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The promise of Easter in apricot branches

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I think I wrote here last year that Pius Parsch says Lent is the springtime of the soul. I probably also said that the wonder of spring to me is that all is promise. We've all got only a limited number of new thoughts. But the old thoughts are worth consideration.

It's already spring in Missouri, and I spent the weekend gardening. It was heavy work. I cleared a little strip of invasive grasses between the neighbor's driveway and our garage. I turned the compost pile. I edged the vegetable garden with broken bricks. And I pruned the two apricot trees.

I brought the tree branches into the house, and this morning, the tiny red buds had swollen and turned white, ready to burst into flowers. My housemate, Roberta, imagines each bud to be an apricot and suspects I am wasting bushels of golden fruit by cutting branches. And it is true that each bud is the promise of an apricot.

Last year, the trees' first year, we had a crop of two apricots. Just wait until we get some young fruit, and most of the small hard pieces drop to the ground. Even then, I may have to shake off some small apricots in order to allow the best to ripen. It's going to kill Roberta to see those tiny inedible gifts to the squirrels.

But in this moment, my hope is in the flowers we are forcing, white with purple veins and stamen, slightly scented, clinging to the bark. It's the promise of beauty, of harvest, of fullness, the promise of Easter.

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