

**The Lonely Gardener**  
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**Abstract**

As a child, witnessing addiction was always framed in the sense of extreme, that people knew they were overwhelmingly addicted to a substance, and it would ruin their lives the moment they started using. However, I was unaware of the silent slope that addiction could be and that I had already been on the slide down for quite a while when I was assigned to an abstinence project that would open my eyes. I chose to abstain from nicotine, a substance I had been using for nearly two years at the time, believing it would be easier to quit as it had never been a powerful influence in my mind. When the struggle of the first week hit me like a train, I started to look past my fallacy and see the reality of my dependency on nicotine. Through the help of my accountability partners and the knowledge I gained throughout the course, I made a genuine long-term commitment to quitting smoking when I first believed I would not be able to. This project gave me an incredible perspective and insight not only on my own struggles with addiction but those of the potential clients I may work with in the future in the social work field. Through this poem, I aim to cast a light for those in the social work field to gain perspective on addiction. I hope that others out there struggling with addiction know that in the end, we are not alone and that we have support out there even if we did not realize it before.

Lush life behind stone walls,

Verdant greens cover cracks plaster alone cannot mend.

Ignore the cacophony of distractions outside,

they know not the troubles behind.

Sight must remain fixed on the burdens

ahead. Gardening is lonely work.

Knocking on my door,

A stranger I hadn't considered before.

Promises of safety and light,

A watchful companion on lonely  
nights. A new friend enters the garden.

Your amber glow kept monsters at  
bay. I had only known the soil and  
struggles,

You shared with me a comfort that enveloped me whole.

Like a moth I came with no hesitation,

No worry of the dangers of your presence.

Glow turns to flame, a wreath of fire enclosing my  
lungs, exhaling inhibitions and inhaling a new persona.

Turning from the garden, I find home in only you.

Doors shut, no visitors allowed, why need anyone else?

The dark overtakes, and your electricity sparks with a frightful craving.

Like tinder to fire, your embers turned on me,

Ignored for too long, harvest in hands suddenly aflame.

No forest for the trees, no fire for your light.

Sight robbed by your intoxicating essence,

Promises of solace have only assured

silence.

Amber light creeps past the horizon,

Morning dew quenching smoldering ashes and decay.

Rising from the ruin your presence brought,

Denizens of field and forest lend helping

hands Making way for new growth from the

rot.

Gardening perhaps was never so lonely at all