

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.