

GERANIUMS

by **Christine Jensen Hogan**

You! Yes, you!
 Sitting there inside your fence.
 How is it that you know the world so well?
 Have you lived the lives that we have lived?
 Have you known our joys, our pains?
 Sequestered in your garden, do you judge?
 Or do you hide?
 Or do you even care?

You give to charities,
 But you do not even speak to those who live beside you.
 Do you feel noble, holy, signing that check,
 Stuffing that envelope with cash
 For the least of your brothers,
 Your brothers so far away from you
 That their pain, their sorrow,
 Is no more than a write off at Taxtime?

Inside your fence,
 You sit and see the edges of your green, green lawn,
 Your pruned shrubs,
 And your geraniums.
 So neat, so bright, so scentless!
 Like your senseless coldness to us
 who live so near you.

But when our own pains have lessened,
 Or our means for living grown,
 Will we all sign checks so coldly,
 And sit behind *our* fences,
 Smug, untroubled, duty done,
 Good neighbors?

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