

# New Poetry from Lauren Davis: “The Flowers You Brought Back From Italy”



FACES TUMBLING DOWNWARD / *image by Amalie Flynn*

Each time I open my notebook the pages stick.  
Because I've forgotten.

And onto the ground  
they fall:  
royal purple flowers fall  
out,  
emerald stemmed, blue veined,  
life  
from the coast of Italy.

You pulled them from the earth,  
pinched their feet  
with your fingertips,

you breathed into the sea

and thought of the way my hair  
swayed between my shoulders,  
while you once walked behind me  
near an American riverside,  
flowers sway in the field  
the same way.

You placed the poppies then  
into the spine of your bible  
you pressed it,  
punched the face  
and rubbed the back  
onto the ground  
to release water  
into sacred words  
you pressed,  
wanting me there  
and you breathed into the sea.

Yesterday, you stood in the kitchen  
of your new house  
while the songbirds in the yard  
called *good morning*,  
you opened your bible  
and pulled the flowers up  
by the end of their stems  
like tails,  
their faces  
tumbling downward

and I opened myself / my notebook  
and tossed the flowers into

my spine / my book's spine

and there  
I closed it  
and pressed it into the granite  
underneath  
to press  
wanting to stay there with you  
out.

You asked me:  
*when again do you leave?*  
*Two weeks.*

Now,  
one-thousand miles away  
the pages stick  
each time I open my notebook

and onto the ground they  
fall,

and I remember how  
you must have looked  
collecting purple poppies  
by the sea of Italy.

Our modern lives,  
so set apart,  
both  
by miles  
and unsteadiness.