

# The scent of rain

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

The breeze that heralds rain has a different smell — a rich soothing aroma, instantly evocative of wet earth, and unbridled joy of feeling the first drops of much anticipated rain, cooling droplets cutting the domi-

nance of a blazing sun, or increasing the mystique of a pitch black silent night.

Rain is among the most common, and sometimes menacing, elements of nature in countries blessed as ours with annual monsoons, and rainfall every now and then, in season, and out of it. But, regardless of the frequency, or the very ordinariness of rainfall, it has a somewhat mystic power to evoke a range of emotions in various individuals.

I am no different.

Water has this inexplicable attraction for me — be it the waves of the sea, the



gently flowing hill stream with a rocky bed, or the noise of a waterfall crashing down and creating spray rainbows from far above, or even the wide brown swathes of quietly flowing beastly powerful rivers of Bengal — they all pull me with the same intensity.

I find peace near these, burying myself into my thoughts and drowning out the crowd.

But living in Dhaka, the most frequent interaction with water is rain. A dull dreary hot day is instantly cheerful for me with the first flash of thunder, or the first lungful of petrichor-laden breeze. Even this promise of rain falling not too far away is a mood-lifter.

Rainfall has been my friend in moments of quiet, content contemplation; in moments of warm bliss. Watching the gentle falling of the drops on a patch of open space, deep into the night.

Rain has been my friend in moments of intense agony, salve to a broken heart, the angry pounding of large drops falling in a thick curtain, drowning out my silent screams, providing respite while letting the healing begin.

Rain has been my friend in moments of anxious turmoil, many a long walk on the forced-empty pavements of Dhaka have

helped me let go of negative emotions — pent up rage or helplessness, washed away as the breeze cooled my soaked skin, and the heart as well.

As privileged and grateful I am to have this life, it is not lost on me that rain in this city entails trouble for many. The waterlogged streets, the jammed roads, the sudden scurry for shelter by the homeless, rampant power cuts and of course, the ever-present threat of floods in rural Bengal... are all facets of rain, impacting each of us in the fabric of society in a different way, and not always pleasant.

But for me, it brings catharsis. Just as the trees look greener, washed off of the city's perpetual dust, I emerge from rain a little bit more alive. For the moments I stand by the window, against the raging winds of a 'Kalbaishakhi', and then its angry hard rain, or the hours I waste gazing at the clouds as they accumulate for their regular monsoon affair, with or without a coffee, and may be some music, or even just waking up in the morning to streets speaking of rain just passed, it brings me joy, it stills my soul.

By Sania Aiman

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