

HARVEST OF LOVE

by Holly Love King, Tennessee

At 40 years old, for the first time in my life, I lived on more than a quarter of an acre. In the summer of 2018, we moved to a fixer-upper on five acres with a big, red barn and a 20-acre field behind us. Finally, room and space to breathe! “Neighs” more than neighbors and wild turkeys more than traffic. I’d dreamed of this for a long time.

I’d also dreamed of planting rows and rows, not just small, square-foot gardens. So here I was, and it was spring. Sure, the house wasn’t finished and I should have been inside helping my husband, but it was spring! Gardeners can’t be cooped indoors with the smell of seedlings in the air. This is our-kind-a-Christmas!

Now, I’ve gardened off and on for years. Growing weeds more than watermelons. And mostly planting veggies. However, a couple of years ago, I fell in love with flowers when, needing some space, I headed outside for a walk. At the time, I was “all business.” My dad had recently passed away, and as the executor of his estate, keeping myself emotionally closed was helping me push through. While

walking, I began to notice a wildflower here, a wildflower there. Slowly, I began to pick them, and soon, I had a bouquet. Captivated by their beauty, I brought them to my face to drink in their aroma. As the petals kissed my cheeks, this thought flooded my mind: “I love you, in millions of ways, in rainbows of ways. I will love you in millions more.” A tear rolled down my cheek. My heart softened a bit as a few more silent tears fell. It felt like my dad or my Creator or the flowers themselves were speaking to me. Loving me.

Two years after that walk, here I was, working in my very own football-field-sized garden, feeling like I’d won the lottery. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine gardening in such a spot ... hugged by the quiet, green field and never-ending blue sky. One day, while I was outside playing in the dirt, a song came to mind out of nowhere. Instantly, I began to hum the tune and think about the lyrics:

“She’s got a way about her;
I don’t know what it is,
But I know that I can’t live without her.

She’s got a light around her;
And everywhere she goes,
A million dreams of love surround her,
Everywhere.”

The song is *She’s Got a Way* by Billy Joel. It’s not a song I hear often or know well, but nonetheless, it flooded my mind. With tear-filled eyes, I continued to softly hum and work the soil. Once again, it felt like my dad or my garden or maybe the earth herself was singing to me. Loving me.

I’m not sure why we gardeners keep at it, battling the weeds and weather. But I have a sneaky suspicion that it’s not just for the ripe tomato or fresh bouquet. It’s for how the flowers soften our hardness, for how the soil soothes us in song, or for how the earth simply loves us back. Whatever the reason, we “Janes” are growing. May we not just scatter seeds, but rather, may we reap the harvest of love ... in millions of ways, rainbows of ways, and millions more yet to come.

Holly shares, “I am a Nashville-native wife, mama, part-time writer, and owner/operator of my own housecleaning business, Happy To Be Home. My heart’s outlet is writing. I love the outdoors. And coffee. To learn more or purchase my devotional journal, visit HollyLoveKing.com.”