



DAY 35

The Bending Tree

Isaiah 41:10 – "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

As I walked along the trail of Babb's Run Park, I went down, down, down the ravines and found my way to the mighty Cuyahoga River. Today the river had a strong current due to the melting snow and overflowing streams. At one spot on the trail, I found this tree - a 35 foot bending tree - that was anchored to the riverbed, but stretched way out over the roaring river.

How odd, I thought. At one point early in this tree's life, it started bending to the river when all the other trees sought to grow upward to the sky. What happened in this tree's life cycle that turned it toward the raging waters and away from the safety and comfort of the stable earth? What was holding it up (for years!) that allowed it to bend and not break? I saw there was movement in the tree. The wind would gently lift it up as the river flowed by. The air coming off of the current was a natural, built-in support system for the wayward and headstrong tree.

I felt a kinship to this living being, and smiled. Even when I grow in a direction that is completely different than what is expected of me, God is there. God's wind acts like arms to embrace me so that I may not fall, and other people (like other animals on this tree) can experience the life-giving value of water (God's living water) through me.

The Bending Tree.

I did not ask to be this way I only stretched my weight
One foot upon the rocky shore The other tempting fate
Or rather reaching out for God And finding in my search
God held me up, and molded me A bended tree of birch
The other trees may laugh at me And say, "You foolish tree
You're likely to fall sooner than The straightened ones, like we"
I'll smile then and tell them that "I'll have a lighter fall,
and God's water then will carry me to Heaven's port of call."

God help me to be strong like a bended tree and rely on your support. Amen.

– Kathleen Leigh Lewarchick