

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.