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## Traveling Home

By Christine Smith

I had finished lunch and sat gazing into the coffee cup I had just drained. My thoughts were on the beauty of the landscape I had traveled through that morning and the miles of open land and sky that lay before me that afternoon . . . more beauty to come. A woman silently appeared to stand near my table, and a shudder of warmth moved through me. I felt her before I saw her. When I looked up into her calm, quiet eyes, I thought how natural it was for her to be there.

She was dressed in soft animal skins adorned with bits of twig, bone, moss and fur. There was the smell of sweet grass and warm earth about her. As she stood before me, I felt the aliveness of her body and the truth of who she was through her silence.

I knew I was in the presence of Love. But in the moment of this recognition, I realized I had suddenly turned away. I had created a distance between us and had begun to imagine this all as if it were a memory . . . as if it were something that had happened in a time 'before' rather than 'now.'

She continued to stand quietly in front of me. As I looked once again, risking the depth of her eyes, a question rose from a wave of anguish in my heart. "Why do I do this?" Through the silence, I heard her reply. "It is because each moment has yet to be recognized as the presence of Love, and devotion to each moment has yet to be recognized as a response of Love."

As she looked at me with a steady gaze, I realized that in my subtle but constant effort at maneuvering life into familiar, recognizable forms, I had often claimed what I created in my mind to be 'reality.' I was doing it now. I was trying to make this imitation of truth stand in place of the aliveness I knew in this moment. I could see that any act that came through this effort was a mere shadow of the vitality I actually felt in her.

With remarkable ease, I then felt myself come into the truth of all she embodied. It was a truth far wider than any I had known before. This was Love experienced in the moment of its fullness . . . a response freely given, not as obligation or a gesture intended to keep myself safe and to keep the world at bay. The deepening silence between us confirmed my realization.

Everything was present in that moment: there was no existence that could even be imagined beyond what created and saturated this living "now."

It was then that I realized I was not only in the presence of Love, but I, too, was Love.

With this, she was gone. Only a faint hint of sweet grass lingered.

(See Christine Smith's bio at the end of *Embracing the Boundless*, page 44.)