

Wet Reflections

Written by Vivian Bikulege



November, and it is a rainy Sunday morning. Seems like our lowcountry is speckled with puddles and ponds with few avenues available for evaporation. Mosquitoes are abundant, turtles continue in their slow search for sun and high ground, and our chorus of frogs and toads is in harmony with the percussion and pelt of raindrops on my metal roof.

This is the month of gratitude, good food, football, and the long inhale drawn in before the rush of Christmas and the crash ending of another year. I hate clichés, but truly, this year flew by, again.

I let another year pass by without sitting in a kayak. I have been scarce as the author of *Whatever*. I did not plant enough flowers. I worked, and traveled, and worked, and traveled, and I put on my winter weight sometime in the waning days of summer. (Once denial lifts, I will say out loud that I have simply added another layer to my 2014 adipose inventory.)

I am breathing easier. My sister and her entire clan live in the lowcountry now and this is indeed a blessing. I still have my Mom. My husband is healthy and helpful. My dogs are joy-filled. On a fishing trip with my good friend Father Bernie, I caught my biggest fish ever this past September – a bull red – beside the bridge that connects Hunting to Fripp Island. It was amazing. Once more, I was a part of the audience at the Beaufort Water Festival Talent Show, my photo of the beach will be part of the 2016 Beaufort County calendar and I took an online poetry class this semester helping me to fall even more deeply in love with words. There are always high spots reigning above the mundane.

I need this time of year. I need the exhale and focus back on family, giving, receiving, and the slow foggy cooldown the season brings. I planted a few daffodil bulbs along with my hopes for the surprise of spring. Storing the cushions from lawn furniture draws me to recent memories of my mother lounging in the sun or brooding on the trellis swing. Someday, I will see her ghost

there and that gives me pause time and time again to really soak in the gift of her presence.

I love the oranges, reds and yellows of autumn, the purples of mums, the segmented and bumpy feel of pumpkins, squash and gourds. I have been throwing all of the Christmas catalogs away this fall without opening a page. In the past, I have had a bad habit of accumulating every magazine and gift catalog, but this year, I know there will be a second, third and probably fourth edition of Land's End and Harry and David, so I will wait just a bit longer before I put my Christmas gift list together or sit down to a healthy round of Internet shopping.

So what am I grateful for? My faith, my family, my friends, my health, my job, my home, my pets, a car, food, clothes, a phone, water, AC, heat, fuel, housekeepers and landscapers. I am grateful for all the pilots, flight attendants, ticket and gate agents who usher me safely to places where I need to be and for Gwen who greets me every time I land back in Savannah after another business trip. I am grateful for co-workers and customers. I am grateful for the many people along my way who build my faith. I am grateful for fellow writers and readers and always to Margaret for giving me a place in Lowcountry Weekly to share *Whatever* I may have to give.

And I am grateful for the rain this morning. Rain has had an especially awful place in our state's history this year. We know the power of water because it is woven in our everyday lowcountry lives. But just for today, this morning, the rain has provided me pause, opening my imagination with prompts from the sound of water against windows.

Before I wander down my acorn-laden, mildewed driveway to pick up the Sunday edition of the *Beaufort Gazette*

, I am grateful for the gift of time and words, of thought and verse, of moss and palms. Happy end of 2015. Relish it. Smile when you are in a long check-out line. Breathe when someone pulls in front of you taking that just-perfect parking spot. It is all passing by, passing away.