

# Studio One

---

Volume 44

Article 24

---

2019

## Gulag

John Grey

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/studio\\_one](https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/studio_one)



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Grey, John (2019) "Gulag," *Studio One*: Vol. 44, 56-57.

Available at: [https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/studio\\_one/vol44/iss1/24](https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/studio_one/vol44/iss1/24)

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Studio One by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@csbsju.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@csbsju.edu).

## GULAG

He potters in his garden  
in torn undershirt  
and a pair of  
ragged red trousers.

His flowers are  
as wilted as he is,  
his care for them  
as fitful as how he

tends to his own needs.  
But, having lived what would  
have been his best years  
under hammer and sickle,

he treats freedom warily,  
as more like something  
he could contract  
rather than embrace.

The beetles devour his roses.  
His petunias won't open  
as if they fear  
to show their colors.

Once, he was imprisoned  
by the state.  
Now, little by little,  
his mind makes

a gulag of everything,  
even plants, the soil,  
and little scraps of beauty.  
The day is dark and empty

except for his rake,  
his clipping shears.  
In truth, he's no gardener.  
And his world is still no garden.

John Grey  
Johnston, RI