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rose petals

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About the Contributor

Abigail (Abby) Shaffer is majoring in professional writing and minoring in creative writing, so apparently she must like to write a lot. In reality, her desire to write is more of a need to write. In any event, she thinks it's pretty great that God gave us words, and she hopes we will make them as true and beautiful and hopeful as we can.

ROSE PETALS

ABIGAIL SHAFFER

at each rushing-on of wind
they splay out like pages
from a book with old binding.
scarlet tongues lap at the air.
a petal is yanked free
and wheels away into breathless
solitude. that makes three.

i gather up each falling soldier
(uniforms veined red and edges
stained with dark rainwater and
lips chapped by time)
and i cup them together,
propping them into original form.
cool velvet kisses my fingers.

when i let go the rose unfolds, it falls
open, sagging with old age. it's not even
days cut off. one thorn remains
and scrapes dully at my thumb,
like denial. O Lord, He said you would
fade. in your dying scent is harsh sweetness,
is sour incense. you gasp heavy.

O Lord, the wind blew right through us,
you tore us asunder. now you carry us gently.
if you do not restore us to stem,

O Lord,
redeem us to sky.