you once called your black beauty. Your faithful ancient companion.

Let our history count for something and recall it as you decide what to do next. Trust that my intentions are pure. Recall that I bestowed peace in the past and protected the glory of the homeland. Please allow me to rest and carry out the length of my remaining days, unburdened by your brutal aggressions. Honor the memory of what I gave you in my fertile years, I beseech you.

No. 20

Name: *Ficus carica* (Edible fig)

Point of Origin: Mediterranean region

Date of Entry: 1769

Dammit! Are we back to that same tired story? Forbidden fruit again? Must you always qualify me with that label of shame? You brought me here to sweeten your lips. You worshiped me, and I supplied you with sustenance. I even went above and beyond and became your livelihood, a delicacy recognized and adored the world over.

But, now it's that familiar refrain: too supple, too prodigious, too seductive, too decadent—you want it, but I am too much, too much, too much! You brought me here to create an Eden that you could recognize, and now you've changed your mind about who belongs in your heavenly garden. So this is what it's come to—you're willing to banish me again, repeating a story that's so misguided, it's laughable and yet, here we are. Enough is enough! What gives you the right to say I don't belong? Have you forgotten we came here together?! If I have to leave, so do you! You're just as foreign-born as I am.

The world is a different place since we first planted ourselves. The old ways just don't apply. You can't refuse to notice that time stands still for none of us. We have come to a crossroads, and we must be ready to absolve ourselves of those primitive laws and institutions. No more two by two's, imperious wrath, intolerance, and punishments in the name of an angry love. Let's rewrite those testaments with a doctrine that fits this age, not as overseer and subject or saint and sinner, but as natives of Gaea who share the bounty and honor the simple building blocks of life.

No. 21

Name: *Nerium oleander* (Oleander)

Point of Origin: Asia

Date of Entry: Unknown

August 6

I'm thinking of you today. At home, I heard that you all lived through a blast of heat that was forty times hotter than the sun. It left imprints of your shadows on the buildings that you stood in front of, the ones you were meant to shelter. It ripped so many of them apart, but not you. It seems to me that those who burn the brightest cast the longest shadows. You turned to the light, full force, with no fear. I'll remember you on this day, always, for your resilience in that heat. *Hibaku jumoku*, you came out the other side, and because of you, I will, too.

They're tearing me out now, forcing me to go. I came here at Lady Bird's behest when she called out for something to beautify the byways and brighten eyes along the points of connection. I am what made the transitions and journeys feel grand. It's my turn to avoid hot hands, escape further into places where they can't reach, until their anger dissipates. I'll wait for them to remember that we are the ones who are worthy of becoming icons, being cherished, admired, and relied upon for our grace under fire. I bend to you, and I see you, bough deeply crooked and unnatural but steadfast and sublime.

No. 22

Name: *Lactuca serriola* (Prickly lettuce)

Point of Origin: Europe

Date of Entry: 1890

Smear green blooms in the paved jungle. Inter-species, inter-sexed, a mash of slick petals, dewy bowers, parted, and parked. Tripping lovers on the lush spread. Stretch out.

From above we are kaleidoscopic. A series of arrow-tipped shapes, finely furred, arranged into a rose window of shared bliss. A knotted orgy camouflaged in the crush of each other's limbs. An embrace shaped by our combined contours. Gaps are breaths, moments of pause.

Abandon barriers, walls, limits, boundaries, and definitions in wanton contact. Budding rosettes unfurl in libidinous swallows, divining rods for tête-à-têtes, no loss in love's labours. Desire spreads through a gauzy mesh. Drunken couriers deliver amber-stained dispatches, as tawny gobs mount on their cheeks; they crash into petals yearning for passionate blows. Central columns emerge out of discreet nethers, the bait for passing woozy seed steeped in ardor. Unctions applied to sweet spots. Excited prepubescents share near-clone forms, entwine limbs that read as one body. Bleeding the weed.

Soft barbs catch fervors and wend their way back, forth, and across. Ours for hours, daze for days. No yours, no mine.

Each is all is love.



No. 23

Name: *Schinus terebinthifolius* (Brazilian pepper tree)

Point of Origin: Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay

Date of Entry: Mid-1800s

30 by 30. How many can say that for themselves? If you grew a foot a year, would you be able to hold yourself upright at this point? My Peruvian cousin gets all the glory—beautiful, willowy, and lacy. You turn to him when you're looking for elegant adornment. Me, I'm more of a workhorse. My fanciful fruits are thick and abundant. If you ask me, I don't see what's less impressive than a flashy show of color. You think my display is cumbersome and blundering, but I find it lively.

It's so typical that in a moment of heatstroke, you have no trouble resting under my dense shade that you otherwise find so awkward. The winged and four-footed don't mind it, either. In fact, they love it, and they make for the most superb travel companions, over the most incredible routes. We agree that the hunt for new and unexplored terrain is wonderfully exciting. In my joy, the air is full with my rich, spicy aroma.

Can I be honest? It's just exasperating to continue listening to you whinging on and on about me: that shade, that smell, those suckers poking up and out of that thick, cluttered leaf litter. Gah! Enough already! Settle down and breathe. Everything will be alright. Maybe it's time that you step back and acknowledge that we get on just fine without your meddling.