

Magnolia Tree in March

The magnolias are opening
upward like petaled bowls
holding the cold smell of
the first days of spring.
Already the tree has begun
its long season of unbecoming.
Blooming flowers loosen
themselves one rosy stitch at a time.
He loves me. He loves me not.
All potentialities are translucently
present in the fullness of its branches
and the wetness of the grass
below them while it is still morning.
Count each petal as it falls
and you may know the secret
of its ringed heart. Touch
each little bowing tip twice:
once before and once after.
Each one will soften
itself into the white readiness
of your skin, when it is time.

—Ciara Sanker