

She pulled the cold sheet up to her warm body. A tingle crept unconsciously up her spine. She shivered gently aware that gooseflesh had spread over her body. She pulled the cold sheets closer as if to stop the unexpected sensations. She curled her fingers around the top of the sheet finding comfort in holding onto something soft, looking for warmth. She felt cold somehow. At some deep level, cold and alone and unsafe. She opened her eyes. She hadn't even realised that she had instinctively closed them when she had shivered. She was in a small carpeted room with one window in it. Through this the moon shone brightly. The light curtain fluttered in the soft, warm breeze. She guessed it was about 2:00 am, but she was now wide awake. The uncertain light, the light breeze and the cold sheet somehow had awakened something in her. It seemed like an old memory from a time long past. She wanted to remember it - this thing she had begun to forget - but there was something scary about wanting to remember too, it was unclear where the path would lead. The two thoughts seemed to play seesaw in her head, gently, almost tantalising her. Turn over and return to sleep or dredge up an uncertain memory.

The past held many fond recollections. These began to meander from her thoughts, to her eyes, past her nose and to her mouth. The feel of being out in a hot car and pulling up to the ice cream shop. She swallowed in anticipation of the cold, sweet creamy taste. As the car opened the sound of the street flooded in; the quiet, stifled atmosphere of the car at once safe and claustrophobic, now invaded by light and noise and possibility. The clack of her hard soled shoes on the tar road, the hand that came to hold hers, the short walk into the shop. The anticipation. She swallowed again, this time more strongly. The rattle of the shop door as it opened, the mixed smells of life inside it. The texture of the ice cream cone in her hand - now the certainty of the hope. The first lick to catch the melting snow as the heat brought summer to the cold mountain, that's how she thought about it. At least that's how she had when she was a little girl. The lick bounced back from her taste buds to her thoughts and ran along like a stream. The stream... somehow in her head this started her remembering....

The thought-stream poured over a waterfall, into a cold pool that spawned two trickles. The one trickle seemed to be like the wonderful carefree time she just remembered, the sense of being guided, almost forced to act in a certain way, of being a child, with strong parents. Being given good things, being looked after and cared for. And yet, there was a restriction about it. The other trickle formed a whirlpool in a puddle. As the waterfall filled it, it began to look for ways to keep from overflowing, from falling apart, some way to work with all this water; to channel it. First the water looked for a way out between some grass, but after a short downward flow a large rock stopped it. The water seemed to swirl in confusion. She saw a rivulet form on the other side of the puddle and seemed to race promisingly towards a good wide area. The soil seemed too sandy and the rivulet petered out. The pool filling now, seemingly faster than before. She glanced at the other trickle and saw it was flowing well, but this one; still struggling, full of eddies, nowhere to go, directionless.

She found herself breathing harder, concerned about the way forward. Her attention bouncing from the one flowing stream to this other seemingly stagnant one. She followed the other stream down the slope in her mind - hovering over it. It seemed safe and certain, clear and strong. This was a sure path. The start was good and when one looked along the flowing water there seemed to be a safe, straight way down. It looked like plain sailing. She could even see the gently undulating flood plains not far below and thought it would be good to get there soon - lovely gentle flowing water, lush vegetation, shady trees and a place to plant and to settle. A place to put down roots and a place to call home. She saw the quaint shops and the people. They moved gently about, calling out greeting to each other as they went about their day to day business with a kind of relaxed predictability. Gentle, carefree, caring and secure; what else could a person - a little girl - want? As the thought began to hover lower, tossed like a leaf on a gentle breeze, she breathed more slowly and enjoyed the view, the noises and the smell of good food and fertile croplands. She felt the Sun on her back and instinctively turned over to face its warmth. As she did she caught the glint of the waterfall high above. The thought that had been tossed this way and that in that soft warm air was beginning to settle in the valley. The waterfall and all that troubled water seemed far away, too high to be concerned about in this good place.

She was surprised that she could see the waterfall-spring so clearly. She looked again at the people below. They were content and busy, going about the good everyday tasks of life, seemingly unconcerned with the source of the water. An unexpected updraft moved the thought skywards and she briefly saw the high country clearly again. Suddenly, the people small, the faint roar of the waterfall louder now and closer:

*The splash of spray upon her face
The call towards amazing grace
How would she want to run this race?*

*The other pool, its path uncertain
The way oft closed as with a curtain
And yet the way is clear enough
If we will flow, just drop by drop*

She breathed in again, almost unconsciously, the cold water on her face and fresh cool air squeezing her out of the dream and plopping her back into her bed with the cold sheets and the uncertain breeze at her window. She took a last quick look at her thoughts as the images began to fade. The lovely farmland, the homely smells... the thundering waterfall, the whirling pond. She was left in the quiet part of the night with thoughts and answerless questions:

Was the pond still just whirling around aimlessly, had it found a way onwards? Was the path difficult? How fast was the flow? Did the river go through the beautiful floodplain or perhaps bypass it altogether on the way to its destination? Would the Sun dance on the water, or was the water cool and seemingly still? Were there waterfalls and obstacles and how would one face them?

She was left feeling a little lonely or else in earthly solitude. And even though there was no other human soul there she was aware of the soft light at her window and the uncertain breeze carrying on it the sure thrill of adventure.