

# Liquid Altitude

-the other world above tree line

by Clyde L. Lovett

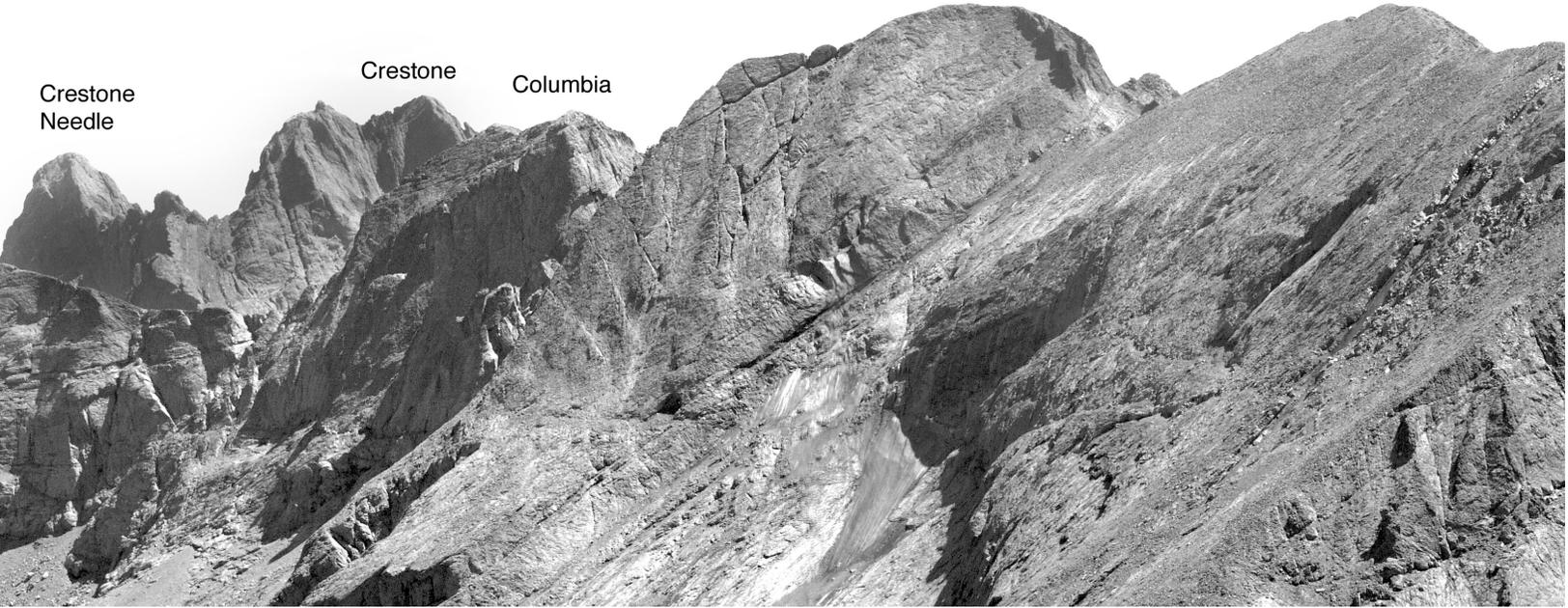
Kit Carson

Challenger Point

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Columbia



Letting go on the top of a mountain, on the edge of a precipitous cliff, would seem to be an unwise choice. To reach this place the weights of daily life have already been shed. The transformation is well underway.

The lower parts of the trail are exquisite foreplay to the journey. Moist pine needles in a deep inhale, thundering waterfalls of melted high ice, the circling play of the hawks and eagles above begin the break from the world below. Before long, trees and waterfalls become tiny objects below. It will all be left below. Before long, the daunting peaks of yesterday become the trail underfoot. How trite to say that it is reaching for heaven, or reaching for the stars, but only trite if the use of the terms are not properly revisited. For in the aspect of being high above the pother and ado of the world in a place with the god of your understanding, the greater forces amongst whom you tread, you are in their realm, and they reside in no less

a place than heaven. And so thus, how archetypical to quest towards such a place, to strive for such a goal.

And so along the way is religious practice, renewal and baptism, freedom from carnal, permitted in this higher church of metaphysics.



This this place becomes apparent at something like 12,000 feet, or 2,000 feet beneath the summit. In this place the view is straight up and the ground approaches your nose in its steep incline. So begins the place where faith and grounded-ness are what permits the march along the

razor's edge path. In this place there becomes a very real connection between the soloplex and the center of the earth, the center of gravity. The great mass of the earth becomes, when you let go into it, a magnet to your center, drawing you deeper, more solid into the ground. And faith in the force permits the dance on the the edge. The dance of transformation.

Waking thoughts come in religious practice, and what struggle it can take to free the mind and soul of the constant build-up of sediment falling onto daily life. The mind can shed so much, but what baptism of nature will cleanse the remainder? Swimming in the daily life, walking in the quagmire of the seeming important, what refresher could exceed transformation of body and mind together as they are meant to be? None for this author but a journey to the place apart from the world of human creation and to the heights of natural creation - on the top of a mountain or far from land on a ship at sea.

Suffice it to say, climbing a mountain requires physical exertion, struggle, challenge of body and mind. It is a pilgrimage. To Le Mont Réal. To Mecca. To India or Tibet. It is a pilgrimage to the church in the back yard, to the wailing wall in Jerusalem, and here too, written prayers, rolled tight, tuck into the cracks of the great wall of rock mountain.

“Free me of the weight of the world, here where there is less gravity and more truth. Bring me to the place that matters and here find the hand of a child, a love companion, the top of the mountain, a long voyage at sea, a new blossom and one gone by.”

And by now, the steepness of the climb is such that any fall risks death. And thus is the moment concretized under the duress of “no option.” Body mind loses whatever self-imposed bridge was previously in place. There becomes no gap, in a true universal love between body, mind, self and nature.

The climb goes amongst the trails of those who journeyed only one way to this place, and transformed right out of their body, falling through the thin air, released from corporeal existence. Closer to god, and nearer to acts of god, the fall of the deminimus human is but another drop of a tree to a strike of lightning or tumble of a boulder. There is no distinction in the flow of nature, and in that beautiful way does the soul blend forever with her or his beloved experience.



And it does happen that great people fall, sometimes to their death (or ruin) and there is no malice in it. The mountain did not hate them, no, there is no such intent. Sometimes great climbers fall or are struck down and we say a prayer for them. Our beautiful mountains in the back yard have claimed a few lives this year. Or, it could be said that a few lives were lost on the mountain. It is hard for me to say which. The subtle difference leads to a huge polarity in

reference to predetermination on the part of the mountain. No, I don't think the mountain has such ego! The mountain does not hate. Nor does the mountain love. The mountain simply IS and in its being so, it is the Taoist master who stands in benevolent indifference - a proud face, statuesque, honorable, wise in its age ... and forgive me for

anthropomorphizing, but really, is there any distinction between what is and what is metaphor?

It is an honor to visit the peaks, to melt the crust of the lower world and to become liquid. It is such relief to become a liquid being in the fluid of the thin air. In concentration and dance. A pirouette on the edge with no place for fear, no place to be hard, no place for rigidity. There can only be permission for flow.



The mountains, the ocean, the great forces of nature, in the presence of the awesome forces which can, be it arbitrary or retaliation for hubris, sweep you away

and render you back to the obscurity which is your real place, when so humbled, fear could take over, but has no place. In the words of Mark Twain, "Courage is mastery of fear, not absence of fear." Fear of the great storm at sea or in the mountains could level you to a slobbering fool if you were so foolish to think that you were going to somehow in control the experience. And thus it is both pleasure and requirement to be liquid. Stay alert. The unpredictable will happen!