



### Timing

November 17, 2021

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As we begin to huddle against the cold and snip down the dead flower heads from our gardens, I am so thankful for the leaves. The leaves that continue to fall even as I'm raking. The leaves that clog my gutters. The leaves that cling to the bottom of my shoes, so they can find their way indoors. Their colors astonish me and provoke joy, even though they are harbingers of the winter freeze.

They follow a pattern of the seasons that is predictable – at a time when we long for stability and normalcy. I know what to expect from my leaves and what their dropping portends.

Not all of my garden is quite as cooperative. Last spring, we splurged on some flowering plants from the store: a pot of hyacinths and a pot of tulips. When the plants stopped blooming, I took the pots outside and set them on the railing, intending to plant the bulbs later. Months passed, and I never got around to planting them. Or watering them. Or even putting them in the sunshine. In September, I thought again about planting them, but the soil was a hard clod by then. I assumed naively that nothing could be alive – even if dormant – in those pots.



Last week, I picked up the pots to throw them away and, lo and behold, they are both budding. As the leaves are falling and the grass crunches with frost, my bulbs have chosen this time to emerge. The pots are now back in my kitchen, receiving warmth and water.

I have no idea whether I'll see blooms this year. I'm afraid to count on it. Life has been too uncertain, too frail, too unpredictable. Expectations have been dashed.

And yet, there they are...bold in their determination. So, I do my part in tending to them, hopeful but realistic. I offer this blessing for them and for you:

As you poke out of the dryness that has left you parched,

As you push aside the dry clods that have constrained you,

May you emerge with abandon and confidence to embrace life, to grow tall, to display your vibrant colors

So that all who encounter you will pause, startled,

Wondering about your sense of timing and how

Even now, you can burst with life,

Even now, provoke joy.