## **PEONIES**

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This morning the green fists of the peonies are getting ready to break my heart as the sun rises, as the sun strokes them with his old, buttery fingers

and they open — pools of lace, white and pink — and all day the black ants climb over them,

boring their deep and mysterious holes into the curls, craving the sweet sap, taking it away

to their dark, underground cities — and all day under te shifty wind, as in a dance to the great wedding,

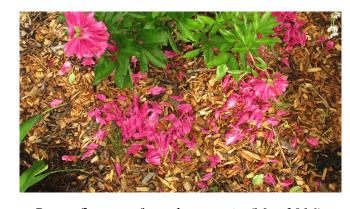
the flowers bend their bright bodies, and tip their fragrance to the air, and rise, their red stems holding all that dampness and recklessness gladly and lightly, and there it is again — beauty the brave, the exemplary,

blazing open.
Do you love this world?
Do you cherish your humble and silky life?
Do you adore the green grass, with its terror beneath?

Do you also hurry, half-dressed and barefoot, into the garden, and softly, and exclaiming of their dearness, fill your arms with the white and pink flowers,

with their honeyed heaviness, their lush trembling, their eagerness to be wild and perfect for a moment, before they are nothing, forever?

~Mary Oliver



Peony flowers after a heavy rain (May 2016)

Sadness at twilight . . . Villain! I have let my hand cut that peony.

~Buson

