in caring

by Steven Pirani

affection growing in peculiar places streams flowing upwards flowing outwards familiar people passing closely faces we recognize but cannot place reticent things said in murmurs

rings held between hands held between teeth words written in french written in script stems wrapped in petals wrapped in paper lipstick on a napkin in the wind trepidatious brushing hands

a green river rushing at night water flowing backward up the mountain things we sign with a heart what we only write for ourselves those we care for in secret