

Contemplative prayer with peony

by [Luci Shaw](#) in the [November 25, 2015](#) issue

So, I didn't latch onto a holy word
and go into space and, ethereal,
lose touch with my body. But God,
in those thirty slow minutes, you
unfolded in me the bud of a fresh
flower, with color and fragrance
that was more than my soul
was capable of, on its own.

. . . We all, with unveiled face,
behold as in a mirror
the glory of the Lord.

And when the peony showed up,
I knew it as a kind of mirror. This
was glory in pink and cream, with
a smell of heaven. Petals like valves
opening into the colors of my heart.

I saw myself kneeling on a grass border,
my knees bruising the green, pressing
my face into the face of this silken,
just-opened bloom, and breathing it,
wanting to drown in it. Wanting
to grow in its reflected image.