

## Walk on the Wild Side: Unforgettable Harvests



Jennifer Burrows

As a city kid I used to watch huge pumpkins roll from trucks and heap themselves onto city parking lots. The October harvests of my childhood painted my young world such a dazzling orange that the memory is crystal clear today.



Those postcard harvests brought friends together in sticky kitchens that spilled over with tangs of ripened food, lifted moods and a warm blanket of security that promised many harvests to come. But as you know, there's little about life that stays the same.

This summer my world turned a brilliant orange and it wasn't October and I wasn't looking at pumpkins.

***Although I can't imagine opting for this experience I'm aware a valuable harvest comes with every experience you have.***



A massive explosion of fire approached our neighbourhood in the uncontrollable manner that characterizes wildfires. From a spark it grew to become an inferno covering 95 square km, or 37 square miles and blazed for more than a month.

Simultaneously, extremely hot weather, lightning, tinder dry forests, and carelessness ignited more than two thousand fires throughout B.C. and created uncertainty and fear wherever flames hit. Facing danger is a trying way to bring a community together but it does.

It's a stretch to find something worth harvesting when you feel threatened.

***Fear has a way of overpowering gratitude and focusing you single-mindedly on preservation.***

Yet we've all heard reports of countless acts of generosity, courage, and compassion that take place during times of threat, and so it did here.



Mother Nature delivers powerful reminders about the greater flow to life that's beyond our control. And sometimes her big events illustrate how deeply rooted we've become. Compared to earlier times when people expected to pick up and move themselves to safer ground we want to control natural cycles which of course is impossible. Life holds no guarantees even when you hang on with a vice-grip.

I came across an ancient Indian proverb that says, *"Treat the Earth well. We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children"*.

***This leaves me with a deep sense that what we harvest in future will depend more upon how we treat Earth than upon the seeds we plant. Imagine what we'd learn if we reaped in proportion to the love and gratitude that we planted?***

Once again it is the beginning of October and piles of orange pumpkins are piling up everywhere. In communities where the fire has passed people are harvesting more than food.

They are feeling safe, breathing clean air, celebrating the recent rainfall in the forest and the anticipated the return of wildlife. Soon new trees will begin seeding in the scorched spaces the fire left behind.

Having life return to normal feels like holding a winning ticket. This year's harvest is one to remember.

Jennifer Burrows

[jennross@shaw.ca](mailto:jennross@shaw.ca)

<http://fineartamerica.com/profiles/jennifer-burrows.html>