

JOELLE BIELE

When You Were at Children's I Wanted to Go Back to When

you were small, we went to the garden store, the cart you sat,
sometimes stood in, waves of petunias, snap-dragons out

in the sun, and the car, it was full of flowers, the petals
that fell like words, nouns waiting for verbs, your first words,

and we walked through the yard, scooping handfuls of dirt,
whacking at the ground to make way for your bright pink

petunias before you wandered down the hill, returned
with rocks, you arranged them *carefully* so we could shimmy

the flowers out of their pots, so we could blanket the ground
in petunias, so we could lie down and the rain would rain

from your watering can, the watering can you picked with much
consternation, and a light wind would lift a few words from this page

and deposit them in a sea of petunias, because you are my petunia, and we
will ride

in your submarine/watering can (the spout makes a good periscope),

and we will read the water as if each wave were a page in a story
about a girl who wants to visit the sun and the moon, maybe the stars,

whose ship is stored with petunias, dirt and spades, and in the hull the
words

I wish I knew that might accompany her like a compass into the far night.