



Perspective

By Jamie Buckingham

HENDERSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA — Writing is usually just hard work. Oh, sometimes there are those flashes of inspiration when the words seem to flow from the source of all knowledge through an open and unencumbered pipeline directly to the paper. But, by and large, writing consists of a man and a typewriter, a huge wastebasket filled with wadded up sheets containing anything from one line to half a page, a stack of clean, white paper and a much smaller stack of typed manuscript which still has to be edited, marked, and re-written at least twice before it's ready for final copy.

For a week I've been secluded in a beautiful mountain retreat far away from blaring televisions, jangling telephones, noisy traffic and neighborly interruptions. I'm working toward a publisher's deadline and the children have strict instructions not to interrupt for anything less than an emergency. So far they have left me to my task while they set rabbit traps, rode ponies in the pasture, made their way through the forest behind the cottage in search of unclaimed treasures or busied themselves building dams of stone and stick across the happy brook that dances through the virgin woods.

Our little six year old girl has just broken the rule and quietly entered the screen door of the little study. I'm not aware of her presence until I glance up from my typewriter and see her chin resting on the window sill beside my table, surveying the freshly mowed lawn where she has been so laboriously helping her grandfather rake leaves. She smiles, showing two empty sockets that last week contained baby teeth, then sighs, exhausted from her labor in the cool mountain air. But remembering her instructions about interruptions, she says not a word. I glance back at the paper and, when I raise my eyes, she's gone. Outside the window I hear her whispering to her older sister, "Don't rake so loud, Daddy's writin' a 'portant book."

I get up from my chair and stand at the window overlooking the green pasture that blends so beautifully with the rolling mountains of the Blue Ridge. The rhodendron, the mountain laurel, the wispy white oak, the stately poplar, the white pine and sturdy hickory—all are just the same as they were 30 years ago when I wandered these same woods. The little creek still flows with silver water over sparkling rocks. The clean fresh mountain air scented delicately with pine feels good going into my lungs. In a world where everything is changing, it's good to get back to a far corner of civilization every once in a while where very little has changed—where the God of yesterday comes alive in the thoughts of today.

On my typewriter is a taped reminder: "Pray Before Using." This time I pray while using. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth." And here, where the mountains meet the sky and heaven and earth seem a little closer, the help comes easy.