

## **Earned Homecoming**

At some point most have felt a draw to go home again.

I felt mine near life's end. The urge to return to where I was born appeared preordained. I never questioned it, nor did those with me throughout life.

And so I go on this quest that may or may not succeed. Unsure of what will happen on the way or if I will make it.

No fear! I am beyond fear.

Even now I can feel the water rushing all around me. Calling to me in ragged broken flow to find my way home. And so I listen to the rhythmic patterns dispersed with large rain droplets as the sky cries; knowing my upcoming struggles.

Every journey starts with a single step. I will not step though, I will leap! Into the rapids and currents so strange. The power of this flow tries to keep me back, but it is not stronger than will and I shall make it through.

Slowly pressing forward.

My muscles were designed for this, the years have prepared them.

I am ready!

Others now surround me, joining in my quest or perhaps completing a journey of their own.

Unexpectedly, my way is repeatedly blocked. Large barriers funnel wet flow and constrict my path. I am nearly stuck! Wiggling I fight and thrutch back and forth in panic. My energy vanishing.

Then I am free once more to focus again, but there is no time to enjoy my lucky escape.

I must press on!

Ahead a slippery sill defies me. I go at it, over and over, propelling my small body upwards, more and more, higher and higher each time. I will not be beaten now, so close to the end.

Exhaustion follows. It takes hold of me like a vice, paralysing my movements. A crowd pushes me left and then right. I can feel myself floating as if weightless.

I wonder to myself, if this is the end.

Then something pulls me back from the black, the edge. Again feeling returns to my body ... and hope. I shake a bit to regain my confidence, that is when it happens with short sharp bursts. I suddenly feel myself fly free into the air with a watery world below. The experience cannot be described or understood.

Pure pleasure!

Metres away my flight is over, I descend again and dive into the clear blue wonderland.

Such relief, and such luck.

Going against the flow was difficult, climbing falls seemed impossible, but my desire was so strong, I never gave up and came through.

Now as reward my homecoming is so close. The taste in my mouth tells me I am near. The shallow headwaters appear in sight, the source of the waters which have fought me like an adversary all the way are now stilled.

They, like me, have accepted fate. The salmon have arrived.

Sweet is the taste of victory, but also sweet is a well earned homecoming.