

The Lost Roses

by [Sally Witt, CSJ](#) in the [January 2025](#) issue

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“Look here,” he showed me,
“all these buds.
I’ll be cutting off what could be flowers.”

It was January in western Pennsylvania,
windy, cold with freezing temperatures
prepared to stay.

But the man who came to trim our garden
from the fall—
yes, it was late—

wanted me to see
how nascent life appeared
along the branches of the rose bush.

Should he cut them?
I had no vision
of their blooming

and gave the word
that they should go.
Was this a stroke

to blot out any blooming?
A search for stronger life?
A hope that cutting back

might open ways
for growth beyond the sight
of us, who on this January day

see only what is here
before our eyes?