In Memoriam

The first rose breaks through bud's entanglement,
The power of Spring tears open the cloud curtain
And the blue above us revives heart's joy and hunger

We cast around for those who, surely, will understand
Should we lift a rose from a stalk's imprisoning
And give it to them.
Would that be arrogance? After all, in truth
Do not all flowers beyond the law's chicanery, belong
To them as to us all?

We hope, somehow, they'll wear this gift
Somewhere upon their clothes
Or let it float, maybe, on water filling a China or a Wexford vase
To create a love for us where there was none
Or to augment a love already present
That will reveal itself in a smile or an eagerness to listen.
Embodied in transfigured flesh, this love will stand,
Framed in the doorway of a house known well

Where, through the flower-hung portal, all of the Father's rooms
astir with joy,
History's culmination, in your welcoming arms
Will blossom for us after our long protracted exile.

So finally we learn: a rose speaks with that intense vocabulary too
That grows within earshot of all our eloquent yet silent yearning.
The gift at which we fondly gaze,
Petals pearled after rainshowers, where insects, lured into darkness
Find themselves lost in an overwhelming fragrance,
Comes like us, the world and those we love and have loved
From that Father the Gospels speak of
Who never loses, like we can and do, the power of love.

ERIC CHURCH

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1994.tb01511.x Published online by Cambridge University Press