

Pearlstone In Bloom/ Tome Shaaltiel

For the last two weeks there have barely been any humans on the Pearlstone campus. I have expected the place to be quieter in sound and in movement, but in fact it has been so much louder and busier.



The grasses have just started to pop out shooting up long green leaves, standing their ground and welcoming the warm weather, the sunshine and the showers of rain. The wild edibles, we have been waiting for all winter, are popping up one by one. Since there aren't as many humans foraging them as years before, they can grow as big and as wide as they please. The thorny brambles and sticky bushes are less frightening while they start growing tiny green leaves. The Daffodils, the first flowers of spring have woken up, a rare scene, only for spring. The first trees are in bloom. The oaks and the maples with a red canopy, then the plums and pears with their white flowers sticking out from the distance. The trees bloom to attract the sleepy pollinators, letting them know it is time to get up and start doing their hard spring work.



I have been waking up from the sounds of birds singing in all their glory. All kinds of birds, each with their own unique song. The land is the loudest it has been in a long time. All the animals have come out of their winter hiding, checking out the scene scavenging for food and water, finding mates and marking their territories for all to know. The animals have always been around the edge, finding the best variety of food. Now, they are braver, staying out in the open spaces throughout the day. They are roaming in the fields, meadows and forest. They feel more comfortable on the land, no one is interrupting them but the occasional farmer passing by in the field. More than ever, they have free range to do as their heart's desire.

Every day the landscape is changing colors. In the winter the colors of the land are mostly red, yellow and brown, with bits of green from the evergreen trees and leftover grass. Occasionally the land gets covered in white from the snow. In this time of year, one day I see brown, the next green, then white and pink and yellow and red. Every plant has its own performance time slot to show off its brightest colors. They all wait patiently for their turn with the temperature shift and the length of time they need for each inch of growth.



It is just the beginning of spring, and the streams are already filling up from the rain, urging the skunk cabbage to grow along the creeks and in swampy areas which are forming in the depth of the forest. Water is overflowing with excitement and rapidly moving faster and faster down the hills into the valley. Vernal pools are created within holes in the ground, a haven for tadpoles to nurse into frogs. The streams are crowded with new species, from insects laying their eggs. The geese and ducks have come back to our lake during the day. They are swimming and fishing with delight. So much life is forming in the waters surrounding Pearlstone.



The decomposers were busy all winter preparing the soil for the new growth, to feed the land, the animals with the most nutritious soil. They may be underground and unseen to most, but they are of great importance. The mycelium spread their network even farther above ground, bearing delicious fruits of mushrooms right after the first rains of the season.

The land is in full action taking care of every life form. Making sure all have water, sun, air, soil, all have what they need to grow, to take these first steps of spring, make a fresh start. The land is loud and wants to be heard.