



WHICH IS THE BEST TIME FOR A FLOWER?

Which is the best time for a flower?

Is it that moment when,
By an ancient wisdom we cannot understand,
The seed emerges from its dormant, pregnant state
Of months, even years,
That state when everything is possible, but nothing is assured,
And begins to grow?

Or is the time when the first rootlet pushes into the earth,
And the first shoot breaks through into the sunlight,
With exultation,
When the first pair of leaves open into their tender green goldness,
That the soul remembers and thrills to anew
Is this the best time for a flower?

Perhaps it's the period of glorious growth.
When stems, buds and leaves proliferate with abandon,
As the plant proclaims its presence,
While out sight the roots are deepening, anchoring, spreading,
And, coincidentally (?),
Preparing the ground for earthworms and new growth.

Surely the best time for a flower is its culmination?
Its flowering moment of supreme glory and beauty,
Which is followed so closely by its supreme moment of sacrifice,
That you have to wonder if that's what it was celebrating after all.

Is it possible that the best moment for a flower is its decay?
Which is not just a breaking down,
But a building, providing, nurturing time,
Ensuring not just the survival of its own seeds,
But of life.

Which is the best time for a flower?
If we could answer that question we couldn't do what we do.
Push our babies to the margins of life,
So they don't interfere with our own self-importance.
Treat our children as if we know more than they do,
When they have forgotten much less
And are so much closer to the truth.
And our adolescents, so angry, so idealistic,
Trying so hard to make sense out of a senseless world.
We couldn't criticize them, or worse, ignore them,
(Then wonder why they turn to suicide or drink).
Adults we respect,
At least if they're Productive and Successful.
But we'd have more time for dreamers and poets
If we knew what the question meant,
And we couldn't waste the precious resource of elders.
The insanity of shunting people to the margins again
Just when they have finally figured out what life is about.

Which is the best time for a flower?
Not our time, that's for sure.
But maybe, just maybe,
Our time most of all...

By Anne Goodman

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