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Courting a Prairie??

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"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 spectacles!

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