

March 20, 2012

Hello World!

Global warming. Climate Change. These are terms to be argued by scientists and politicians. For me, all I know is that it's the middle of March and here in Ione, California, I am watching through the slit of window at the back of my cell, rain falling down with consistency for the first time this winter.

I am aware that dreary days, rainy nights, bring the blues to many. For me, it's the opposite. Rain brings a peace, a quietude, and a flood of memories that raise the corners of my mouth into a contented smile.

My first memory of rain was as a first grader running home with a drawing that I had created for my mother. The picture was ruined in the downpour and I cried. Of course my mother still thought the drawing was beautiful, and then with motherly insight, asked, "Son, why didn't you put the drawing inside your raincoat?" I cried again because of my stupidity. I received my mother's soothing embrace and a cup of hot chocolate. It was a good day.

The next significant rain in my life came as a 13-year old. I was surfing off Flat Island in Kailua Bay, Hawaii. The waves had glassy faces of 4 to 5 feet - just perfect for a novice such as me. Two miles out to sea dark clouds gathered. A sheet of rain fell no more than a mile wide. Within it lightning repeatedly struck the ocean sending electrified oval rings shooting outward. Three-quarters of a mile from shore it was too far for me to paddle in so I sat watching the ugly cloud race toward me. Then it happened. Stretching from the edges of the black mass were two of the brightest rainbows I'd ever seen. As if pouring out, the multi-colored ribbons touched the water, a sign to me that regardless of the danger, God is always present. Within seconds I was engulfed in stinging rain that otherwise was lukewarm. Seeming to bow to a superior power, the waves ceased. Lightning snapped and fizzled, tingling my body and turning the bluest water white. Then as a wiper clearing a windshield, the sky wiped itself clean. The waves returned, seeming not at all embarrassed by their submission. I rode the swells until dark with a new sense of awe and a feeling of how special someone must think I am to allow me to experience such a wonder.

For college, I attended Chico State. I owned a 4x4 and enjoyed mud whomping with each rain storm. Wanting to impress a coed, I invited her for an exhilarating evening splashing along swamped mountain fire roads. She accepted. For 30 minutes my truck and I delivered, finding every puddle and pot hole to spray muck over the hood and covering the windshield. Five miles east of town with pounding rain reducing visibility, we came upon a meadow. Illuminated in the bright KC lights atop the truck's roll bar, a 20'x10' puddle sat in the middle of the expansive field. Its surface bubbled under the rain's assault. The coed and I looked at each other with devilish intentions. She cinched her seatbelt and I floored the gas pedal. Hitting the puddle at 40 MPH the truck dove in. As the hood of my raised

vehicle went under I saw out the corner of my eye a sleeping back hoe. This was not a puddle but a 5 foot deep trench. For the time it took for water to fill the engine compartment, the oversized tires grabbed for traction, bucking and twisting the truck. I fought the steering wheel and the coed screamed, thankfully with excitement and not fear. Water rushed into the carburetor to drown the cylinders, killing the engine. Sitting in the cab as water seeped through the door seams to soak our legs and submerge the speakers playing Let the Good Times Roll by the Cars, she asked, "Does this mean we walk back?" Drenched and trudging the mountain road the coed intertwined her fingers in mine. Need I say more?

And now, I sit in a concrete room, sipping steaming tea, listening to a Pablo Cruise CD whose lead singer advises that "I find my place in the sun." I chuckle because for me as I enjoy this shower of memories I can say without reservation that it's all good.

Thanks for checking in on me.

Cordially,



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Novel: A Thundering Wind (Amazon.com)