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Facing South in Renewing Sunshine

“Facing south” is a good springtime art, whose purpose is to restore creative forces that ebb, to restore enthusiasm for existence when winter and vicissitudes of existence have driven enthusiasm low.

When we lived on Road V, Laura worked at the drugstore in Willows part of the time, and I was often alone in the old house standing by itself out in flat farmland. Low times sometimes hit me, and facing south was part of the solution.

I scratched up dirt on the south side of the house, like a dog preparing to settle. I sat down in dirt, leaned against the faded old wood of the house and soaked up early spring sunshine as smells of fresh dirt and plants growing and life busy with being life brushed against me.

I allowed tensions that had knit themselves into my existence to release into sunshine. Low reservoirs of everything I needed to proceed with existence and creative pursuits began to refill.

Birds flew and sang. V-shaped flights of Canada geese flew from the game refuge and spread across the valley, seeking their day’s feed and calling to each other about the joy of existence, the joy of flying. Flights of swans flew from the refuge.

Red-winged blackbirds sang of spring from perches on last year’s cattails. Meadow larks rejoiced in sunshine and sang gratitude for existence.

I let the day become sunshine, birdsong and birds flying in the spring sky. I sat in dirt in sunshine, leaned against the old house, not by intention I fully understood, but by meaning deeper than words. I felt gratitude as clear as the brilliant spring song of a meadow lark, as clear as 21 geese flying the early morning sky in spring formation.

I felt gratitude that I had allowed meaning deeper than words to guide me south of the house to a patch of warm dirt. I felt gratitude for my existence, gratitude for spring, for sunshine, for red-winged blackbirds, geese, swans, and meadow larks. Gradually, I filled with gratitude, with renewed enthusiasm for existence, with renewed creativity, with a sense

of deep peace.

Eventually, I stood up, brushed clinging dirt from my trousers, and wandered happily through part of the day, watching the forms of life around me celebrate spring. I returned into the house, picked up my guitar, and built a new song about gratitude for sunshine, for a meadow lark singing on a fencepost, for the colors in clouds in the western sky, gratitude for the song itself, ringing clearly into the sunshine of the day.

Sunshine is part of the process, and warm dirt, and an old house to lean against, and it always works, wherever I am.

Dirt, sunshine, old wood that has served as shelter, smells of spring, are symbols, steps on the way to increased gratitude for existence, to increased gratitude for every symbol of life and for life's eternal source.