

Sweet Flashback



The other day I was inspecting my just budding grape vines and noticed the accumulation of weeds that had taken over the surrounding soil. As I began the process of gently releasing each weed's grip, the smell of the earth and the weeds combined sent me into a vivid flashback I did not expect.

A warm flow of happiness flooded over me as I remembered the feel of the air, dense and cool and the scent of thick vegetation in the deeply forested woods of southern Illinois. Suddenly I was there, fishing pole in hand, hiking the shallow trail that would take us to the stream where dinner awaited.



Tranquility

Let me backtrack. Carbondale was a town I had never heard of until I met a handsome star baseball pitcher who went to school there. After my first spring visit to the beautiful bricked campus of Southern Illinois University, this California girl came under the spell of the blooming pink dogwoods, as well as the lure of old-fashioned country living. I took a leap and stepped into a new lifestyle, finishing my last two years of college there.

Back to my story.

One or two days a week, after school, my boyfriend and I would grab the fishing poles and a basket to carry our finds and take a drive south. Deep into the woods we would drive, park the car, then head towards the creek where our lines were cast, hoping to lure a bluegill or croppie. The water was clean and the fish plentiful. There was usually someone down stream doing the same thing – letting nature provide a free meal. I remember one gentleman who always seemed to be there with a huge grin on his face, his line fin to fin with a long row of freshly caught fish snuggled together. I imagined him returning to his cabin in the woods, and handing his catch to his wife who was grateful once again for mother nature's generosity to their large family. There was plenty for all.



Fishing for family

After catching just enough for our dinner, we'd head toward the

railroad tracks where the wild asparagus grew with abandon. The stalks smelled of fresh green and were tall and skinny. This was my favorite part of the late afternoon, the sky a bit hazy from the moisture on the crowded trees and the smell of early spring – indescribable. I'd snap off spear after spear, grateful for this opportunity to indulge in the wood's wild bounty. Little did I know at the time I was foraging for my dinner. My country boyfriend was teaching me to be a country girl and I loved it.



Foraging for asparagus

I treasure memories like these, of an uncluttered life, where simple pleasures were all around me. Thank you weeds for triggering this fond memory and evoking an emotion I hadn't felt in years.

What are your favorite times of bliss?

"I am beginning to learn that it is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones after all."

– [Laura Ingalls Wilder](#)

Ciao for now,

Mary