Earth rocks my world. Listening to the music of my hyphae, I decompose the farmer's song and dance routine. 75 tons of beautiful compost gave an acre of sod a shiny black coat. At less than two miles per hour, I slip the plow in and gently flip her over. Not too deep but thoroughly penetrating, so nothing is left unturned, we kiss the grass and clover goodbye and prepare for potatoes, those apples of the earth.

Land grounds me. This compacted field has not been turned in thirty years or more. Like meeting a new person, whose familiar smile encourages, the possibilities of a new garden excite imagination. The sensuous aroma fills the air, while smooth ridges and deep furrows follow the hills contour. I love to fall plow sod and leave it for old man winter to freeze and thaw it, making us a nice mellow bed to land in.

My soul savors soil. Nothing seems as sacred as loosening tight ground and reinvigorating it with compost. An inherent inner instinct awakens and I am silent. I eat from where I walk and do not want to talk. Three hundred bushels of potatoes appear and disappear here every year, followed by similar yields of other vegetables. The souls who support the farm free me from the market economy, and allow my love of this piece of earth to direct my daily work.

Love is not without hurt, and my sensitivity to land creates a pain when I see abandoned farms. Humans cleared and loved these farms, opening up the land for cattle and the opportunities livestock provide. Earth needs animals, especially ruminants. When present the land flourishes, and when absent, it deteriorates. Returning animals from feedlots back to the farm is of the utmost importance.

The four-stomached mammals can create more fertility than what their own fodder requires. The crops they graze improve soil structure. Ancient cultures survived only when this knowledge was recognized and respected. Vegetarianism arose from the realization of the absolute necessity of keeping cattle. Otherwise, famine would have ended their agriculture, and their civilization.

What happens to grass during its eighteen days in the belly of a cow? The magic of microbes, of intestinal flora and fauna, transform it into the earth's redemption. We further this process in the compost pile. Forces are lost from the growing of plants and are returned to the earth by microbes. Frequently fermenting the farms forgotten foul fortunes fosters, future field fertility.

Molded by mold, backed by bacteria and pro-protozoa, I sense a microbial intelligence in humus

rich soil. When the earth is soft, fluffy, and silky, and I can easily move my hands around it, our crops grow effortlessly. Microorganisms colonize the roots, exchanging nutrients, water, and protection for the root ex-dates they live on. This symbiotic, underground relationship creates permanent soil vitality and the best possible sustenance for man and beast. Nature knows what is best for the earth.

Textbooks written for children a hundred years ago eloquently describe these good farming practices: appropriate animal impact, composting of manures and farm wastes, crop and animal rotations, growing green manure cover crops, and the use of rock dusts. It was not only immoral but also illegal to sell hay off of leased land, or to not grow the grass and clover two out of every four years. Centuries of experience culminated in these wisdoms; how to use ruminants to build a live soil humus capable of feeding not only the animals and humans on the farm, but allowing for the sustainable exportation of excess produce. Land was never left idle like we witness so commonly today.

This excess production is food; carbohydrates, sugars, starches, and protein. These are primarily carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, given to the farm freely from the air and rain, powered by the sun. All we need is love, and the earth to love. Let’s plant potatoes!