

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.