



Contour drawing by Judy Early

Passing Thoughts

by Alan Joyner

What is this illusion? This beauty that astounds me? A life that chills me with reality yet thrusts before me many wonderous things: the joy of friendship, fear of rejection, the complacency of love.

Sometimes when I am all alone in the mountains, listening to the muffled wisdom of the icy stream, it almost makes sense to me. The water spills its thoughts in a language spoken long before man began his long journey across the plain of history. Its substance flows unceasingly, like that of the creator.

The wind reminds me of a time when my spirit wasn't bound by flesh and bones; it makes me think of rambling beyond the stars. I often wonder what it would be like to transcend time and space, to let my spirit drift along on a stream even more beautiful and complex than this illusion we call life.

If mother nature is an old oak tree, then we are the many leaves covering its lofty branches. We are born anew in the warmth of spring. We flourish greedily in the summer's heat. By fall we have slowed, almost halted. The cold north wind stings the life's blood which flows melodically through our veins. We slowly whither while our hearts grow colder in anticipation of the forlorn snows of winter. We die, are swept away on howling winds.

I often wonder what it will be like, looking back on life from the other end of my years. With white hair and dulled eyes, and perhaps from behind the comfort of a bottle, I'll try to recall my loves, my losses, my travels, my dreams, my visions. I will remember the kinship I felt while gazing across the Great Smoky Mountains, and feel the joys of a life passed.

Sunday On Ansley Drive

*My view from the porch
As I sit on the swing
Is not one of visual perception.
I feel clouds rolling in, atmosphere in spin
And hear birds that converse as they sing.
If I move to the right near the logpile,
Nothing much changes at all.
My inner-out-look still feels the storm
and hears the birds as they call.
Related to life on a larger scale,
Keeping all points of view in range
the conclusion is clear that here or anywhere
The view from the mind can't be changed.*

by Jan Sullivan