Easter of 1963 came in mid-April, at the height of the Mississippi spring. In Boston the arrival of spring was a very dramatic thing following the long winter months; in Mississippi spring was the most gentle season. Spring took over the landscape with a slow assurance, born of the confidence that the Sun ruled this land, that there had never been any doubt about the struggle against the frost. The first yellow flowers of daffodils came in January; then, in a slow movement for weeks and weeks, new colors appeared and faded into more colors until the pastel green of the new leaves on the trees finally turned the dark green of their permanent summer color, as the bright green of the grass turned dull under the steady sun.

Easter Sunday in New England had meant that the altar of Grace Methodist Church in Cambridge was surrounded with banks of Easter Lilies—as an almost sympathetic magic ritual to guarantee that one day, many weeks away, the spring flowers would return despite the snow still covering the earth of Massachusetts. In Mississippi the flowers on the Easter altars were a minor reflection of the visible abundance of the earth... Perhaps the Christian faith is more necessary in a harsh northern climate?... But, then, Palestine had its Passover festival in the spring, surely a sign of victory of life over death, a celebration with a history much older than Moses in Egypt... and Palestine had the confident sun of Mississippi... but Palestine had the rocky earth of New England... In Mississippi the gentle spring and the terrible summer must have convinced the men who lived here that change