

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