

# 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.*

. . . . .

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?

. . . . .

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.

. . . . .

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.

. . . . .

*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*

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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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Written 4-1-14*