

Azaleas

by [Philip C. Kolin](#) in the [September 13, 2017](#) issue

Azaleas profess their own theology
teaching how to pronounce
the name of God—gashed wounds

opening into radiance. Far more
transfiguring than rote words
mouthed by stale breaths.

Here in this asphalt of sorrows
they gather in celebration,
the parameters of rainbows,

collecting the awe of blue
and rose winks from heaven's wide sky
all the earth a domed nave.

They are gulls and herons,
pelicans and bitterns
roosting in earth's roots,

fending off night's gloom
from hooding daylight's triumph,
choiring souls in silence.