

Things in Motion

ALL THINGS ARE IN MOTION AND NOTHING IS AT REST ... YOU CANNOT GO
INTO THE SAME (RIVER) TWICE. --HERACLITUS (540?-480?)B.C.

THE RAINY DAY

THOSE WHO dislike rainy days must lack the gene that makes me treasure those all-day slow and steady, (to some) dark and dreary days without bright sunlight, drifting clouds, and gentle breezes. I regard such periods as a respite from the usual; a chance to view life as the wonderful mix of sensations that frame our existence. Never mind the annoyance of wet streets, damp clothing, and raindrops down the collar—there is something about the drumming of rain on the roof that nothing else can offer.

As a youngster on the farm, rainy days meant that farm workers would be busy indoors with tasks such as grinding feed for the livestock and mending worn harness, greasing the axles of farm wagons and mixing fertilizers. There was often a gathering of the older workers who sewed cotton sheets for the coming harvest. I loved to hang around those people and listen to the tales they told—sometimes hilarious and now and then scary, but always interesting and seldom repeated. As an adult, I realized that the time I spent in that way added something to my education that could not be otherwise obtained.

As a teenager struggling to awaken creative drives, I loved to sit near a window and watch the rain filter through the huge oak trees on its way to the ground. In the subdued light, it was always easier to let my imagination soar in whatever direction it chose—to find adventure in hushed forests or near the floodgates of a dam busied by the swollen streams behind it. I never tired of opening a book and joining the characters therein—the rain seemed to push me into the heart of whatever adventure those characters were experiencing, something not as easily done on a day of endless sunshine amid the songs of birds, the buzz of insects and the chatter of squirrels.

Buried somewhere in my sub-conscious supply of folklore is a sketchy reference which says that weddings and funerals conducted while it's raining will bring good fortune to those who are participants. I cannot verify whether there is an iota of truth in that, but I do recall with both sadness and joy, the funeral of my mother—in the midst of a downpour. Sadness at her being gone; joy at the thought of seeing her again in an infinitely happier time and place. The rain was my closure to a treasured part of my life.

During my school years, I found it easy to do well in class—tests were easier, too, when it was raining. Lab experiments went better and there was a lighter, more joyful atmosphere in spite of the dense weather. Even the long ride home on the school bus was more pleasant in the rain, and the driver always delivered you as close to your door as possible.

The descriptions we get of what heaven will be like always seem to deny the existence of a rainy day, but I am comforted by those promises that heaven will be just what we want it to be, and if that is correct, there will certainly be one secluded spot where rain will fall—and those friends who know me well will always be able to find me there, if nowhere else.



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