THE HUMBLE ANNALS OF A BACKYARD: 
THE RAIN: BY WALTER A. DYER

The Lady of the House does not like thunder-storms, high winds or rainy days, and we seem to have a good many of all three in spite of our annual drought. I don’t mind those things so much myself, though I hate to see branches blown from the trees, and I am not free from the depressing effects of a long rainy spell.

But there is a kind of rainy day that I like. It comes after a dry spell, when we have had plenty of sunshine and the garden is parched with thirst. I recall one such recently.

The sun went down in a golden haze, and in the morning we awoke to hear the steady rattle of the rain on the piazza roof. Out in the backyard the garden is drinking eagerly, and already the corn has taken on new life; it seems to have grown an inch. The grass and the lilac leaves are washed a clean, glistening green; the dahlia buds nod heavily in the dripping from the ailanthus tree above them. One of my tomato vines lies prostrate, perhaps from a too copious imbibing of the life-giving fluid.

Then I turn to the front of the house, for there is the impression I like to receive. A lone pedestrian hurries up the street, his umbrella held at an angle against the slanting spears of rain. Across the street and a little way down a covered grocer’s wagon stops and a man in rubber coat and boots jumps out and dashes around the house with a basket. The horse stands and nods exactly as the dahlia buds do.

The rain comes down so steadily as to produce the effect of a fog, half blotting out the landscape and changing the aspect of familiar objects. All the sharp angles are softened a little, and the motion of the rain gives the scene a look of unreality as though it were a moving picture. All the colors are changed. There is no blue overhead, only a dull, slaty gray that casts its tone over all the landscape. Green, red, white, yellow, all are grayed as with the broad wash of an artist’s brush. Only the brown of the tree trunks appears to stand out darker and more vividly. Our street seems turned into a Japanese print.

The grocer’s man comes hurrying out and leaps into his wagon. The horse starts off at a smart trot and the street is deserted. I peer through the rain at the houses opposite, but detect no sign of life in the windows. It is as though the world were asleep, awaiting the coming of the Prince to kiss it awake again.

I alone of all the village seem to be alive and stirring. I am shut into a little world all my own. I experience all the joy of solitude and none of its pain. The witchery of the rain makes me as lonely as a mountain in the clouds and I surrender to the enchantment.