

**Catharine Savage Brosman**

**Romaine**

It's labeled "artisan" — a current word  
seducing buyers prone to snobbery,  
whence higher price. (Still, have we ever heard  
of workshop turnips, studio broccoli?)

But this time it makes sense. Each head, "petite,"  
is tender, outer leaves curled back a bit  
and flounced, the rest, like tiny rowboats, neat,  
concentric, nested, to great benefit;

for, wrapped around themselves, by nature's art,  
they are untouched by anything — pristine,  
protecting, as a lover might his heart,  
their subtle prism, half-earthy, half-marine.

With care I peel away three leaves, no, four,  
arrange them cunningly — an amulet —  
slice cucumber, tomatoes ("heirloom"), pour  
a "cold-pressed" oil- and red-wine vinaigrette.

Voilà! I yield to vegetable guile,  
in short — and marketers. It's justified;  
they nourish us with taste, in leafy style.  
A mineral world and I must have our pride.

### Arm-in-Arm

Arms linked and shoulders touching, feet together,  
faces lit by the delights of laughter, talk,  
close harmony — what homages to love and friendship.  
Once, Pat and I walked arm-in-arm,  
along an aisle, new husband, wife, to happiness.  
We strolled in Paris one sweet summer, too —  
the very picture of romance. And near  
his lifetime's end, we walked in London, shivering

(as it was January), both slightly lame (the shoe  
that pinched me, Pat's bad knees), but celebrating  
older love, the sort that won't give up.  
My parents, also — I must not forget: the three of us  
along canals in Amsterdam, and later  
on a Paris boulevard. We stopped at an appealing  
*bistrot* where Vivaldi's *Seasons* gave a voice  
to time as passing, always — my mother wondering

at the customs: large dogs, quiet, orderly; two lovers  
kissing, each with glass in hand, on a bench  
below the mirrors — the quintessential image of *amour*,  
reflected for us. Other threads of recollection:  
friends from Catalonia — she British, born in Ceylon,  
and he, a native Catalan, a novelist.  
We met in London at a conference, walked arm-  
in-arm through Gordon Square; then they invited me

to visit for a week their country house outside Olot.  
Elsewhere, happy scenes of holding hands,  
the way my grandson, not full grown, gave his to me,  
half-guiding, half-supporting me discreetly  
past the semi-darkness of the entryway and down  
the steps in Diocletian's Palace, hollowed and too high.  
What comes to mind most dearly are Pat's hands,  
when he was old — strong, sensitive, with wrists still

powerful from slamming tennis shots — and that day  
when on a tourist train he held my own  
so tenderly that others in the coach inquired how long

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we'd been married. Two answers, there. Another  
moment: Michelangelo, the Sistine Chapel.

Now I imagine copper clouds at sunset, Pat appearing  
as they part, reaching downward to me, arm  
extended — smiling, signaling, his fingers touching mine.

**Normandy, 7 August 1944**

They parked their Panzers in a poplar grove,  
expecting orders. *Hitlerjungend*, not  
supported well, worn down. Montgomery drove  
his forces toward them hard, as always. Caught,

then overrun, the *SS* tried retreat,  
but met Canadians, whose countrymen  
had perished by a field of summer wheat  
as prisoners of Germans at Ardenne.

And each remembered. War is destiny;  
to even out the score, the ancient curse —  
however crazed and cruel revenge may be —  
appears as sacrifice, awaiting worse.

It will not end. The Teutons at La Cambe,  
who lie beneath their crosses of basalt,  
compose a desperate ideogram,  
aligned as for an ultimate assault.