



A visual representation of "Rain Scene" by Collier Nogués

## Rain Scene

Collier Nogués

*for Opal, and for Hong Kong, the city she'll grow up in*

Sheltered by the white-tiled park overhang,  
I watch you run in nonstop loops. You've found  
a shallow soup-bowl where a tree was planted once  
but didn't take. Its surviving neighbor trees, each  
in their own soup, quiver in the light rain  
while you stomp, soaking the socks I'll soak again  
tonight to leach from them their rust-red mud.  
Of course I remember the pleasure this is.

This isn't the color my mud was. Mine  
was white, limestone ground down to river clay  
and rife with flint and fossils. At every flood  
we found dead things risen with the water.  
In case the road washed out we had the truck,  
and when the creek rose past truck-axle-height,  
my father drove the tractor to the highway  
and hitched a ride to get more milk.

More milk here takes merely a walk  
down to the Circle K, whose clerk knows you  
and says hello. Hello you say to her, or if she says  
*jóu sàhn*, you say *jóu sàhn*. *Jóu sàhn*, says the fruit stand man  
who offers you an orange. You take words in  
and give them back, but sometimes changed: orange  
becomes ocean—because of *cháang*, I think—  
which in our family now describes both fruit and sea.

The sea comes very near the fruit stand, surging in  
on Lam Tsuen River's tide from Plover Cove,  
but the watercourse is paved and engineered, no chance  
of flood no matter how the rain comes down. My mother  
would have liked that, would have liked the refuge  
this city makes, the care its people take to greet  
each other. Thank you for the ocean, you say to the man.  
What she would have made of you, I wonder.

I wonder where her heaven is. Far from my father's,  
surely. Or near, in that for both of them, just as for me,  
you are every heaven's anchor. I am glad we've anchored here,  
where I watch you watching for snails, the giant ones  
who come out in the rain, bigger than the ocean you've forgotten  
in your awe, are those its hands you ask and no, I say,  
they are a kind of eyes, a kind which can bear water.  
Some creatures, even cities, make their own shelter.

The poem was first published on the Writing Plus website as part of the Urban Love Poetry Contest for the 2020 Hong Kong International Literary Festival Schools Programme: <https://www.writingplus.hk/urban-love-poem-2020>, reprinted with the permission of the poet.

Lee Hoi Ki  
Diocesan Girls' School



I believe that the beautifully written poem inspires readers to reflect on their own experiences and develop positive values such as mindfulness, empathy and hope. Using watercolour as the base colour, highlighted with water markers, I created a subtle hint of the 'rain' theme without being too literal. A limited palette of cool and muted colours expressed the atmosphere of a rainy day while layering and blending added depth and texture. Working with watercolour was unpredictable. Each stroke of the brush pushed the boundaries of my creativity. The final result was a satisfying evocation of the beauty and mystery of the rain. This uplifting poem suggests that purpose and beauty can be discovered even in the most ordinary and trivial things in life. To the speaker, her daughter brings her joy and sense of comfort. In our busy lives, it is easy to overlook the beauty of the present moment. Taking the time to appreciate the small details and simple joy can lead to a more profound sense of gratitude and fulfilment.

### Positive value(s) and attitude(s):

Appreciation and mindfulness

### Positive message(s):

Whether it be the sound of rain tapping against the window or the way the light filtering through the trees, there is beauty all around us if we take the time to notice it. We should learn to savour the present moment and find joy in unexpected places.