

a month at the hospital. It was helpful to discuss concerns and worries with other parents. I volunteered through the group to buy and bring toys to the hospital for children who would undergo frequent and painful treatment procedures.

As Bobby continued his treatment, which was to last three years, I began to realize my greatest source of strength. I was finding it in my own son. He was always so brave and accepting of the testing and medical procedures. Was it his innocence or

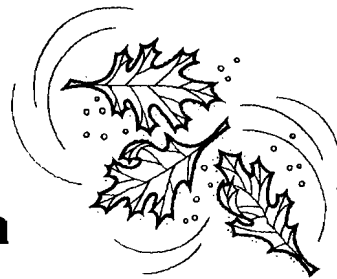
God's love shining down on him that gave him courage? His strength became my strength. We relied on each other to help us through the three long years of chemotherapy.

Today I still lay in the dark, but now I thank God my son is alive and well. He celebrated his twenty-first birthday this year. I look at him and I feel intense inner strength, love and hope. In thanksgiving I often recite the psalm, "O Lord my God, I cried unto thee for help and thou hast healed me" (Psalm 30:2). ◇



## The Rain

by Jeanne M. Rudmann



The holidays were approaching, my term paper was due, and a project for work was a week late. I could barely catch my breath, much less take any time out for contemplation. Slowly my prayers dwindled to a hasty "Keep me safe, healthy and happy. Amen," muttered before I fell asleep. Two days after Thanksgiving, I was forced to reorder my priorities, reminded of what really matters.

That Sunday after Thanksgiving, I drove out to Melody Equestrian Center in West Hills, New York, to drop off my

### Solution:

Words: 1. remember 2. stitch  
3. puff 4. glad 5. know 6. baby

Quotation: "The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel" (1 Kings 11:9).

board check. After I left the check, I hopped into my car, hoping to take some of the winding side roads to the Walt Whitman Mall for some early Christmas shopping.

The rain was slaking down in silvery sheets; the pavement was so covered with oak leaves it looked rusty. Thundering winds shook the remaining leaves from their clinging hold on the branches, and the waters crashed down the hilly side streets. About two blocks from Melody, I saw cars slowing down for a large puddle completely blocking the road, but I had driven through some deep puddles on the way to the barn, so I figured my car was puddle-proof.

Wrong! Halfway through the puddle I realized I was in trouble. The lights on my dashboard blinked; the engine died. Water lapped at my car doors like ocean surf and wind rocked the car back and forth. I opened my car door only to find water licking at the door frames.

*Don't panic, I thought as panic began. Turn off the lights, turn off everything, get out and push . . .*

Other cars roared by, sending sheets of water higher into my engine. Just as I had made up my mind to get out and push, headlights from behind

blinded me.

"Need a push?" A well-dressed young man leaned out the driver's side door of his mini-van. His wife sat on his right. There were three children in the backseat as well, looking curiously out of the windows.

"Yes, thanks!"

He pushed me up the hill until I was safely out of the water. I couldn't thank him enough. I asked, "Do you know how long it will be before my car works again?"

He hesitated, then admitted, "A while. Do you live around here? We'll drive you home."

"I live about an hour from here."

He hesitated again. "Well," he finally said, "We're on our way to the church down the road. Would you care to go to Sunday service?" His face brightened. "There's nothing like spending a Sunday morning in church."

"No, but thanks," I said awkwardly. I couldn't picture myself sitting through service in my soaking wet, muddy barn clothes.

He pulled away with a wave. I got out of my car and began tying a white rag to the trunk. Another driver pulled up. "You okay? Need a lift?"

"No thanks!"

Yet a third car pulled up offering me assistance. "We

live just down the road," the woman said. "You could come with us for awhile."

"No, but thank you anyway."

I hiked back to Melody where my friends were still in the barn. After I explained what had happened, Steffi frowned and said, "I know that corner. It's not usually that bad."

"It was bad. The water was over my door frame."

She shook her head. "I guess it was the downpour. I can't imagine it ever getting that deep!"

I stayed around the barn for half an hour. The man's words, "There's nothing better than going to church on Sunday!" kept echoing inside my chest, as if a gong had been sounded nearby. I was so restless I couldn't sit still. I decided to take my chances and try to start my car.

When I returned to the hill, I could hardly believe my eyes. Steffi was right. There was no lake there, just a few regular-sized puddles by the side of the road, but not the deep lake in which I had stalled. Wherever the floodwaters had come from, they had receded.

No. I didn't want to think about this. I got out of my car—it still didn't work—and hiked up and down the side roads in the pouring rain, my umbrella

barely keeping my jacket dry. *Go back to the car, sit and meditate*, my mind said but I was fighting it, fighting it, fighting it.

Finally the rain became so intense I had no other choice. I sank into the seat of my car, leaned back and closed my eyes. I thought of how fortunate I had been to have stalled so near to friends. If I couldn't get home, at least there was a phone I could use. I thought of the kind man and his family stopping to push me out of the water. I thought of the two other people stopping to offer help.

Stranger, deep thoughts began to surface. There are many of these thoughts trying to manifest themselves each day, but we push them down and aside, squashing them among grocery lists and laundry chores and worries. In the quiet, steamy interior of my car, as the rainwater pooled on the floor off of my soaking sneakers and umbrella, I began to think about chance.

Is anything really chance? That puddle where I had stalled; my friend had never heard of such a deep puddle at that intersection. When I walked back, the puddle was gone. But it had served its purpose, of course, stalling me in my hectic day, making me

stop for an hour and think.

And think I did. I thought of how many nights I had watched inane TV shows and not given time to God. I thought of the petty unkindness I had begun to show towards others because I was "too busy" to help them. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and began to meditate to pass the time.

Slowly, I felt that connection that is the lifeline of existence re-establish itself somewhere deep within me. That crazy, hectic feeling was gone. My Rock, my Anchor was back. The presence that tells us we are never alone was speaking slowly and carefully, murmuring deep within. I had been so

busy I wasn't listening to His voice. Stalled in the rain, with nowhere else to go, with nothing to read or look at or do, I was forced to sit and listen to that Voice, like a running brook or the lashing wind, crying softly, *Listen, listen. I love you.*

I turned the key in the ignition. The engine sputtered into life. My enforced hour of contemplation was over.

I drove home. I put away my books and my business and made time that night to really listen. A stalled car on a rainy Sunday, a chance meeting with a family and a walk in the rain can teach us great lessons if we are willing to listen to the very ordinariness of our lives. ◇

## *The Pastor Said It!*

*"In order to be led,  
you must be willing to follow."*

By Dr. Michael Walker  
Minister at Penbrook Church of God,  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

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