

## TRACES IN THE SNOW

By John F. Hall

Today is the calm before the storm. That is a phrase first used by sailors. They were referring to an actual weather phenomenon that they observed at sea. They noticed that



just before a storm, the air around them seemed to get very still. Even the waves, they claimed, would calm down for a brief period of time. That reminds me of Matthew, Chapter 8, Verses 26-27, and these words: Jesus replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. I know how Christ's disciples may have felt, when a sudden and violent storm came up, and water began pouring into their boat. The disciples were in fear for their lives. When I was 19, and on a security mission, the Merchant Marine cargo ship that I was on, sailed into the heart of a typhoon. The angry waves were 50 to 60 feet high. The ship was in the East China Sea. I thought the ship would break apart, and I would become shark food.

Alysha Renee' wrote a poem called, "Calm Before The Storm." These are her words: "She's laid back, yet tense, as if waiting for something to happen at any moment. She smiles more like she learned the very secret of life, and wears it pressed upon her lips. She laughs; for "she knows life is short. You might think her to be happy, but she is the calm before the storm." I was watching WPSD TV Channel 6, out of Paducah, Kentucky. The National Weather Service had just issued a winter storm warning. Heavy snow accumulations of between four to seven inches are expected. My wife, Paula, and I live on the top of Dyers Hill. Driving up and down Dyers Hill Road, is a no-go, with that amount of snow.

Autumn Christina Adair also wrote a poem called, "The Calm Before The Storm." These are her words: "Mediocre phrases, sting like frost bite. Waves of emotion run through my vessels. My system shuts down, my breathes descending. Raw skin around my darken red eyes. I look through my album, all the cracks from the past. It all comes flooding back, I'm being swept away. I can't think straight and I can't stop thinking. I see the ashes emerge and evolve, I see nothing but blackness, cold, eerie blackness, chest pain triggers. Being struck by lighting bolts and thunder storms, there's no cover, all alone. It'll go away with two strokes of the clock. That's the calm before the storm. Then it repeats itself all over again, mediocre phrases sting like frost bite."

This writer starts his day with a simple prayer. I pray: Good morning Jesus! Thank You for my life. Thank You for all the gifts that You have given me." The rest of my prayer is personal. When I first get out of my bed, I will reach for my upright walker, that I keep by the side of my bed. The upright walker is a mobility aid, that is designed to assist me with walking, while I'm standing upright, rather than hunched over as with traditional walkers. Dr. Bose, my cardiologist, wants me to use the walker, to keep me from having a fall.

Falls kill one out of five adults, over the age of 75. I will turn 80 on June 29<sup>th</sup>, if the God Lord allows me to live that long. I take blood thinner, pain medicine, and other medication that cause me to be dizzy and to lose my balance. When I suddenly stand up from my bed, or from my wheelchair, my weak heart and scarred lungs, nearly make me pass out. So I will immediately sit back down, and let the blood run to my brain, for a minute or two. My upright also helps me to maintain my independence. It has a seat that I sit on when I shave I will pull it next to my shower door, to assist me going in and out of the shower. I then use a nasal inhaler, and then a lung inhaler. After breakfast, I will sit in my wheelchair, at my kitchen table. I converted it into a work area, since my cardiologist, Dr. Bose, does not want me going upstairs. I have a large dining room, and a kitchen island, with four stools and the kitchen table is not needed.

I enjoy looking out one of my kitchen windows. It provides a good view of the woods behind the back of my house. As I was typing this, the snow flakes began covering the tree branches. Robert Frost wrote the poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowing Evening." These are his words: "Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village though; he will not see me stopping here, to watch his woods fill up with snow. My little horse must think it queer, to stop without a farmhouse near, between the woods and frozen lake, the darkest evening of the year. He gives his harness bells a shake, to ask if there some mistake. The only other's sound the sweep, of easy wind and downy flake. The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep."

My brother-in-law, Roger Garner, lives next door. His horse is named Harley, and it will "nicker" every time it hears me come out my kitchen door. A nicker is a horse's way of saying: "Come closer to me." Harley has a small stable, near my well house. It protects Harley from the rain and snow. My great niece, Katie Harrison's horse has a new large barn to go into. She put a "fly sheet," which is a horse blanket, on her horse, to help keep it warm. I like to open my kitchen door in the morning. A large rabbit was resting, on one part of my carport, that was free from the blowing snow. It jumped up, and ran to its burrow. The rabbit's paw prints became large traces in the snow.

DM Babbit wrote the poem, "Tracks In The Snow." These are his words: "Tracks in the snow, the pristine landscape cold and white chilled and frosted by winter's Wind in the trees, blowing back and forth, from the highlands in the north. Drifting piled high of snow upon the hill, reveal the burrow of a rabbit will. Footprints in the snow of quiet creature soft and gentle food seeker. A thumper paw imprint soon covered by the windy cold, speak a hidden story of old. The wind, the cold, the forest stands, hides its message of nature across the land."

John F. Hall

\*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:  
<http://www.ajlambert.com>