

Making Friends

As daylight fades I sit alone, thoughts tumbling like the water in the South fork of the Kaweah River over the rocks in the streambed behind the B & B that will be my home for the next three nights.

I thank the stream for becoming my friend, think of others new-found today: like the brushfire that blazed a trail for me across the San Gabriel mountains transforming one north-facing slope into a smoke cloud that would define my memory of a morning sky; like the farmland around Delano, legend from long ago when I refused to eat grapes for so many years but it is met only now; like the succession from grassland, to tree-pocked hillside, to forest, to giant sequoia as I turned east, followed the roadway up the slope of the Sierras which squeeze rainfall from prevailing winds,

allowing the water in the gorge below me to flow now, during these dry August days, whispering:

"Do not worry.
I am as old as
the brushfire, have
been flowing here
since before there were
croplands
in the San Joaquin
Valley,
before the oldest
of the giant sequoia's
sprouted from
the mountain soil,
before the first
human being reached
this continent.
I have
no need to sleep.
You may rest
tonight and I
will be here still
to greet you
in the morning."

Steve Bloom
August 2006