

A Rosey Surprise

An experience of enjoying the simple pleasures of God’s beautiful creation.

I’ve seen him so angry I thought he would explode. Then again I’ve seen him spend hour after hour in sheer, almost mystical delight. I’ve seen my husband in both states of passion when he does what he thinks must be done in the rose garden.

He tells people, “Roses are easy: they almost take care of themselves.” I wonder, “If this is true, why does he spend so much time tending them?” When I ask, he smiles gently and says, “I do it all for you, Marlene. Remember your middle name?” My middle name is “Rose.”

But I know that the real reason he does his roses is because for him raising roses is one of life’s small and significant pleasures.

Every year in early spring when there is still a trace of snow on the ground, my husband announces that today is the day the roses have to be dug up. Roses being dug up in the spring time? Well, here in the northland it gets so cold over the winter, that the best way to make

sure rose plants survive, is to dig them out of the ground roots and all in the fall, make a grave, wrap the green stems in news-paper, lay the rose plants in their winter graves, and literally bury them. My



husband marks these “winter rose graves” with pieces of firewood. It is these buried rose plants that have to be reclaimed in early spring when the frost is out of the ground.

It is like a miracle! The stems of the freshly exhumed plants display themselves as deep, deep green, having been protected by their newsprint shrouds. The roots

are ready to take nourishment from the soil. Some times eager rose bushes have already begun to sprout pale, sunless probes while still buried.

It is exciting to dig them up, prune them where they need to be cut back, and shape them and the garden plot, so that their lives will flourish in April, May, June, July, August, September.

It is like finding a treasure when the first flush of buds appears on rose bushes that have lost their identifying tags. Will it be a “Masterpiece,” or a “Barbara Bush”; an “Orgold” or a “Peace”? We look at each other, and my husband and I say the words in unison. “We’ll just have to wait and see.”

Finally, when the blooms explode, it is breathtaking. Gorgeous colors define the bushes, and the blossoms are bigger than ever. A friend jealously asks if we are growing cabbages instead of flowers.

Growing roses is one of life’s small pleasures, not just for my husband, but for me as well. After all, my middle name is Rose.