



"Sages Ravine"
47" x 33"
Acrylic on Muslin

Hero and BAM! sat on a rock next to the stream, peeled off their hiking boots, and soaked their aching feet in the cool, refreshing water. Their journey had begun about four months and 1,500 miles earlier. On a frosty morning in February, they had stepped on the approach trail to Springer Mountain in Amicalola Falls State Park, Georgia: the starting point for the Appalachian Trail. Since then, they had trekked through crystal forests with icy, frozen trees, and burn zones where forest fires had cleared out large swaths of plant life. Mile after mile, they made their way from the Blue Ridge to the Shenandoah's and climbed the "Roller Coaster" in Virginia.

Long before their journey began, Hero and BAM! had been on the front lines, fighting food insecurity in Western North Carolina, through their relationship with Manna Food Bank. Their fund-raising project, "Hiking for Hunger", had already raised thousands of dollars in donations. As they hiked "miles for meals", they crushed their way through West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, and into Pennsylvania in a single day. The 43-mile "Four State Challenge" was boosted by a matching donation and raised over \$4,000 in 24 hours.

They stumbled through the rough terrain of "Rocksylvania" and found some relief in New Jersey. Crossing the border from Connecticut into Massachusetts on a hot June day, they heard the sound of rushing water as they approached "Sages Ravine". Surrounded by wildflowers and a lush green, verdant forest, the cool water felt like paradise on their sore feet.

They still had about 700 miles to go: The White Mountains with the ascent up to Mount Washington, then Maine and the 100-mile wilderness, and the final push to the summit of Mount Katahdin. But, on this day, they were in the eye of the storm, basking in the tranquility of a cool mountain stream.

Tim Grant

Website: www.tgrantartworks.com

Email: tgrantartworks@gmail.com

Phone: 703-303-1938