

A Meditation on the Great Smoky Mountains
To the memory of Geoffrey Burns Hague

VI.

No, tales are not told by the mountains;
But the spirit and the moods of the mountains remain –
Both happy and sad –
And give to him who can experience them
The essence of the Glory of God
And the infinite majesty of His creation.
*“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
which made heaven and earth. “*
Psalm 121, vs. 1, 2.

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by

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I.

Soon again spring will come to the Great Smoky Mountains –
Soon and again.
Again? For how many times past?
Possibly fifty million, more or less;
Man can only guess.
And how many summers and autumns and winters?
The same, of course, in seasons for fifty million years.

II.

Every season has its happiness and its gloom;
And the Great Smokies –
Under glistening snow or misty shroud
Or blanketed with bloom of rhododendron, laurel, azalea,
and of dogwood and redbud trees,
Or blazing with the intense autumn fires that only nature
can ignite –
Express this conflict of the joyful and of the sad;
Like laughter through tears;
Or sometimes of laughter only, and then of tears.

III.

The majestic, the awe-inspiring, and the grand in this ancient land
Elicit the human response –
And so do the minutia:
The snowflake and the spider's web;
The rivulet and the busy mountain bee.
The ballad, the song, the dance, and plucking of the dulcimer -
Crafted my mortal hand –
Give vent to joy and release from woe.
Expressive man:
Creature in God's own image.

IV.

The harsh, the cruel, the cold, the rough – all things painful -
Whether on the mountain height,
Or on the parched desert sand,
Or on the ocean's limitless depth and span,
Or in man's inhumanity to man -
These are the terrors that bring forth sadness and sorrow.
Alas, that is should be.
And the tears flow.
Forget not, O fragile Man, thou Child of God,
That the Son of God also wept
And that He can wipe away those tears.

V.

If these mountains could talk as men talk,
What tales they could tell
Of the joys and sorrows of the human race that has lived -
Some of whom for only a day,
And many for a lifetime –
In this lush and glistening realm.
But the mountains talk –
not in the simple words and babblings of men –
But in the sounds of the wind, whether breeze or blow;
In the trill of the brook and the roar of the waterfall,
In the cold silence of the star-lit winter night
And calm warmth of summer sun;
In the petal sign-language of wild flowers,
In the drop of cone from fir and pine,
In the song of birds and the incessant chatter of animal life.