



A visual representation of "Rain Scene" by Collier Nogues

## Rain Scene

Collier Nogues

*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  
jǒu sàhn, you say jǒu sàhn. Jǒu 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 work is inspired by 'Rain Scene' and I am hugely fascinated by the messages. I used oranges as the background because of the scene of the fruit stand man giving the speaker's daughter an orange and there, oranges mean both fruit and sea to the girl.

The girl, who is sitting in the boat, is the soul of the poem. The anchor, which represents the speaker's daughter, stabilises the boat. She is holding a flower, which symbolises the precious memory in her childhood. The ocean is calm, different from the one she saw when she was little because she is living with her daughter in Hong Kong now. Even though it is raining, she still feels safe.

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

Family love

### Positive message(s):

Family love can be stronger than we think. It can be the source of security, and we should pass it on.

