

Crossing the River

By Glenn Currier

She gets up in the morning, feeds the cat,
and with her face washed, teeth brushed, hair fixed,
and dressed,
she carefully puts on her shoes - one foot aching so
bad
she wonders if she can walk through this day.

Already feeling tired
but not yet out the door,
she takes her pills, gathers her purse and work
things,
and speaks in her cute little voice to her kitty
telling her to be good, blowing her a kiss.

She feels pain.
And pain does something to you.
It depresses, it foments fear -
its dread, dark and heavy -
can blanket and engulf you.
But still, she closes the door
and takes those first painful steps to her car,
moved and motivated by the faces in her mind,
faces of her co-workers
and her beloved students
knowing her special bond with them.

She winds her way through the traffic
and the too familiar streets of Baton Rouge
and approaches the bridge
the bridge that she will mount
to cross the river.

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How many rivers have I crossed
into mornings
with early feelings of sadness or fear?

How many rivers have you approached
in the dailyness of your life
that challenged you to find a bridge
across.

Sometimes I think I know someone so well
they fall into easy categories.
My judgments are so sure

my perceptions so comfortable
in the terrain of my mind.

And then something happens
revealing without warning
the tenderness
the fragility
the exposed humanity
of the person I was so sure I knew.

And I feel confused and lost
in an strange and foggy place
where all my certainty
seems subtlety
and disappears in the mist.

I wonder if we can really know another person,
even family and close friends,
and how the plows of life
have carved their inner contours?

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Across the river
on the other side
of her troubles and pain
she arrives in a place where she belongs
a place where her skills
and her good intentions
flower each day
and she lends her hand and heart
in modest service to the young growth of her
students.

I cannot say what ache is in her
nor grasp my own pain - much less hers.
But when I slip on the downside of being human
I fall into *her* arms
I caress *her* heart
I know *she* knows what it's like.

When I trip on the rug of self-pity
I catch myself and think of *her* resolve
and the flight of courage
she took with each daily challenge
her body presented.

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with troubled ones – the ones regarded as lowly.

So here today we remember the June we loved:

The June Bug, the baby sister
who drew our affection –
and who learned she could depend on her
family.

The young Wonder-Woman-June
so stunningly gorgeous and impressive -
the June who loved to see that wondrous
impression
in the eyes of others.

The June with a surprising down to earth
humor
who made us chuckle
and see the lighter side
of family and ourselves.

The feline June
who knew in cats a kindred species,
the June who empathized

We are here to remember the June
whose depth and whose soul
were beyond *our* reach
but were as sure and true
as the God who filled her being.

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I remember the June
whose childlike spirit
and delight in her simple life
make me humble and grateful
that she was family.
And I am now sure she and I belong together
we are one
in all the important human ways.

This beautiful spirit
is what I will try to recall
the next time I encounter
my own raging river.

*Dedicated to my beloved cousins, June Marie Thibodeaux [February 25, 1955 - January 4, 2014], Rodger Landers,
and David Landers*

Author's Note: June worked as a teacher's assistant in Port Allen, Louisiana - in West Baton Rouge Parish - across the bridge from Baton Rouge where she resided with her cat in her modest apartment of which she was so proud.

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