

MIRIAM O'NEAL

Death Comes

like the man in a blue madras shirt
that tugs too tight across his belly.
He strolls through a swirl of pink petals
the wind has pushed off the cherry trees
along Main Street. His shoes are black, except
for those flower-pink soles.
And when he walks into the shop
the remaining flowers follow— rush the open door
and settle as it shuts behind them.

Some hide in the news racks.
Like children who can sleep anywhere
they start up each time a grownup moves
among them, then ease back into their naps.
Except for those tender bodies caught
in his tracks the first time—
who tore and spindled into dark pink drops,
like rain that fell but could not
collect itself into some watery
body—

or rosy grains of stone
that cannot reconstitute into blocks—
Or children who have waited too long
for the Generals to ease their hunger—
who lie down in the sun and close their eyes.