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Patricia Clark

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White Sweet Clover And All The Other Named and Unnamed Flowers

Patricia Clark

White campion, first, for being ubiquitous
and fetching, its puffy calyxes

like the thoraxes of bees, plump, pendant.

And another pale one—wood anemone
with its opposite leaves, deeply palmate,

above which the flowers look creamy, shy.

Field clover, red, and the white sweet one,
too. Does the metalmark find it by scent?

Fading now, almost finished for the season, the elegant

reclusive stalks of dame's rocket in three colors—
pink, white, lavender. The last has lasted

longest, color of the dusky hours, the hours

of sorrow and reflection, of missing someone dear,
of words said that cannot be taken back.

A purple twining one, relative to the sweet pea,

which is called crown vetch. It adds
nitrogen to the soil and makes a stunning

companion along the roadside. Daily you fill in

one more name on the family tree, daily a new one
blooms. Soothing, idle purposes, oh summer.

About the Author

Patricia Clark, an associate professor in the Writing Department at Grand Valley State University, is the author of *North of Wondering* (poems, 1999). Other poems have appeared recently in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, & *Slate*.