

*Water Is Life*

Simon was born in the clouds. He opened his eyes and gazed at the instant flash of white that blazed inches from his resting place and cleaved the grayling floor beneath him. He tried to grasp the material around him, but everything dissipated into air and he was sent plummeting miles and miles down to Earth.

When he awoke in the early morning, Simon found himself lying on a frail, bronzed leaf barely supported by an aging stem plagued with scoliosis. With a raspy, arid voice the leaf sighed, "I'm not much anymore, but you may rest on me for as long as you need." Simon longed to see the leaf rise and sway in the wind, so he gave up a third of himself to the leaf. It thanked him and absorbed the single droplet. Under Simon the stem began to sturdy and reach for the sky, pink buds sprouted around him, and the leaf became green and smooth! Simon, a little smaller than before, smiled and floated back into the clouds.

The next time he fell, Simon landed in the dusty, ruffled fur on the back of a jackrabbit. The rabbit hid under the shade of a rock, fearful that the sun and air would ring him dry. "I wish to dash and sprint around these desert sands as I once did, but I have no energy to do so," whispered the poor animal. Simon saw the heartache in its eyes and gave up another third of himself so that it could drink and replenish its spirit. The rabbit immediately sprang to its feet and thanked Simon before it hurtled over the rock and bounded towards the hills. Simon, a little smaller again, felt happy and rose into the nimbus.

When he fell a third time, Simon landed in the river and joined countless others he had never encountered before. Before he realized where he was, the current drifted him into a wooden bowl, which was then carried on the shoulders of a weary woman. Eventually, the bowl exchanged hands, and a bearded man with long hair and gentle and loving eyes soaked him into a

rag. The man lifted the towel with Simon in it and told Simon that he needed to use him to restore another man's life. Simon looked at his own body and worried that he could not afford to sacrifice any more or he would disappear. "Do not worry, Simon, for you are life, and you will always be able to provide for the entity of others." The man kneeled, set the rag on the foot of a sick man sobbing in a chair, and began washing with Simon. As he gradually faded away, Simon felt satisfied and content again.

Several lives later, Simon was born anew in the clouds. He eagerly waited for the flash of light that would send him on his next journey down to replenish the world.