

## An Amaryllis Blessing

Once upon a time, when I was a little girl, a mysterious, tall green stalk magically began to grow two stories beneath my bedroom window. It had appeared in the flower bed, snuggled up so tightly against the sidewalk that we knew no human being could have planted it there. At the time, it seemed that no one even knew what kind of plant it was.

Then, one day, the mysterious stalk revealed its wondrous blooms. And later, when the blooms were spent, it seemed to die. Except each year, again and again, the magical stalk again emerged from the soil to repeat its blooming refrain.

Many years later, my mom had enjoyed another Amaryllis bulb miracle. No mysterious planting this time--the bulb had arrived nestled inside a florist's basket. A perfect gift for my mom—for whom one of her greatest (and simplest) pleasures is to sit and watch flowers bloom. This special bulb—which grows at a pace that you can almost observe--provided a bright spot in her one-room, assisted living space.

Once its blooms had been spent, mom sent the bulb home with me, with the hopes that someday it might bloom again. For a few weeks, it sat on a shelf near my back door, enjoying occasional sips of water as its drooping leaves continued to feed the bulb.

Until one day, I noticed that a new stem had begun to send up its pointed tips. Gradually, another set of blossoms appeared at the tip of the magical stalk, bringing a double round of enjoyment – both for me and to share long distance with my mom.

And then, wonders of wonders: yet *another* stalk began to climb—stretching upward toward the still-present blooms. And as this latest stalk (the bulb's third in as many months) reached its lofty destination, the final bloom from the second stalk completed its own cycle.

For me, an amaryllis bulb is no longer simply a mysterious gift from within my childhood garden. It is also both memory and a reminder of the magical beauty that exists in the world. Or, as Muriel Barbery writes in *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, an “odd moment of beauty, where time is no longer the same....[rather] a sort of interlude in time, something suspended, an elsewhere that ha[s] come to us.”

May your own life be blessed with many “odd moments of beauty” that both suspend and transcend time, while linking you with thoughts and memories of those whom you love.

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