



Signs of Spring

“The wilderness becomes a lush pasture, and the hillsides blossom with joy. The meadows are clothed with flocks of sheep, and the valleys are carpeted with grain. They all shout and sing for joy! Ps. 65:12-13

“Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice! Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise! Let the fields and their crops burst forth with joy! Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise before the Lord! Ps. 96:11-13

“...The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands! Isaiah 55:12

Such poetic images. They all evoke impressions of spring. Because that is kind of the way it happens, isn't it? Orange poppies and blue lupines spilling down the hillsides. Lambs frolicking in lush grass. Bare, dead looking trees suddenly bursting all over with shiny new buds. I like imagining the hillsides shouting and singing. I like thinking of crops bursting with joy and trees clapping their hands and rustling their leaves with praise.

Spring is when I feel the most alive, rejuvenation rises up in me like unstoppable sap, leaping with hope and energetic playfulness. The air feels warm and smells fresh. The plants in my yard grow with measurable difference from day to day. Yesterday there were only buds, today the buds have blossomed. The bees are back. The soil smells rich. The plants look like they can barely contain their energy. Their leaves are a bright and luminescent green. They haven't yet been ravaged by the hot sun for months. They're ready to go all out, to blossom and shout with joy.

As a girl, growing up in Ohio, I loved to race home from school in the springtime and check the emerging daffodil spears from the damp soil. Every day, they rose a little bit taller. Every day, I had hope that spring was truly on its way.

Then would come that one morning when my brother and I would burst out the front door, headed for school, and race head long into a cloud of lilac-scented air. I could hardly contain myself. Spring made me feel giddy and alive after being holed up in the house for months. I was over the snow; cold and slushy ice had taken over. Pure misery. The only good thing about the slush was the ground that was thawing out, damp with that particular smell of frozen soil coming back to life. The smell of things to come. The signs of spring.

Though spring does seem to be the favorite season of many, there are things I love about every season; that lazy slide into summertime, the scent of pink climbing roses in the air and drowsy, meandering days doing nothing and everything.

The mounting excitement of fall; I've had my fill of drowsy days and a new school year beckons. The air changes, becoming a little sharper and the smell of leaves changing color and finally giving up their last hurrah as they drift and swirl to the ground.

The coziness and nesting of winter; the first hard freeze, the first lazy snowflakes drifting downward, piled into soft puffy mounds the next morning. Hot cocoa and home-made bread straight from the oven as my brother and I burst into the house home from school, wet mittens and boots strewn around. Fires in the fireplace, reading enchanting story books nestled under the blankets in my bed. Ice storms. Snow days, snow men, snow forts. Epic snowball fights.

Slowly warming temperatures, but not warm enough to rejoice in.... slush. Dirty snow. This is getting old. Longing to play outside for long hours. Coziness has turned into feeling constrained and restless.

Then spring!!! Life and energy all around. Wild freedom. Hallelujah! Let all the earth rejoice.

This is the cycle of our lives too. They may or may not coincide with the actual natural cycles going on around us outside. I long for spring, especially after a drawn-out time of winter in my soul.

Every season has its time and reason. All of us will have challenges, trials and troubles, the long, drawn out winters of our lives. Every wintertime has a springtime nipping at its heels. Watch for the signs.

"The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours; everything in the world is yours – you created it all." Psalms 89:11

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