

DIANA RAAB

PINK PETALS

Cherry blossom petals fell
on childhood home lawn:
silky droppings each May before my birthday—
coating the grass like a soft
baby blanket wrapped around
a newborn.

Every year I waited for that day
because I knew gifts
arrived soon after, but I also wanted
to absorb the beauty and gentleness,
carried in each petal.

With my gray cat, Pixie,
each day after school,
I sat on the hill of my front lawn
and tossed petals into the air
watching them
get caught in my hair
and stuck to my pants.

I'd then wiggle close to my cat
and slowly bring her to my lap
in the same way how last week
I brought my dog to my lap,
only moments before he left me,
just wanting to say I love you
and good-bye
one last time.

Isn't that what we do with those we love?
Bring them close, feel their heartbeat,
their breath and their skin for one last time
until there is a breath no more,
and all we remember is
how we healed one another
one petal at a time.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Walking through my garden today,
I stop and study the magnificence of nature
and how it heals my broken hearts
as olive tree branches sway in the wind.

Sterile olives fall to the ground,
and bees buzz inside purple flowers,
while hummingbirds flutter from
one red flower to the next.

Crows sweep down for water
into my birdbath, an arch of roses
drop their petals as I walk beside
a plumeria with its sweet scent
reminding me of beloved trips to Maui.

Pebbles crunch under my feet,
camouflaged lizards remain still until approached.
In the corner, large rocks my grandson climbs

under a big oak tree hanging over
a bench where I sit as he swings
in his very own playground.

Another hummingbird
arrives from the heavens
to tell me that grandma sees all,
and reminds me how being still
is the best spiritual practice
in our ever-transforming universe
of life's garden.

IN THE EYE

One year on Friday the thirteenth of August
began my belief in superstitions
as a hurricane ripped through
our Florida property: a big oak tree
crashed across our driveway
locking us in from the outside world.
Our yard's potted cypress trees flopped
to the ground in a zillion pieces.

Only moments before I pushed a cart through
the supermarket where people frantically
jammed carts of supplies—water, batteries,
peanut butter, tuna and powdered milk,
dashing through the wet parking lot
trying to beat the eye staring at us,
and waiting to pierce our souls and ruin lives forever.

As I pulled into the garage lightning sparked
and thunder bellowed. The sky emptied buckets at my feet.
I plopped supplies onto the kitchen counter
and tossed the collectibles from our hall closet—
old dolls, photo albums, collapsible chairs,
and boxes of first drafts,
to hide in the only place without windows
and where silence hovered all the way across the lake
to the dark homes on the other side.

There was no sign of life anywhere
until the next rush of nature's fury—
the burst of thunder and another gush of rain
and a bolt which could have killed us all,
as we prayed our house would not cave
to the railroad-sounding roar

WHAT WE NOTICE

In the heart of the day
don't you see the hummingbird
hover over the red flower
and nudge it for nectar
as the hawk flies above
scanning the garden for rodents?

And don't you believe
the olive trees know
their olives are sterile
amongst everything else
fertile?

And don't you smell the hybrid roses
in our garden corner
offering the highest vibration
of all flowers? Don't you see a cloud
hovers over the tallest trees
shielding us from faraway dangers?

And don't you hear the freeway hum
in the distance as humans rush about
sometimes oblivious to the callings of nature
as they look up to our sky
and wonder if it will rain

or be sunny so that they can
get in their very last golf game,
as evening settles and birds
sleep very still in our trees
and shades of flowers dim
under our brilliant moonlight?