

Life Will Find a Way

I remember the animals. So many colours, so many noises, all so intriguing. Driving through the national park, you could go for hours without seeing anything but parched, yellowing grass and prickly thorn bushes. The anticipation that I would see something round the next corner kept me perched on the edge of my seat. I didn't care, I was in Africa! And as far I was concerned, there was no better place on earth. I spent days driving round in circles staring out through the window, longing to see a rustle in the grass or a nose emerging from the undergrowth. On many occasions I would take part in a favourite family past time of 'rock spotting' which involved shouting 'Rhinceros!' at the top of your lungs and seconds later identifying this object as nothing more than a large rock. Audible sighs and grumbling would follow before the car groaned forwards and flew up a cloud of dust off the dirt track.

Many times I got fed up with the relentless hours spent devoted to watching empty spaces and would turn my attention to something else, usually moaning, eating or sleeping. The relentless heat and endless disappointments made me stropy and irritable, a characteristic I keep well oiled even today. But the disappointments made the good times even sweeter. For every five hours spent driving around seeing nothing, you could spend two sitting on the same spot watching a pride of lions with their new cubs, venturing on their first excursion into the wide world.

But with new life comes death, and that upset me most. I rejoiced to see life everywhere, in the plants and the trees, the animals that called constantly across the savannah, never resting. Even if it was just crickets or cicadas lying hidden in the grass then I would be happy. Because it was life. Glorious, beautiful, wonderful life. The sound was a symbol that showed that everything ticked over. While the crickets hummed, nothing could go wrong. Even during the night time, when the predators growled and fought in the distance, the crickets would hum and everything would be ok. It was safety, security and hope all in one. The crickets stopped sometimes, but there would be another sound to continue the music, passing it across the savannah in an endless symphony. Feet padding through the grass, elephants trumpeting across the plains the roar of an enraged beast. The savannah never was still.

But there were also sounds of fear and danger. The growl of anger released by an angry predator would tear across the plains and you would feel shaken inside. But a sound I cannot forget is that of fire. It was evil. The flames spread quickly, devouring everything in its path. Greedily it ravaged the landscape, nothing was left alive. The sound was deafening. So much to hear and see, you could never take it all in. The fire roared and crackled, singing a song of death and triumph, the earth howled and groaned under the heat and ferocity of the flames. And the smell of charred wood and rotting flesh would fill your lungs and you would be forced to turn away, unable to face the truth of what was happening around you. All the time the pounding of hooves would thud against the hard earth and the distress calls of frightened animals would pass overhead, a fanfare of fear and desperation. All night the fire would rage and in the morning you would wake to a new world.

The earth would be black and bleak. The absence of animals hung as an ominous reminder of the brutality and harshness of the wilderness. And the silence was deafening. A constant reminder of death, for the crickets and cicadas would be destroyed in the heat of the fire. They never had a warning, a chance to run. No one would speak; eyes would rove the blackened earth, desperate for a sign of life. But there was nothing, only one creature dared to tread the sooty earth, still hot from the flames. Vultures. A merciless species that lived off the death of other creatures. They would pick at the carcasses and cackle with pleasure at the pain of others. To me, they were evil on

legs. I hated them, I would not watch them. They scared me. I would shrivel in my seat and turn away from the bleak picture before me. I would try and engross myself in a book, but that could not stop the pictures of dead animals flashing across my mind.

But you should never give up, because something could will come, you just have to be patient and keep looking. Further down the road are herds of animals. All species sharing the same space, united by danger, forced to accommodate others to survive. For here were the survivors. The ones that forced themselves on, thinking of the future generations that they must protect. Not everyone made it but the large number of animals that hade survived would fill me with joy and you could start again. Rejoicing in life, singing the love of everything wholesome and happy. Because life carries on, and no matter what you do, life will find a way. The plants will grow again, and flourish in the nutrition brought by the ashes. The animals would live off the plants and the predators off the animals. And then of course, the fire would live off them all. But it's a vicious circle that will never stop. But it started with life, and it will finish with death, but everything that happens in between is all that matters. Live life, before life runs away.

And life was good. I had family, friends, adventure, and fun. Everything I needed to keep me occupied and happy. Being surrounded by people who rejoiced in the company of others, I could never stay sad for long. Laughter is what I remember about these people most. And music. We were from church, and we were all one big family together. Picnics, barbeques, parties, we did everything together. My favourite memories are of Sunday school and craft club. When I could spend time with my friends making things and working hard, all the while enjoying the company of others. And of course the singing! We were a fairly unblessed in the music department at four years old. But we tried, very hard and we made an awful racket! But it was happy noise! And that is something I take with me into my new life in another country. The memories of happy times with friends have influenced what I do today.

I am quite musical, and I enjoy playing and creating music with my friends. And I still sing at church with other people, and the quality of music has not got much better. But I enjoy it! We are united with music, and together we can express ourselves through noise! I also bring my love of water with me to a new place. The boiling African sun would beat down on me everyday, never giving up. But we would swim everyday to combat the heat that made you sticky and uncomfortable in your clothes. While I do not battle the heat of the sun in the middle of England, I enjoy swimming. I love hearing my friends laugh as they splash around the water, and I love the feeling of self satisfaction that can only be brought about by hard work and exercise. You can feel good about yourself when you know that you are working hard to stay strong and keep fit. It is a natural human instinct that we have protected and worked to a comfortable level to create a wonderful sense of achievement we can be proud of.

But in a new life in a new place I have found more things to spend time on and to express myself through. I love to dance and to speak to people through dance. There are steps and rules and you have to do everything in a certain way, but how you choose to interpret it is a very personal decision. No one can tell you off for how you decide to interpret music, dance or art. And the feeling of individuality you can create is something to rejoice in. life would be dull if we were all the same; there is no doubt about it. And yes we all know that we are individual, but what does that mean? I love to think about life. It a phenomenon. So many questions that we cannot answer, so many thoughts to follow, but they all end up in the same circle of life that keeps the world turning.

At times I think I am very philosophical and I would love to share my thoughts with the whole world and get a response, any response to appreciate what I am thinking, to guide me in what I am saying. I could speak all day about what I think of life and its hidden meanings, but I am afraid that going off on a tangent is one of my habits. Indeed,

this piece of writing becomes less autobiographical as you reach the bottom, but maybe that's no bad thing? To write about my entire life so far would not be particularly interesting. I have only just started it and there is so much more to come, that it seems pretty pointless to document it write now. But how I feel about my life is important always and life all over the world fascinates me.

Life is a gift, but a gift from whom? Or from where? I love the questions, but I love the answers even more. A question without an answer is pointless, like a doughnut without a hole, or a swimming pool without water in it. But if I'm going to ask these questions, then I should answer them myself, and I do. With God. To me he has the answers and he has blessed me with a life that I should be proud of. Even though at times, we all struggle in life, we need the bad times to make the good times even better. Life is a wonderful gift we have been given and we should rejoice in it. Look around you and you will see colour, death, happiness, peace, joy emotions are expressed through life. And there we go; I have gone off on a ramble about life. Something we all ponder from time to time when we need a break from the rushed world we surround ourselves in.

But I do not feel bad about all I have said. This is creative writing day, and Mr Swinford said to start with a memory and let the words flow, I did. My memories of young life growing up in the wild grasslands of Southern Africa, I can appreciate life for its variety and beauty. Those years have helped me to appreciate what I see around me, how I feel, what I hear. I can understand death and new life; I can rejoice in youth and grieve for death. For an end will come, and however insignificant that person or creature may seem, we should remember them, because they will only live on in our memories. I enjoy life and I fear death, but I know that death will come in some form or another. When or how, I do not know, I cannot say. All I can do is hope that I am granted the opportunity to live a long and fruitful life. And one day I met get the chance to sit down and write this autobiography properly, and share my life with other people. And if I do write it, then I hope that being the respectable English teacher he is, Mr Swinford will not attack it with his red pen. Life is a gift, and we can try and tame it, craft it, and bend it to our will, but you can never change it. Remember, that no matter what you do, life will find a way.