Blood on my pearls

BY ELIZABETH HALLER

There’s blood on my pearls tonight.
It came from a man, shot through his brain,
There’s blood on my pearls tonight.

When we met he was dead, no more pain,
We fought to pump blood through his veins.
Twice resuscitated, twice denied.
At last, we admitted he had died.

Night shift wanes, day draws nigh;
But before I move on, I cannot deny
There’s blood on my pearls tonight.

On what inspired this poem:

It was a late night in the emergency department. A man had committed suicide, and I was part of the resuscitation team. Our tug-of-war swayed twice in our direction as his heart regained its beat. Yet, ultimately, his injury led to his death. The shock of meeting someone while he wavered between worlds left me with many questions: Why had he chosen death over life? Would he want us to restart his heart? If we did, what sort of life lay before him?