



**JOHNNY MAHAFFEY SAYS:
"It's Never Sunny in Columbia"**

7.24.16

Well, that may not be entirely accurate.

The sun has been baking this place like an oven lately. The ground is in such need of water that it crunches under your feet, and I've avoided staying out in it too long--because it's as if I can feel the radiation in my skin. The heat being just past that point of being enjoyable, the kind of heat you just KNOW is too much for you to linger in.

Right now is the time to find a nice shade tree and read a copy of a new book released by Simon & Schuster in June, entitled:

"Lily and the Octopus," by Steven Rowley

Check it out if you can--you won't regret it--I promise.

A heat like this is often too much to even take a boat out on the lake. That is, without copious amounts of sun screen! I think that's why I like the upstate area: more trees (it seems) and the mountain areas near with streams and lakes; lots of areas to cool down. Areas where you can hike or mountain bike all day long under the canopies of huge trees that have been uncut and otherwise undisturbed. Trees and areas like those portrayed in the movie "The Last of the Mohicans," which (I believe) had parts of it filmed in that area.

Whitewater Falls is a place EVERYONE should see....

Ted Flask could've taken that old dachshund Lily up there. I took my old basset hound Daisy--and she loved it. I think she would've been content living up there as long as we still got Doritos.

Place has a strong hold in who we are. Where we've been, what we've seen and experienced ... it all plays a role in what defines us. I feel that I'm lucky to have had such places in my life--especially in youth--to have had the opportunity to grab a bike and hit a trail. To swim in the lake. Fish. Kiss, or rather BE KISSED, for the first time. Bobby Joe Kelly, or "BJ" as she went by for short: a cute redhead that I'd sit with on a dock at the lake and watch the sun go down. She was an angel. Took me by complete surprise. Memories like that are ingrained into my being--and I'm very fortunate to have had the life that I have had; and those Blue Ridge Mountains are there in the background of nearly every memory.

It's good to go outside and be part of the world.

The Wrens remind me that every day; and while they may not be the Cardinals, but their feathered antics are just as humbling. My mountain turned not into a molehill; but an awning skirted with snag-wire. But that's okay: I have a typewriter....