

# Nuts!

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*Unless a seed fall to the ground and die, it cannot bring forth new life.-- Jesus*

Spring begins with a CRACK! of the bat  
In a park with the cheers. . . .  
Spring begins with a CRACK! in the heart  
That breaks, spilling tears. . . .  
Spring begins in the dark  
Where there's no one who hears  
The shell of the nut going CRACK!  
Listen!  
The green shoot appears!

Behind brown hardness since the Fall,  
It waits. . .silently. . .darkly  
And wishes for  
All it's worth to be known. . .  
Its secrets bare. . .  
But not here! Not there!  
Not now! It is too soon.  
(The sun, at noon,  
Yet is slanting low.)  
And so, defended 'gainst the mortal cold,  
Its own counsel keeps, and sleeps  
Down within the humus  
And the mold:

Where it is grateful for that structured, strictured,  
Boundaried husk which  
Gives not life,  
Yet saves it by the purchase of some time:  
Swaddling time. . .holding time. . .  
Until, in time's fullness, ready,  
It answers the subversive call of Spring  
(That perverse Mystery of death and birth so mingling.)

CRACK! the shell's embrace is broken free,  
Releasing -- in giddy, adolescent mirth --  
Into the damp and warming earth  
A new, green wager that now the sun is right.

But what of that now-spent shell,  
Whose broken, ugly shards repel  
The notice of squirrels and  
Other connoisseurs of Spring?

A funeral of dignity and celebration  
Is its due.

So let the word go forth,  
Sounded by the trumpets on the vine,  
That it gave up its life in the fine  
Service of protecting what it could not give:  
Abundant liveliness to live!

Above let its marker be the green,  
Rich extravagance that once was only dream  
In silence and in secret.

And on that marker let its epitaph be read:  
"I held on not too long, too tight,  
But broke and bled,  
To let the green life out. . .  
Certain that the sun was right!"

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