



September 2020

EARTH CARE & SPIRITUALITY MONTHLY REFLECTION

*Down in the River to Pray* by Wendy Weiger

This year, the last day of spring – the eve of the Summer Solstice – was unusually hot by Maine Woods standards, reaching 90 degrees. As another data point in Earth’s warming trend, it wasn’t something I wanted to celebrate. But the lush green forest and shining waters beckoned me nonetheless. They invited me to come and play, to let go of my fears for the future and immerse myself in the joy the moment offered.

How could I say no? I headed to Big Wilson Falls, a giant staircase of slate ledges, where sparkling water dances downward in frothy white cascades.

I waded across the cool stream, slapping at female horseflies who saw me as a blood meal that would nourish egg production. I lay down on a beach of gray water-smoothed slate fragments, almost unbearably warm from the midday sun. The heat seemed to melt lingering bits of ice inside me, remnants of a winter whose storms lasted well into May.

And then, when I was hot enough that my body yearned for cold, I walked back into the water. I sat down directly beneath a tumbling cascade, the current pummeling my shoulders in a wild massage. I leaned back against the rock, easing the upper half of my body behind the curtain of falling water. The rushing of the stream resounded in my ears. I breathed moist air, rich in the distinctive tang of waterfall spray, redolent of the life within and around the stream. Strong sun shone through the sheet of water before my eyes, a liquid curtain striped in sky blue and gray with brilliant streaks of bright white light.

As the wonder of the world around me flooded my senses, my whole being became a prayer. Nature was reduced to its basic elements: rock and water, air and light, vibrantly energetic but with deep stillness at their core. And I, too, was part of that dynamic stillness.

All too soon, it was time to clamber out of the cascade and return to everyday reality. My summer schedule has been crazy-busy, with little time for sleep, let alone leisurely contemplation. But, even in the midst of the daily hecticness, I know the healing stream still flows – not only through the forest, but deep within my spirit.

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