

Today at 50Plus (our Senior Citizens' group) some kind lady placed pussy willow sprigs on each table.

For just a little while I am that little kid again, maybe 6 or 7 years old, trudging over the half-melted, crusty, northern Illinois snow on a sunny late-March afternoon in our back lawn.



I have on my ratty, pull-on black boots and an almost-outgrown heavy coat, home-sewed from somebody else's long-ago handed-down wool coat. None of the buttons are alike but they work just fine to keep the coat warm and toasty around my scrawny little body. My stocking cap is hand-crocheted from scrap yarn and there is a "sensible" wool scarf tied around my head. My "snow pants" are constructed of whatever warm fabric Mom could scrounge up. My bulky mittens were crocheted from more of that scrap yarn.

My faithful side-kick, Smokey, is digging under the rose bush, hot on the trail of some errant rabbit or possum.



I am on my tip-toes, reaching as faaaaaar up as I can to retrieve some of those pussy willows that have opened on the bush along the house yard fence line. Oh, such an exciting treasure to bring into the house for Mom. At last, spring is coming!

That's Dad and Mom in about 1950.



Ah, but this is March 19, 2015, not 65 years ago, and those pussy willows are safely displayed on our mantle in Mom's ceramic cow-shaped cream pitcher:



Thank you to the kind lady this morning who stirred up all these comfortable memories.



Pussy Willows

According to an old Polish legend, a mother cat was crying at the bank of the river in which her kittens were drowning.



The willows at the river's edge longed to help her, so they swept their long graceful branches into the waters to rescue the tiny kittens who had fallen into the river while chasing butterflies.

The kittens gripped on tightly to their branches and were safely brought to shore. Each springtime since, goes the legend, the willow branches sprout tiny fur-like buds at their tips where the tiny kittens once clung.