

'The Sitter' by Sol Jorgensen

The sitter arrives and I explain how he is. Which medicines to give, what he can eat, how his feet, body, chest and breathing are. Which physical exercises, which voice exercises, which listening exercises, that are still to be done. How he is in himself. I list our accomplishments of the day and I hover, flitting here and there, all restrained energy, dragonfly energy, hovering, waiting, flitting. Wings not really seem, only hint of potential for speedy motion.

I leave, finally, half an hour later, brush hair at least in some vestige of remembrances of self-care and appearances. Then, with my dog Peggy, I oh-so-quietly creep from the house, still listening to the soft sounds floating from the room.

I'm out.

It's evening, and the people rush past in cars and on foot, all straining to get somewhere else, quickly. Intent, oblivious and driven on by a need for action.

I walk slowly down the street, look at the park as I pass it but that its gates are closed fast for the night. No entrance or escape for me there. Too late in the day, the darkness is descending, filling the hollows between places, changing the shape of people's faces, as they pass. Another dog walker comes towards me, a woman, and we smile, tentatively, at each other. She looks up at the sky which looms ominously overhead, threatening rain. I shrug, smile, not caring if it rains, how it rains, of where it rains. The rain and the darkness have long since become friends of mine, sometimes welcome, sometimes not, but known and cherished throughout.

I reach the road junction just as the lights change and the rain begins to fall. Big, fat drops splatter down. I look up and see the heaviness of the cloud and its nearness, and realise I am about to receive the blessings of a deluge. I raise my hands to feel the rain (as I'm not going anywhere at the moment, caught by the cars), and make like a tree. Stand firm but pliant, welcome and the water and feel it beat about my head, down my coat and swirl and eddy around my feet.

Important, I've been told, to be in the moment and not want to be somewhere else. So I attempt this and find that rain is not cold, and it is not really uncomfortable to be wet. I still walk slowly, when the lights change, and upright, not bending against the wind, not trying to escape it.

By the top of the hill I am thoroughly wet. I feel the joy of release from the house and from city conventions.

We reach the fields and I set her free. She roams across the muddy greens in the ever deepening darkness. Ebb and flow of the wind, each tree has its own voice. Can't hear the wind now, only see the thing that it moves, see the rock and the sway of the trees, hear the wood humming to itself. Dancing waves of wind and rain.

The last of the light leaves swiftly and the sights and even the sounds of the city fade. Only the roaring of the winds now passing by.

Surrounding, enclosing, shutting out the workday world.

Stand like a tree in darkness.

Returning by the half-night half-light of the city sodium lamps, I feel refreshed and calmer, and ready to become again, again, the guardian, the listener and the watcher.
(and am prepared, a little, for the oncoming anxiety of the night)