

## Dance of the Least Weasel

I woke at first light and gathered the new day into myself. I sat on my bed, gathered enthusiasm, balance, and physical strength and stood, walked into my kitchen and put a simple breakfast together and ate. I needed to get outside for sunrise.

I lived in a ramshackle house on a farm in the Treasure Valley of eastern Oregon while I worked on healing after being hit by a drunk driver. I took my guitar from its case and carried it outside, a ways up the dirt driveway that ran past my back door to a milking barn, abandoned by all but a family of owls years before. I sat down in soft dirt, sheltered from cold spring wind by the big cottonwood tree I leaned against.

Sun cast golden light into the sky as it began to rise from the horizon.

I tuned and played my guitar. I built a new song, started in deep down blues, where I had been when waking at first light. I slowly built up from discouragement that had come to me in my dreams during the night and was hard to leave behind in first light of early morning. Up. Tones rise. Words rise. Up from blues, leave mournful tones of dreaming blues and rise into the warming sky.

I found patterns in sounds of six steel strings and in newest words that reached for harmony, words I sang tentatively into cold air, to trees and weeds growing green from the spring dirt around me.

The sun rose above the barn roof, and its bright light warmed me in the early morning.

A small animal came my way on the dirt road through bright sunshine, almost hidden by weeds growing from dust. I kept playing my guitar stopped searching for words to build my new song, and watched.

A least weasel, reddish brown, about six inches long, white underneath, carried its black-tipped tail straight up and trotted jauntily along the dirt road toward me. Without altering its pace, the weasel looked me over as if it liked the music resonating from my guitar, trotted past me, up the steps, and in the open back door of my house. I got up and followed it, still strumming my guitar but trying now to find bright rhythm that matched the small animal's confident trot.

The weasel toured my living room, looked my sparse furniture over, trotted in and circled my bedroom, walked into my bathroom and looked everything over, came out, and trotted by quite close to my feet, unafraid of my hugeness, of my humanness so close to its tiny form as it trotted though this part of its day.

Harmony of my guitar's tones filled the narrow hallway as I matched the small animal's rhythms of movement.

The least weasel trotted out my back door, down the steps, and down the dirt road, out of sight into a field of sugar beets growing toward the spring sky, into tall grass and trees. It had delivered its message, that I am not alone, that the life force is strong and surrounds me with joy and flows smoothly into harmony and into the future, for me, for all existence.

I sat down on the back step and played and sang a new song, a weasel trot, happy, confident, resonating into the world. Sunshine and bird song filled the day as my song and I reached toward the clear blue sky.

Sunny day after sunny day developed into summer. My song, the song the very small weasel had brought for me, developed, unfolded and became the starting point for many songs I built that celebrated sunshine, harmony, and the healing power of life.

I left crutches behind. I left my cane behind. I walked. I healed in ways, in strengths I hadn't thought were possible.

Often, in the years since that morning in The Treasure Valley, when I needed to climb toward recognition of harmony, toward renewed enthusiasm for life, I danced the weasel dance, sang the weasel song, and other songs I built to remember better the bright message the tiny animal brought me through weeds and dust in spring sunshine, that life is good. Life is full of healing. Life flows in harmony all around me.