

The Easter Flower

Far from this foreign Easter damp and chilly
My soul steals to a pear-shaped plot of ground,
Where gleamed the lilac-tinted Easter lily
Soft-scented in the air for yards around;

Alone, without a hint of guardian leaf!
Just like a fragile bell of silver rime,
It burst the tomb for freedom sweet and brief
In the young pregnant year at Eastertime;

And many thought it was a sacred sign,
And some called it the resurrection flower;
And I, a pagan, worshiped at its shrine,
Yielding my heart unto its perfumed power.

~ Claude McKay

This, it seems to me, is a 'foreign Easter', an unfamiliar Easter; an Easter that, although blessed with light and warmth and birdsong, seems alien, fragmented, disconnected. Cut off from our communities, apart from those we love, there is a fragility to this season that is uncharted. Yet, within this 'prolonged Holy Saturday of emptiness' (to quote from the Church of England) there are sacred signs of hope and newness of life, those that spring to life in leaf and flower, and those that arise within us. Let us pray that something new will emerge from this 'prolonged Holy Saturday'; that our hearts and communities will yield to hope, kind-heartedness, and love; that from this 'foreign Easter' we will re-emerge stronger and closer; and that we will more deeply open our hearts to the incredible gifts we've previously taken for granted, to our sacred connectedness to each other, and to the mystery we call God.

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