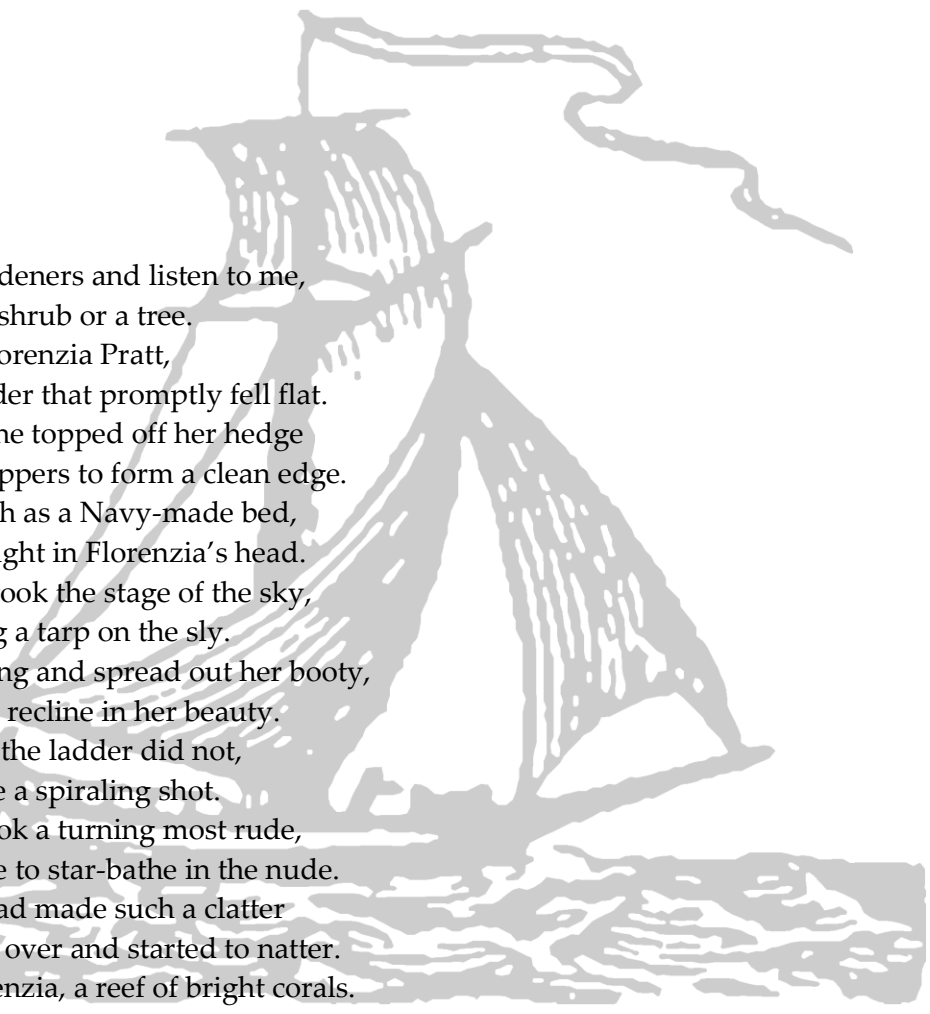




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Southern Exposure

By Karen Mathieson

A faint, stylized illustration of a sailboat with three sails, sailing on a body of water. The drawing is in a simple, sketchy style with some cross-hatching for shading on the sails and water.

Come all ye young gardeners and listen to me,
Put not your trust in a shrub or a tree.
Consider the case of Florenzia Pratt,
Who climbed up a ladder that promptly fell flat.
The trouble began as she topped off her hedge
With high-powered clippers to form a clean edge.
The surface was smooth as a Navy-made bed,
Which put a fresh thought in Florenzia's head.
That evening, as stars took the stage of the sky,
Florenzia came lugging a tarp on the sly.
She clambered each rung and spread out her booty,
Then hoisted herself to recline in her beauty.
Alas, while she settled the ladder did not,
But fell to the earth like a spiraling shot.
Florenzia's musings took a turning most rude,
For you see, she'd gone to star-bathe in the nude.
The ladder's descent had made such a clatter
That neighbors rushed over and started to natter.
Flashlights found Florenzia, a reef of bright corals.
The moral of this? Don't rest on your laurels.

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And remember . . . things could be verse!