

In the Downpour

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The daily afternoon Florida downpour, normally only an hour at most, lasts into the evening. Probably it thinks if it lingers, maybe it can transcend its status of minor daily nuisance to reach the status of full-on annoyance.

T and I wait it out under the awning of our favorite cafe. The whole time T mutters that it'll go away at any minute. Afternoon storms never last that long. Meanwhile the cafe's already closed up. The cashier, a kid with a sweaty neck, locked the door fifteen minutes ago. When he saw us sitting at a table, staring at the rain, he asked if we needed him to call us a cab or a tow truck.

"No," T said for the both of us, "we're just waiting out the rain." He pointed at his car twenty feet away. It seemed farther away in the downpour.

"I can give you something to use as an umbrella, like a serving tray or something," the kid said.

"Thanks man, but we'll wait," T said. "It'll end soon." The kid gave us a sour look, like we were members of a cultish religion so ridiculous he couldn't even stand to keep a straight face.

After he drove away I thought it might be a good time to mention to T that I was thinking of moving out, that I had already started searching apartments. But it seemed cruel to bring all this up when T couldn't escape, so I didn't say anything.

T says, "I don't mind storms so much. If I had to wait with anyone else, I don't know I could stand it." He smiles but he continues to look out at the rain. As if he might miss it stopping if he looks away for even an instant--even to smile at me.

I realize I won't be able to mention my moving out for a few months. I don't see a good opportunity, even that far down the road. He is happy with me now. I will wait. I hate so much about him but I agree with him on this: There's no use senselessly darting out into the rain. After all, why get a little wet when you can stay completely dry, if you just hang on for a little longer?

Strangely enough, one of my favorite things is being caught in the rain with someone. Running through a parking lot feels like surviving a war. Afterwards, you both show up at a movie theater, or a restaurant, and you can feel all the dry people looking at you, thinking, "What on earth have those two been through?"

You give up trying to cover yourself and let the water take you. You give it the full access pass—the one normally reserved for lovers or surgeons or god. And when you've resigned and felt firsthand the worst possible outcome for that afternoon, who can deny how perfect it feels to look at him and see he's soaked down to the bone, too?