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Late Blooms I

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D.C. NELSON

late blooms I

We fit because we are the mis-fits, she says,
her love-pricked fingers hesitating
around the thorny
glacier rose,
and I

am tasting a year's-worth of declensions
as crisp as new snow against my
hesitating tongue. *Rosa, rosae, rosae*, I whisper.

Wondering at how quickly *the rose* becomes
of the rose or
by the rose or even
to the rose:
to the bedraggling, resolute rose.

I am pressed knuckle-deep in roots and rotting
earth
grubbing desperately, rutting up the green things.

And she smiles, and so I bite my Latin tongue,
hard,
my fingers too earth-laden
under stern, unfriendly skies
to sweep away the twisting hair
fallen rootlike in her eyes.