

The Old Master Painter

God is not only a God of power, of authority, of love and of mercy, but He is a God of beauty as well. That truth was demonstrated again to me in dramatic fashion this week.

It began this past weekend as Lola and I traveled from Cleveland to Brasstown Valley Resort to join Forrest and Kathleen Preston, Bart Walker, and others from the Life Care team to meet with the general managers of Century Park.

We took U.S. Highway 64 through the Ocoee River gorge, where whitewater rafters challenged the rapids in a rushing stream framed on either side by cliffs and dense woods. Driving through Copperhill, Tennessee, and McCaysville, Georgia, we connected with U.S. Highway 76 to and beyond Young Harris, Georgia, to our destination.



The Appalachian Mountains displayed a wide variety of hardwood trees, with dogwoods and black gums already beginning to show tints of red and orange as autumn nears. The famous blue haze of the Great Smoky Mountains blanketed a series of mountain ridges that seemed to extend into the distance forever.



This was the home of the Cherokees until they were forced to go West to Oklahoma in 1838. They called it *Shaconage*, meaning land of blue smoke, created by a vapor identified as *isoprene* that hovers over the forest. It was this blue haze that inspired the names Smoky Mountains and Blue Ridge.

The Creator's palette, highlighting these spectacular peaks and winding valleys, glowed in the afternoon sunlight under a rich, blue sky. At each day's end, the sun falling behind the darkening mountain ridges colored the clouds in bright orange and purple. It was obvious: God intended for us to enjoy His handiwork. And we did.

The experiences in these two states make me grateful for the wonders wrought by the Heavenly Father, extended as gifts for our pleasure. They remind me of a song that has stuck in my mind for years. It is *The Old Master Painter*, and the artist who performed it was Frank Sinatra. It is, to be sure, a love song, but it is a moving tribute to the God who created the universe. Its lyrics are:

(more)

The Old Master Painter

The old Master Painter from the faraway hills painted the violets and the daffodils.

He put the purple in the twilight haze, then did a rainbow for the rainy days,

Dreamed up the murals on the blue summer skies,

painted the devil in my darling's eyes,

Captured the dreamer with a thousand thrills,

The old Master Painter from the faraway hills.

Then came His masterpiece, and when He was through,

He smiled down from heaven and He gave me you.

What a beautiful job on that wonderful day,

That old Master Painter from the hills far away.

As you consider the majesty of all that God has done in nature, claim the truth of that song: You are His masterpiece. He created you, and He delights in you.

Allow that to be your encouragement as you approach this day.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork (Psalm 19:1 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter

