

NATIVITY

By *Barbara Crooker*

The amaryllis bulb, dumb as dirt,
inert, how can anything spring
from this clod, this stone,
the pit of some subtropical,
atypical, likely inedible fruit?
But it does: out of the dark
earth, two shoots, green
flames in December,
despite the short days,
the Long Night Moon
flooding the hard ground.
Nothing outside grows;
even small rodents
are burrowed in
the silent nights.
Then, one morning—
a single stalk,
then a bud
that swells, bells
full sail, full-bellied,
the skin grows thin,
tighter, until it splits:
heralds the night
will not be endless,
that dawn will blossom,
pearly and radiant,
and two white
trumpets unfold, sing
their sweet song,
their Hallelujah chorus,
sing carols in the thin cold air,
and our mouths say O and O and O.