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IN THE GARDEN IN MARCH

By Katherine DeGrandpre

From earth double dug
and sifted between hands
like Sunday school prayers,
I pull the last overwintered kale
for tonight's sacramental salad.
I kneel in pews of soil
among a congregation
of scattered trowels
and abandoned terra cotta,
gloves cast aside for bare palms
and dirty fingernails.
I give my confession only to earth worms:

Forgive me father for I have sinned.
It has been many seasons
since my last confession.
I have forgotten to dig the potatoes,
and prune the raspberries.
I have forsaken my flocks
of cold crop cabbage
and seedy winter wheat.
I have dishonored the sunflowers,
surrendering them unto the wind,
and skipped a month of garden mass.

Seven Hail Marys
and dig for me fifty holes.
In each hollow, place one green pea.
Finish with new dirt.
Build a trellis of sturdy bow.
Wipe hands on Sunday's best jeans.
Build me an ark of vines,
and so this is my promise,
rain will come.