

Home Country

Taking A Peace Walk With Special Memories

Doc took a little spring walk the other day since people in the valley seemed to have hit a lick of health.

He walked past Miller's old dairy, now grown to weeds, and thought about the kindnesses of old Tom Miller and the way he'd always bring Doc some butter when he wasn't able to pay his bill. Doc could see his big, round face smiling as he walked past the milking parlor's gray concrete walls.

The buds were coming in strong on the fruit trees, and he remembered what fun it had been with the boys he'd grown up with; each spring was a door opening to adventure and who-knows-what-else. At Lewis Creek, he gazed down on the familiar rocks near the swimming hole. If they have eroded any since Doc was a kid, he sure couldn't tell. It's good that some things don't change. We need that constancy, he thought, smiling. The kids who swam past those rocks



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so many years and wars ago are mostly gone now, but Doc is still here. Doc and the rocks.

Passing the feedlot, he caught sight of Dewey loading manure into the back of his pickup. There's something so ... American about Dewey. He can't be trusted to handle anything that might stick, snap, stab, slice, break or mangle, but he'd managed to make a good living with just a shovel and hard work and imagination. Flower beds all over the valley owe Dewey big time.

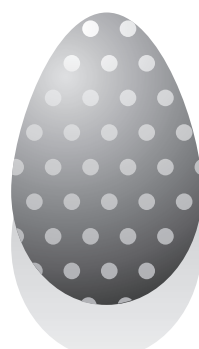
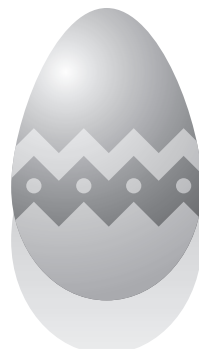
As he strolled back into town and passed by the feed store, Old

Sally arose from her pothole in the street and came over to toddle along with Doc, something she does with the people who love old dogs. She went two blocks and then headed back to where it was sunny. He walked past the Rest of Your Life Convalescent Home. Margaret, at the front desk, looked out and watched Doc go by and thought it strange Doc would take a walk alone.

But he wasn't alone. Not here. It's one of the blessings of living in a place like this.

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