

Echoes of Rainfall

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Poetry and Reflections

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Echoes of Rainfall: Poetry and Reflections

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*For my father,
who taught me to listen.*

*“Last night
the rain
spoke to me
slowly, saying.
what joy
to come falling
out of the brisk cloud,
to be happy again
in a new way
on the earth!”*

Mary Oliver

“Rain Language ” a beginning

As a child, I remember sitting on the front porch of our cream-colored, two story house with my daddy, watching the rainstorms. My father has spent most of his life as a rancher, working with cattle. He would sit looking over the wetness with watchful eye, wondering, sometimes silently, if there would be enough rain—enough moisture—for his pastures in order to keep the cattle fed.

These moments became precious to me and my family, not so much because we shared in his concerns but because it brought with it a beauty unlike most other things within our home. There was such a sweet, comfortable solitude that swelled between us as we listened to the steady rhythms pattering on the roads and rooftops stretched out before us. The sound itself was tranquility.

My family has been lucky enough to live in the beautiful state of Montana, where the rich, earthy, mountainous scent of petrichor perfumed the air for hours as we watched the downpour. Breathing in the scent became its own sort of worship. There was a holiness in the act. My favorite storms quickly became the ones where a person could be soaked through their clothes after spending a few minutes standing under the open sky. The kind of storm where the aroma of would roll in like the instant clouds that stirred the earth to respond in such a way.

As I transitioned into years of teen angst and depression, I began to rely on the refreshing aspects of the rain. Whenever it was raining and I was sad, it made me feel like I wasn't quite so alone—like the earth

was crying with me and sharing in my sorrows. I did eventually find joy again and with that came jumping in puddles, dancing through the raindrops, and laughing as the water bled through my clothes. Perhaps that may seem a bit backwards, a bit childlike, but it became a pleasure I was quick to indulge whenever the weather would allow.

As an adult, I still love the rain. It fuels my creativity when I am able to curl up with a notebook and a warm mug of tea or coffee, listening to the steady sounds of the sky returning its water back to the earth from whence it came. There is no lullaby quite like letting rain sing you to sleep as you crawl into bed for the night.

Given this history, it is safe to assume I am an utter pluviophile. This theme has revealed itself over and over again in my writing, often without my realizing it. When I decided to put together this chapbook, I found that the theme had already lent itself to me in the form of this lovely, melancholy weather and all the ways it speaks to me, the ways it speaks to us and to the earth.

As I got the thinking about rain and all that encompasses, I realized we cannot have the thrill of the refreshing storms without enduring seasons of drought. Too much rain may perhaps lose its golden, grey-hued luster and cause it to become mundane like so many things in life. My daddy taught me as a little girl that rain is necessary, but so is the sunshine. Even so is drought. When the earth is thirsty, we feel that in a very real sense in which we, too, thirst. Yet, when the rain finally returns, the water serves to soothe and heal and our souls respond.

These poems are a response. A response to thirsting, to healing, to finding joy and just as my father taught me to listen and appreciate the rain, I hope these words will show you the same.

Flash Flood

I heard you playing the songs
they used to sing while we watched
and I rose like the waves—
off again, on again
between drowning and floating.
I still appreciate the rain.

You chose to play the sad songs of Noah
even while I was trying to hold together
sand castles in the shape of my dreams.
It's the waiting hours that hold us up
then the tide comes in to take them.

Everything changes in the dark.
I want to pretend: when I close my eyes
It almost feels like nothing's changed at all.
It certainly feels like I've been here before.
You know, we've all been here before—
running in circles of despondency
while you go around assuming
that we're all proud like you.

I can hear the sounds of water
washing through the past
bringing to surface all things
I want to forget. It is a cleansing.
I have built boats with promises
that I mistook for faithfulness.
None of which have held.
This chest is heaven at its core,
bursting forth from chambers of the deep.

I have held on to see the rainbow—
a banner that once spoke of your affection.
In thunder and downpour meant to separate us
from sin, you held to clouds forming black.
The rain remains.

Though the floods have lessened,
they will not altogether subside.
I wait in the ocean you released in me.
Arms up, body sinking, eyes matching
horizons of blue and green and salt,
continually rising up to meet the waves.

Your arms were once my safety net, carrying me
across this sea—for forty days and forty nights.
You kept me above water, you saw me
above windstorms tinted in grey.

Although I have extended this branch—
leaves of olive in this dove's mouth.
I have not yet found another place to rest.

Bargaining with God

Long hours and midnight tears beg
for some form of redemption. To be anything
other than what we were.. Things change.
My wish was granted again, I prayed
for things to be different.

Every raindrop reminds me of you.
The rain rarely stops in Portland, so I'm told.
Tell me, why then, do I feel the need to pack up,
drive forward hundreds of miles, a few states away,
until I reach the shores—
A place where each wave echoes new beginning.
sand swept like time into each tide?

Given time, all things fade. We are no longer certain
which of this is merely observed,
and how much of this is love? What parts the same?
I once convinced myself of my own forgiveness,
Remembering summer nights, gas station beer,
star gazing in parks, Rollins Street,
and storms that shook the entire city—
powerlines entangled in roots
that no longer call these neighborhoods home,
I am left with a collage of sunsets, streetlights,
swingsets, and music.

I heard you say once that sadness
was seeing an old friend and realizing

everything changed between you.
It has been years since you left.
Still every time I pass you on the street,
sorrow rises inside me like the moon—
pulling the ocean back towards her.

Inside a Bookstore

I draw my tea towards me
as I watch branches sway.
Oh sleepy city,
that glistens beneath the grey,
I feel as though I have held you
in my arms and close,
as I wait for night to fold.

Silence me as you have this city
that I, too, might find it
a beauty worthy of waking
with moisture's gentle kiss—
refreshing the earth
with silver and green.

Cinematic

I used to watch as your hands
held the steering wheel.

You had a hunger for control.
Tangible grasp of “Everything

is okay. I can’t see it now,
but I can see in front of me.

Keep driving
forward towards light.”

There is comfort in existing
like bare feet on cold wood floors—

subtle hurt that makes us aware,
or the mountain scent of rain—

reminding us of resurrection,
or the heaviness of silent solitude—

a depth beyond what we know.
May bloom fades to August,

when petals fall, flames consuming
all things we once loved. Smoke

choking what our lungs could hold.
I was naive to believe this too could last.

I've placed myself inside your skin
far too many times.

I still ache when you ache.
My eyes still burn

when watching old films.
There is no forgetting.

Contemplative Recess: Downtown Missoula

It had been raining most of the morning, drawing out colors of buildings
in a way that only the wetness could.

Grey contrasting bits of gold as sun fell
mingled in raindrops.
painting the city radiant.

I could hear footfall, a present hum of wheels and engines,
automobiles ever moving.
Even in sleeping, this city is alive and breathing.
In exhale,
there are small splashes of water that the wheels carry, subtle raindrops
nearly silent.

You can feel what you cannot hear:
the crinkle of the brown paper
I am holding,
carrying cards with cheerful script for those I love,
preparing for this
rejoicing of life, of presence graced here.

I could hear
birds chirping and the sound
of wings in flight fluttering,
small chickadees hop under parked cars to find shelter from the wet.
I could hear children laughing, footsteps making their way across

sound splashes, cars passing by, wheels moving to some fast-paced
far away destination they don't even know why—
and we are in the rain.

There are sounds of summer and sunshine, sounds of hopefulness
for spring.
We are debating winter.
There is such beauty in the grey, so much life found in storms,
yet we are in the rain.

I was eager to return to my plans
and my agenda, beckoning me to backtrack the place I first lost the words...
I found you there.

There is something truly so holy in the divine, how it orchestrates our lives.
I can't help thinking about the happenings of the day,
how you so easily know
what to say to me

to make me begin to wonder.
Invite a way to answers. Questions than I know better than to ask.
Unspoken.
Both of what is said and everything unsaid
between us.

Buildings seem to shine and saturate wetness rain
has brought.
There is a fluttering of wings; of birdsong and it's not yet spring.
The sun obscured beneath a sheet of grey sky, clouds crowded covering—
it is not shadow here:

The gold spills from silver skylines as if a kettle tipped over onto this city,
tea-stained on a letter God must have written,
 hoping we would pause
 to read, reflect on us
 together.

Surely there was some intention
in paths combined and crossed to match the carbon print we leave behind.
Ours is the same.

Even with your echoes mixing
with the sounds
today's city carries with it's wind, tomorrow's city is different—
 a stranger yet to meet.

City of Angels

They say
that you've withdrawn your spirit
while we dwell here next to oceans
where we speak of flood legends
so vast no mortal could endure.

They say
that the state of our depravity
will cause our fall, slipping fast
at fault-lines, turning our city
into a modern-day Atlantis.
When the titanic sunk,
we hadn't yet learned to breathe
underwater.

It is said
that the land is cursed by emptiness
although we have rationed what we could of
earth, our crops are yet unyielding.
However it may be, our cities are thriving
on shores of a body teasing our thirsts.

They say
that the only one who could heal this land
will do so only once we've learned the art
of sanctity, turning from our starlet alters
shimmering silver upon every screen.
Perhaps we would have heaven open
as a chance for earth to drink the sky's release.

They say
the essence of life remains inside our words.
Yet we have dammed lives and cursed hopes.
With pessimistic understanding of what we believe
about desire and fear, contained inside the earth.

There is a silence before the thunder breaks,
a reprieve that we've been given,
a place to hold our tongues at rest.
Perhaps our hush will render it to rain.

We Never Saw the Sky Fall

We started out in constellations.

It rained so thick that night,
we could hardly see the stars.

We felt them instead—
falling on clay skin, leaving traces
of cold pooling at our feet.
Captivating my own quiet since.

You never were beautiful.
I fell in love with every imperfection.
I wasn't blind, rather too aware.
Anything anyone could not see.
You kept them hidden well.
I loved you for all things,
in spite of it as well.

There is a box I have carried with me
containing songs, photographs, and conversation.
I placed it for a time upon my blazing sleeve,
before dropping it
knowingly into a hearth—my personal hell.
All burned finally, the ashes—
a sacred form of letting go.
I lost where it once belonged.

Torrential Goodbye

The rain came in torrents blurring your face.
I couldn't see through tears.
I know you would leave
by the sound of your voice
echoing between the drops on pavement,
wheels sloshing the sidewalks...
before you spoke a word.
These mountain storms swell within my chest—
Subtle at first. A presence of rain, of tears.
Then clashing, raging
thunder came later.

Rivers spilling over pages.
Letters written in deceit,
echoing the rifts forming in every broken place
like lands separating mud and rill from floods
not yet ceasing.

My arms are tired from beating currents,
swimming upstream ignoring how much
it took to keep my head above water.
Even the tides could tell that I was drowning—
by the way we choked on words we'd not yet formed,
could not let in air—lungs crowded out
from all the screaming.

In the wake of our weeping,
wind calms on soft cheeks,
quietness settling
like the vacancy
you left me.

There is only release.

Mired in Forgotten Halls

Feigned winds caressed the walls
of decaying church houses—
forgotten, if not for bones residing,
ancient wood undressing itself
of the white worn as covering.
Could this structure tell of hands
and eyes and voices—
voices that might silence
what we think
we hear.

There are moments when we remember
that we are transient
both in ourselves and with each other.
The very air we breathe,
bohemian in nature.
Watching for pinpricks, waiting
for something otherworldly to touch us.
We see sunlight but our eyes look
beyond what we cannot explain.
Everything is awash with grey,
yet vibrant
like the rain.

Fire Season

We held our tongues and waited,
bated breath & unsung prayers we dare not utter.
The gods seem to have heard us
wrong, offering penance for sacrifice.
Our lungs are struggling for praise.
We've enthroned our doubts—
allowed our fears to reign,
replaced our kings for fool's
mockery in a jester's court
while the world awaits—

Lack of rain or far too much.
Hurricane or flame.
Here we cannot bring ourselves to hold on,
embrace brittle windswept fields.
Mountains ablaze with want,
with what has been withheld.
Fires raging long past autumn.
I am found on my knees begging for winter,
in spite of how I hate the cold, barren season.
Shut in there is no escape.
This sheltered valley guarded,
smoke surrounds on all sides,
there is no win.

Our hearts petition rain,
afraid of the costs, we'll settle.
No firstborn, no namesakes,
no sacred blood worthy.
Snow seems reprieve.
Come February, our plights made clear
in tundra winds, frozen toes—
relentless chinook.

Stars Falling

Anything but stationary—
all burning and silver,
sparkle and decay.

She drew her curtains
fading from black to grey.

Scattered her ashes—
those celestial bodies made of dust,
life begets life, dust formed into clay
from rain and sunlight born.

A funeral for collapsing,
a galaxy wake in aftermath
showered by dimension tears
now drips in golden light.

I await in stillness

In greyness and in nothing—
no distraction to vie for time.
There is nothing quite like this sound,
rain falling outside my window.
Scatter, rush, and rhythm.
It clings to the glass like a lover,
tracing her surface as each touch
moves downward into bliss—to life.

My Presence is Sunlight

You found comfort here.
Warm and inviting like springtime.
You drank your fill of rays.
Stretched out on glass, listening
remain here and I could burn,
the sweat on your brow—you're nervous,
hiding in shadow to rid yourself of discomfort—
I demand reaction.

My voice is a gentle breeze,
a song barely noticed in the background
of how you feel. When direct
and pointed, it will sooth, encourage,
refresh you. Intentionality is awareness—
a brush on your cheek, your hair.
You wear guarded masks,
to shelter against what might move you.

The sunlight envies the rain,
her beauty demanding attention.
She cannot be ignored.

Rain on the Aftermath

Light fell on streets like tea cups spilled onto cityscapes,
edges contrasting jaded buildings that wore clouds like robes.
I felt your echoes reverberate in my own footsteps passing.
Apparitions trapped inside shop windows—
reflections of all that is fleeting.
Words ensnared in thought, voice encased in words.
Foxes burrowing into memory. I continued on.
My feet attempting to push the sound beneath,
to drown out anything remaining that you had left with me.
My legs carried beyond the scene, away from storm and shadow,
away from light tricks and mirrors.
I put away the once belief in magic, wandered into the obscured,
entering into boldness and contrast,
somewhere between lines of dark and light.
Suspended by my wanting, I reached down
into this blood-breathed core, attempting to find a certitude in me,
lingering on the fringe of vantage this rain brought.
Clouds parted to reveal
the faithful sun remains.

Papier Mâché

The mask begins without shape—
A mess— strips of paper wet with glue,
like the way that I am unable to hide
tears in the earliest of phases,
vulnerable and messy.

How could I let you get close enough
to shape the ways I see myself.
You've already etched your image—
burned like exposure on film.

How many times have I asked for you,
for your presence shared with mine,
listening to the rain with each acoustic chord
ringing into the silence.

Storms always leave the most glorious sunsets
after signs of heaviness, signs of scattered brokenness.

I cannot find the words to speak to tell you...
and I'm not ready to give in to weeping.
You have stolen my ghosts
without a warning—
without your own realization or accountability.
Am I to blame you for your lack of awareness?

Let's sit in soulful silence, neither eager to give consent
to words. How am I to explain the way it feels—
as though a thread has been strung
straight through my center
and there the world is hung
weighing me down.

Rain Storm

Like most things,
there was no pattern in the water,
the way in fell to the ground in shimmers.
I sat and watched the drenched earth
embrace it from the sky.
I listened as life collided with life.
Not a steady drum beat
but perfect scattered chaos—
stilling the mind.

The peace of storms.

It keeps me awake—
the thought that you were
somewhere else listening,
falling asleep to your favorite song
that nature would play for us.

Since we are both
lovers of rain— the treasured reminders
of childhood. I realized how little I knew
of yours. I recall you speaking
of a coastline and city lights.
Rain was a constant occurrence.
For me it was my papa,
sitting on the porch breathing in the air—
the stirred up petrichor welcoming our senses—
listening silently to the soft growl of thunder.
It was then when joy wore upon his face.
It was rain that washed the sorrows,
washed all that was broken.

These moments are infinite.
A picture of how much can change,
how new life and growth come from such storms—
beauty from ashes.

How in spite of the heaviness the clouds could hold,
the release is ever sweeter.
Tonight, I'll listen and find there is stillness.

There are spaces where there is emptiness,
where my hands ache for yours.
What is we are missing here?—
to feel so deeply as the thirsty ground,
I wonder if you ever saw it—
how much i would have surrendered my own song
and every melody I had for you.
Instead, I accept the harmonies.
Accepting the background that compliments
and creates depth in the music we live.
I will accept that you are a part of me
in a greater way than you might ever know.

We are all so full of grace—
messy and chaotic like the rain
and just as beautiful.

I will sink into this storm,
blend with it as I wander into sleep
as I have a thousand times before,
becoming one with the rain
as it mixes with my tears.

Hurricane

Humidity hung like heaviness inside.
That summer brought with it an ever present urge to cry.
Like everything, you've grown used to pretending,
wanting them to see you as a normalcy.
You keep biting your tongue but there's an ocean
welling in your chest and an understanding that it's power
cannot contain you, it might break you.

No matter how much you will the storm,
the water stays churning waves until your ribs snap like dams.
Water is a force too strong to pick up the pieces,
you cannot carry them far. Grooves have cut out edges
like cliffs, rivers carving grand canyons into your heart.
Water will clean and shape whatever it does not destroy.
I have begged for healing—not from the pain
for I have learned to manage that.
My life thirst for freedom that apart from this body,
apart from what this war-torn soul has ravaged,
gripped and clawed and whispered—
labeling me something so far gone from what you see.

I have no way of knowing how you could look at me.
How you could find it in the glimmer— that somewhere
reflected in my eyes—distant like the windows of a lighthouse.
How is it that you see past the greys and blacks and blues
and find these vibrant yellows, greens, and reds?
There is an autumn blooming in my mind.
You can paint it for me, even when I have lost its shape.
You hold my heart like its very own key
to release the hurricane beneath.

Dear not-so-forgotten lover,

Rainy day Saturdays were a homemade breakfast and being home alone.
They were strong brewed coffee and a book to last the morning.
They were solitude, contrasting blues against grey,
jazz music floating through water droplets, vinyl records and sleeping
next to him. Time shifts ineffably. Yesterday was warm.
Today is warm and wet. Sunlight reflects the past as a backdrop to the present drab.
In both there is quiet stillness. As clouds shifted, I saw a momentary radiance.
I could have sworn that you were there.

Hollow Lights

Downtown streets shine as raindrops scatter rhythms
across the asphalt. The surface of the city shines like glass
where neon lights dance against reflections in the pavement.
Headlights from taxi cabs sweep over midnight air. Shimmering souls
prowl along sidewalks—searching for a sense of life. Rustic buildings
of brick tower above. Our beings, our silent voices calling
for the things we find inside sparkling glasses of crimson liquid.
Oh! What have we become? We lost ourselves and forgot the reason
that we breathed. The cars drove by, splashing water
at our pretty feet.

The scent of Summer

Dirty wet scent of the river,
lilacs and cherry blossoms,
the smell of heat mingles in breeze
Or coolness as the day draws to end.
Sweet grass, roses, and rain,
Dusty roads and gasoline...