

Where hardwood touches lofty pine and sweet the meadows smell
Along this mountain range I love far more than words can tell
I stand upon a hilltop as I gaze across the land
And ask a blessing on this Earth far as my eye can span.

Although some folks might like the noise of busy city streets
I would choose rich timbered land with soil 'neath my feet.
There's no place I would rather go nor change things if I could
Because I love God's country and the clean fresh smell of wood.

Amid this restless world we need to seek the living God
For our years advance as surely as do rings around a log
His spirit then can help us meet the day the way we should,
And we'll keep things in perspective while we're gleaning in the wood.

Louisa McQuillen's earthy poem makes me feel very nostalgic especially at this time of year. This is a memorable time for me and my family. My dad was an avid deer hunter and this was the time when we would bid him a fond farewell for a week up in the cabin with his Dad and brothers and other hunting buddies. My mom jokes that dad was already packing a couple weeks before his departure date. He would commandeer the guest room bed and lay out all of his clothes and gear for the BIG HUNT. Then he and his hunting party would drive off into northern Wisconsin for a week of man living. My dad made sure he shared some of the details with me: a cabin with five to ten guys in it. Beer, cards, the basic food groups: cold cuts, chips, bread and of course more beer. I remember how excited my mom and sisters and I got on Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving because that was when dad would arrive home. It was like waiting for Santa Claus. Unlike Santa, my dad's sack of goodies included dirty clothes and dirty boots and the only reindeer was one or two strapped to the trunk or hood of the car.

Anyway, one thing I know was my dad loved the woods. He loved nature in general and always took time to appreciate it in all of its glory. My dad fished for hours

on lakes, and walked through the woods sometimes hunting and sometimes just hiking.

He enjoyed the changes of the seasons and the way that nature reflected life. Things

would change, you could bet on that and sometimes it was hard to take and sometimes it was a welcomed relief.

(anyone who has ever gone from a mild Wisconsin Fall to a bitter cold Winter knows what I'm talking about.)

It is clear that God has blest us with so much; yet I am afraid that we are all taking it for granted or even worse ignoring it. 9-11 and other horrors have awakened us to the frailty of life and the need to appreciate everything because it can be taken away in the blink of an eye. Life is for living not for standing by on the sidelines reporting it. Jesus in his own wonderful way is telling all of us to not fear the world around us with all of its troubles and turmoil. Instead we need to enter the world because that is where Christ resides. He is constantly reminding us to invest ourselves with him in the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly.

And as Louisa McQuillen put it so beautifully:

“Amid this restless world we need to seek the living God. For our years advance as surely as do rings around a log. His spirit then can help us meet the day the way we should. And we'll keep things in perspective while were gleaning in the wood.”