

# The Current

By Brian D. Roth

When I was five years old, I endured a unique and tumultuous experience. My life was at stake.

I had been wading in the shallow end of the Susquehanna River in Conklin, Binghamton. There were parts of the river which were narrow enough for me to leap from one bank to another but they weren't what ran along my backyard. That part was much wider. There were perils waiting to be discovered beneath the surface, perils I failed to recognize until it was too late.

I was still young enough to appreciate knowing that I was safe and secure, but old enough to notice that there were places where I was unable to touch bottom and they aroused my curiosity. I had discovered that trying to resist the great open deep going to be impossible. It was but a leap of courage away. The closer I drew toward it, the more I became obsessed with exploring the unexplored without stopping to wonder why I was the only one of my family members who dared to plunge into an abyss of freedom. I felt the way a bird must feel while soaring through the sky without a care.

Something swept me into its grasp and held me for a long time. My lungs were constricted like an array of ancient wires. I flailed and flailed and flailed, thinking I could escape from being the object of a tug of war between a dozen or more inevitabilities. I should have known this was futile and knew I was going to die.

Something else took a firm hold of me, something that came miraculously from outside the mess that the demons who quarreled over were making, an arm so abrupt and forceful that it did what I could not, which was defy Mother Nature.

I emerged, gasping for air, unable to speak for some time, not just because I was drowning but from shock.

I met the person who had pulled me out of the narcissistic claws of death, my brother Eric. He showed many strong emotions, one was a lingering fear for my safety. Another was shock. I could tell from the way he remained in awe, his eyes unblinking and his lips drawn in an O that he wasn't sure he could have achieved this feat. What remained with both of us more than anything else was gratitude. He never actually said so, but as I grew older I understood that he must have thanked God for giving him the strength to rescue his brother. I am forever indebted to Eric. If not for him, I would not be here...

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