

WALK SLOWLY WITH PURPOSE

Northern Michigan Spring

By Dominic Fortuna

As the first light of dawn creeps over the Sleeping Bear Dunes, the world outside my window transforms into a winter wonderland – except it's not winter anymore. The snow's gone, replaced by a carpet of soggy earth and the faintest hint of green. Spring's here, and with it, a renewed sense of purpose.

I throw off the covers, and the chill of the morning hits me like a slap in the face. Perfect. The cold is just enough to get the blood pumping, reminding me that I'm alive, and there's a whole season of possibilities waiting to be seized. In northern Michigan, spring's a fleeting affair – a mad dash to get everything done before the summer crowds descend. So, I'm grabbing the day by the horns, or

rather, the gardening gloves.

First things first, the yard's a mess. Winter's left its mark – dead branches, soggy leaves, and a general air of disarray. Time to get to work. I head out to the garage, the smell of damp earth and gasoline mingling with the promise of a new season. The lawn mower's still got some life left in it, and the weed whacker is ready to go. But first, a cup of coffee, and maybe, just maybe, a dip in the nearby woods for some morels.

Mushroom hunting's a springtime ritual in these parts. The morel season's short, but sweet. There's something magical about tromping through the woods, the forest floor still soggy from the snow, and spotting that first morel – like finding a small, mysterious treasure. The trick, of course, is knowing where to look. The old oaks, the creek

beds, the spots where the wild leeks grow. It's a treasure hunt, and I'm the eager prospector.

But back to the yard. The garden's gotta be planted, and I'm thinking big. Tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers – the works. The Traverse City area's got a growing season that's shorter than a politician's promise, so every day counts. I've got seedlings started indoors, waiting for the soil to warm up enough to transplant them outside. And while I'm at it, I'll tackle some of the "fix-it" projects around the house. Spring's the perfect time to get the deck sanded, the gutters cleaned, and the porch repainted.

Of course, spring cleaning's a big part of it, too. The house has been shut up tight all winter, and it's time to let some air in, literally and figuratively. I'll be sorting through the clutter, donating stuff we don't need to Goodwill, and generally trying to make some order out of the chaos. The garage, in particular, is a project. I'm thinking a good sort, a ruthless purge, and maybe even a coat of paint to make it look halfway decent.

As the day warms up, the yard's going to need some serious attention. The grass is growing, the weeds are winning, and the flower beds are a mess. But it's all part of the fun. In northern Michigan, spring's a time to reconnect with the land, to get your hands dirty, and to remember why you live here in the first place. The smell of fresh-cut grass, the sound of birds singing, and the satisfaction of a job well done – it's all part of the package.

By the time the sun sets, I'll be tired, dirty, and content. The yard'll be looking a little more respectable, the house'll be shipshape, and the garden'll be planted. And I'll know that I've made the most of this spring day in northern Michigan.

And don't forget to be neighborly, a lot of our snowbirds are coming back from the warm climate. It always feels good to be a good neighbor and to be helpful, especially when we all went through this horrendous winter. So walk slowly with purpose into another beautiful and God gifted northern Michigan spring.

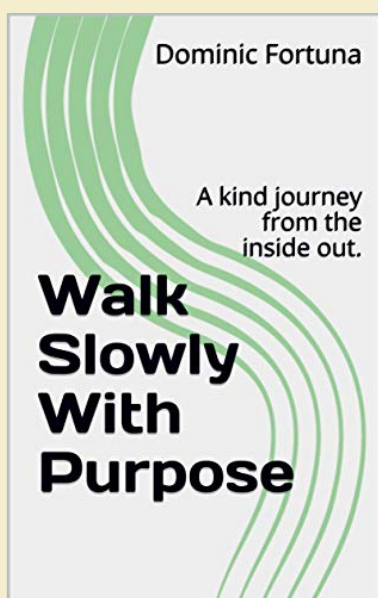


A basket of Morels

Photo by Carlos Amanda on Unsplash

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