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## In the Spring These Small Deaths

*Carol V. Davis*

This season I cannot savor the crown  
of flowers as the ever-bittering  
arugula goes to seed.  
I should have pulled them out long ago:  
the Gerber daisy attacked from below  
the predictable decline of snapdragon.  
I could have given them all up  
cut them off like abandoned loves  
then turned the soil in one decisive hour  
to march forward with an armful  
of new pots and two-inch seedlings.  
Now when I should be picking the first crop  
of yellow pear tomatoes I stroke the skeletons  
of bare spines, unable to plant and harvest.  
Soon it will be Shavuot and I am not ready  
to take the Torah, to carry it down the mountain  
swathed like a newborn, to accept what is mine.  
I want to skip this season  
to forget what it was like to love  
and to have known the names of wildflowers.  
I long to sit in a too cold synagogue  
as summer slips again into fall  
to recite:

For the sin of holding on when I should have let go;  
For the sin of turning away in cowardice;  
For indulging in these small deaths  
*Avinu Malkainu*  
Wipe the slate clean  
Inscribe me once again in the book of life.



*Carol V. Davis's poems have appeared in such magazines as Tikkun and in the anthology Nice Jewish Girls. In 1995 she won the Black Rock Press Broadside Competition, The Book Arts Press of the University of Nevada. She is spending the 1996-97 academic year as a Fulbright scholar in St. Petersburg, Russia writing and teaching at the Jewish University of St. Petersburg.*