

## Song of the Early Magnolias

by [Karen An-Hwei Lee](#) in the [March 2025](#) issue

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Gentlest alchemy of air, the early magnolias  
hold their fragrant lamp-bowls aloft at dusk,  
defying March. Can't be snowing, yet it is—  
in the cloud spaces, the downrush of cold

halts abruptly as a flurry tenders the wind.  
Pausing at the window, I echo, *it is snowing*,  
and you say, *no, it cannot be true. It's not*.  
We see the day floating from truth to truth

on a reel of shared experience, where God  
holds all truth as one singularity flashing  
frame by frame, the little ashes of our lives.  
I whisper, *transience*—I marvel to know

how did I ever get to be a half century old?  
How do we fly from here to the other side?  
Will our bodies rise in the air to meet Christ?  
Or will we sleep for a long time, then waken?

This isn't eschatological weather, you demur.  
It is, I say. We are to be ready for the return,  
always. Do we want to be without lamp oil,  
our wicks untrimmed? Listen, don't we hear

magnolias humming outside with the moon  
sidling into the cloudbank of sugary light?  
Blossoms sing, the time is now—and now—  
now again forevermore, my dears. *Selah*.