

MAY IS MARY'S MONTH

White fair weather cumulus floats high above,
tardy ash leaves break free from their buds,
a passionate thrush greets the morning,
cherry trees bow down heavy with cream silk.
Girls garlanded with white and green circle
the Beltane fire, rejoicing at the conception
of new life and the old darkness fled behind
the hill of winter cold and grim discontent

This is a month of hope, of renewal and growth,
rabbit kits play in the new grass, sun haloed
in a misty morning amongst wood anemone
and celandine; on the bank *companula* sound
their ethereal violet-blue bells; black bryony, its
pale green petals like a necklet of dew-kissed opals,
encircles the spiny common-hawthorn hedge,
where shy dormice feed and hedgepigs nest.

This is the Month of Mary who bore Jesus, a time
of periwinkle skies blue like the Lady's flowing mantle,
of cowslip and primrose that carpet the Lady's path.
Sea pinks are cushions on which once the Lady sat,
and clusters of pale wisteria roof the Lady's bower.
A narcissus shines bright as the Lady's evening star,
lilies-of-the-valley mimic the Lady's soft tears,
and purple lilac is heavy with the scent of a Tomb.

The plangent death call of the white owl is heard
across greening field and burgeoning wood,
and the savage thorn that lurks within the gilded bush
is a sword, that pierced the soul of the Lady, standing
mute and patient beneath the leafless Easter Tree.
In the month that is Mary's, birth mingles with death,
and the mysterious circle that is both our end
and our beginning is for ever made complete.

- Naomi Linnell