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Courting a Prairie??

“We know you are off
the deep end
about prairies, but
this is
too much.
What can we tell your wife?”

My friends are tolerant,
you see, but --
well, they don’t understand.

This prairie of mine; no, it
isn’t really mine.
This prairie is my friend. She
really is that.
I know her moods, her many
moods. She’s lots older’n
me, too; lots older. She’s real
special, though,
and I think she likes me.

I go out to see her whenever I can;
even in the rain.
She’s pretty in snow; yes, and in an
ice storm
she sparkles.

You can’t exactly
say
she sparkles in the
springtime;
better to say she glows. Then
she puts a golden sprig
of Lithospermum
in her hair.

Her hair is snarled,
sometimes,
with prickly brambles, so
I cut them out, but
I leave the wild roses,
even though they’re scratchy.

She likes her Shooting Stars.
In fact she’s quite famous for
Dodecatheon media, which is Latin, I
guess, for a
very dainty nodding flower
that looks like it folded its
petals back,

sort of streamlined,
as though ready to take off
like a shooting star.

My fellow botanists and
biologists,
taxonomists and ecologists,
are sure I
even talk to my prairie.

Well, I do!

I get down on my knees to
cut out the willows that
threaten
her special beauty.
On my knees
I get to see and share
her secrets about
what’s to bloom next week.

I tell her she’s charming,
and she is!

It’s not so dumb to court
a prairie,
especially since she often
tells me stories,
and delights in surprising
me with new events every week.

She may be old, but she’s
able to program an
endless variety of
spectaculars!

She’s a winner! She’s your
friend too, you know! If you are
too bashful to talk to her, then
learn to listen. She’s fun!

--Arnold H. Webster,
who talks to prairies