

Dear Friends,

We have been visiting family in California over the Easter holidays. It's been over two years since our last visit and I have been a little disoriented whilst driving around San Jose. It's not the first time I've lost my bearings in the Valley: while I was at university the area underwent some dramatic changes. Orchards were turned into new residential developments; fields were ploughed under for salmon-coloured strip malls that all looked the same. This time, however, I am bewildered because everything is so green.

After several years of severe drought, Northern California was deluged by rain this spring. Hills that I only ever knew to be dry and golden brown are bright green and lush with new growth; deserts are in 'super bloom'. I've heard of families taken by surprise and unable to evacuate with their belongings; others spent weeks baling water from their driveways and garages to protect their homes. We are lucky, to see only the regenerative effects of the floods today.

So much is surging back to life after years of drought, a testament to the abundant soil seed bank that has been lying *in situ*: latent, waiting, resilient. During the drought years, seeds were germinated by sporadic rainfall, tricked into growing and dying before being able to drop their own seeds. But over centuries and millenia, seeds have accumulated underground in much greater volumes. Many have been waiting for sufficient inundation, saturation, to spring into action and these now benefit from the tiny spaces created in the soil by the roots of their short-lived predecessors, the ones that seemed to have been sacrificed earlier. I hope there will be enough rain this season for these new shoots to grow and leave seeds for another generation. Every seed matters when huge numbers are needed to sustain resilience.



How are we resilient together in hope, love and light? Are we in a drought today, or are we living in a flood?

In friendship,
Jennifer Mui, editor