

He Sends forth the Springs in the Valleys; They Flow Between the Mountains

by Celeste Davis

Your love for the trees and mountains is unmatched, that of no other twelve year old. You've seen them in their wonder and majesty, laden with new ideas and comfort, spreading far and wide across endless possibilities. This is your gift. Keep that love for the natural world strong, and let it grow until it consumes you. God has delivered you to this earth in the form of an adventure-hungry daughter-of-a-woodsman. Bring your heart with you into your forest sanctuary, and call upon God to show you the way to truly admire and share it.

Recall your raft riding journey through Hell's Canyon in your home state of Idaho. Feel the cool pebbles massage your bare feet. The sun rises and sets on your sun tanned skin, as your sisters tease you about your childhood love interests and convince you to truly jump out of your comfort zone, by leaping off a cliff to plunge into the terrifying unknown water.

In these times, you learn the beauty of God's world, you begin to call yourself "friend". Yet, you still can't call God the same. At this time, God may as well be the kid who is in your grade, but had always been in the other home room. But in a matter of seconds, that alien acquaintance becomes the love of your life.

It happens on the river. Devil's Drop, humorously, is the place you would fall head over heels into God's torrential affection. Perched at the end of your family raft you anxiously await the excitement of your first class four rapids. Cyclopean rocks riddle the water, tossing the flow about like a rag doll, busting apart any logs that dare enter its powerful grasp. The perfect playground for an adventurous ten years old. As the challenges approach, your father warns you to sit in the bottom of the raft, to not be tossed out of the rubber raft sanctuary. These waters are dangerous to a defenseless child. Nevertheless, you tell your father to "Go for the big waves,

Daddy!” and brace for the tossing adventure. Devil’s Drop gets its ominous title for harboring a six foot standing wave, forever rolling on the northside of its waters. Your father heads straight for this colossal beast. Sadly for your intrepid spirit, your vessel only skims the monster, and the raft is virtually undisturbed. Disappointed with your experience, you stand back up from the rubber bottom and take your seat on the end of the raft.

In what may have been a second, or perhaps ten (time slows down in instances like this), you are fired like a rocket up over the left shoulder of your father, who watches in amazement at this ten-year-old-sized girl-daughter-frog miraculously flying through the air as he sits, still wrestling with the oars to keep the craft afloat. How would such a young child be able to soar like this?

The answer is simple. Physics. Yes, as you sit insolently on the end of the bouncy rubber raft, your captain is caught off guard by an immense rock, directly in the path of travel. The energy created from the crash would be discharged by the springy material of the raft into the surrounding area or anything else in contact with it. This “anything else” means you.

As the raft caterpillars over the boulder, you are launched into the sky, then directly into the raging rapids. What better yet, you enter a hydraulic, a churning mass of water which sits circulating around and around at the base of a large obstruction in the river. Call back that sudden blast of cold, and the feeling of being hurled around as you were slowly encased in the black, unforgiving waters with no foreseeable means of escape. In this cave-dark moment, you feel only peace. It seems almost comical, and you can't help but make it something to laugh for. “This is going to be one hell of a story,” you chuckle to yourself (you, who should not have been using or even thinking language like that at such a young age). Your trust is so great, you feel it appropriate to take the opportunity to smile.

Suddenly, you burst forth to the sensory overload of your sisters calling out your name in distress and the bright summer sun assaulting your eyes. Instinctually, you grab your life vest at the collar and position your feet forward (the proper position for anyone wayward in dangerous rapids). That life vest which you clutched onto had saved your life. You can't help but play that thought on repeat as you travel downstream to where your raft caravan waits anxiously.

Understand that a literal drop of the devil had sent you into turmoil and fear. But no matter, you stayed solid in your faith and allowed the lifevest to pull you back to the brightness of day: salvation. This was the day God revealed himself to you in the form of a musty orange life vest your dad's buddy had lent him just two days prior.

In years to come, as you're further down the river of life, you'll think of this and smile, maybe saying a short prayer in thanksgiving, or simply carrying on with your day full of boulders and hydraulics.

You are not the only one venturing down this stream. You will encounter others, some with a better floatation device than you, some in distress for having lost theirs, and some who have decided they can do it themselves, and choose to swim but eventually grow tired and weak. What I'm saying is, there are other means of traveling your river of life, but none are more sure-fire than clutching on to your life vest, assuming the drifting position and allowing God to steer you through his intricate and beautiful plan. And be sure to enjoy the journey. For it is once in a lifetime.