

Yahrzeit

Anita Tanner

(*YAR-tzite*): from the German, now Yiddish, meaning "year's time" or "anniversary." The anniversary of someone's death.

This morning I light red candles
and set them on the sill,
daring the breeze
through an open window
to tease the flames.

At noon I gather
red rose petals
and drop them
over the creek bridge
where I walk every day.
I watch them
until they float
out of sight.
A few catch
on rocks and stay.

And this afternoon
I buy a bracelet
and give it away.
Someone is wearing
your embrace
around a thin wrist.

Tonight I eat red ribs
with spring asparagus
and slather my tongue
over chocolate-covered
strawberries, letting
the juice run down my chin.

When I turn in
I keep thinking
of deathwork
for those who remain—
and a grief too deep
to write down.

ANITA TANNER, raised on a Wyoming farm, lives in Boise, Idaho. She has always loved writing and reading, and has published a collection of poems, *Where Fields Have Been Planted* (Kearney, Neb.: Morris Publishing, 1999).