

## JUNE

Well. I've been sitting over here listening to these songs and them doing their parts, and it reminds me of hydroelectric plants. I took a tour once of the Fontana Dam. The tallest dam in the Tennessee Valley Authority. Fifteen hundred feet high. It took a million barrels of concrete to build it. Think of what that would look like in pickles!

Our guide took us all over the thing, even to the control room. And there inside the room were rows and rows of switches and buttons. And there was this one big blue button that he said raised the control gate. By pushing that button, he said, the Fontana would make enough light for every house from there to Siler City. Well, I'm from Siler City, and that was a long way away.

The guide looked square at me and said, "Push it." I tried to say "No, thank you," but it wouldn't come out. "Go ahead, miss," he says. "Push it. It's time." So I set my mouth, walked up to that button like one big blue eye staring out at me, put out my finger, and pushed.

And you could hear it! The gate started groaning up. And the water starts whooshing in – like a flood. You can't see it, you hear it. And the turbine starts rolling over, and the roar is nothing but power. Power of the water and the moving and the turning. And in my mind I can see little houses lighting up all the way home.

Tonight, when that couple stopped to help us rock the bus back up, we were so shook up we about talked them to death. (*JUNE crosses to her family.*) Even as Miss Joanne was driving me over here, I was jabbering away like a magpie. Till I caught myself. And when I got to listening, she got to talking. It was just like the dam. She said she knew she shouldn't complain, but her job was about driving her crazy. She rubs the stickers off the cucumbers down at the plant. That she sings hymns to herself to pass the time. And that she was so happy to help my family. And when we pulled up here, SHE thanked ME. Said she'd say a little prayer for us on our first night back. "My first little prayer in a goodly while." Just by lending her a good ear, I believe Miss Joanne did some thinking and I bet some praying too. So what if I can't sing and none of ya'll are deaf? My job is listening. God's power is loud like thunder, but it's soft, too, like Miss Joanne. I'm done.