

Altar flowers

by [Mary M. Brown](#) in the [August 22, 2012](#) issue

They choose silence, their petals
held like tongues. Their stems
entangled, some are broken, others

sick with their own stiffness, their
own oily fragrance, with the sway
created by the chancel fan and with

the white noise of the nave. They
deny their own violence, opinions
fixed in pink. But finally one breaks

through even her own infernal silence,
won't, in fact, shut up. She calls out to
the others boldly, Beatrice of the vase.