



A visual representation of "Rain Scene" by Collier Noguees

Rain Scene

Collier Noguees

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.

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My take on the poem 'Rain Scene' is a drawing of the poet's daughter, Opal, playing in the rain puddles against a rather chaotic-looking backdrop. I chose to use a warm colour palette because the poet describes the surrounding mud as rust red. I extended this idea and used both red and orange hues for the trees, bushes, and ripples in the puddles. This also intensifies the poet's idea of showing the environmental degradation of the world that we are living in as these colourways usually suggest caution, danger and pollution. Also, the puddles were drawn in a way that visually signalled to the viewers that Opal with her umbrella and raincoat kept walking despite the rain. It concurs with the poet's central idea of 'keep walking and smiling despite difficulties'.

Positive value(s) and attitude(s):

Optimism

Positive message(s):

My understanding of this poem is reflected in my illustration. It attempts to explore the intersection of nature and humanity and encourages readers to find delight and beauty that lie ahead of them in this material world, even though sometimes situations are not always favourable.

We are all born with a child's heart which is inherently optimistic. This optimism, often forgotten by adults, is especially important when facing adversity.

