

# PETALS

## PETER SEARS

There you were in the first X-Ray slapped up on the office wall.  
“See,” the doctor said, pointing at you with his cue,  
gingerly, as if not to arouse you.  
Cancer tumor, you looked like a doughnut  
— no, more like an igloo —  
but you had not begun to spread. “So we’ll get right in there,”  
the doctor said, “and operate on that tumor”

— as if I was going in with them, in with the doctor and the nurse,  
to see you up close,  
touch you, watch you be sliced out of my lung,  
then dropped in a dish. Then what? Tossed in the garbage?  
Put in an urn?  
I look up again at the X-Ray slide; I could swear  
your clean borders have shifted,  
have begun to leak.  
“We’ll try to get you into surgery within the week,” the doctor said.

This morning, on my way to the hospital, April petals  
float at the traffic light while I wait  
for the red to turn green,  
petals so light they glance off the traffic light,  
back into their slow flowing.

I ask you, cancer cells, did you come to me  
like these morning petals  
and fall and drift on to other cells?

Tell me, did you pile willy-nilly like snow, or did you float and fall  
and grow in obedient rows,  
building, building, row house after row house?