



Helena van Vliet Architect, LLC
Restorative Biophilic Design

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Fifty Shades of Rain

“Rain is the Sky descending to the Earth.” ~ John Updike

Astonishingly, there are fifty nouns for rain in Japanese, a distinctly different word for each: the first-rain-of-summer, the brief-light-refreshing-rain, the long-hard-drenching-rain, the chilly-autumn-rain, the sudden-evening-rain, and, one that’s falling-while-there-is-a-fog.

We have the dewy-rain, the snowy-frosty-rain, the misty-rain and the one-which-inexplicably-seems-to-fall-from-a-cloudless-sky-rain....fifty shades of rain, each describing a distinct experience, belonging to that very moment, personal, speaking of connection and beautifully specific.

What a concept!

Never again will I experience rain as... well... just rain. Now I examine more closely, listen more attentively, look up at the clouds and study rain’s place of origin. It turns out, that rain has personality. There are subtleties of perception to be considered: temperature, droplet size, shape and density. Is it falling straight, or perhaps it’s a windy-from the South-West-rain.

And what of the fifty sounds-of-rain?



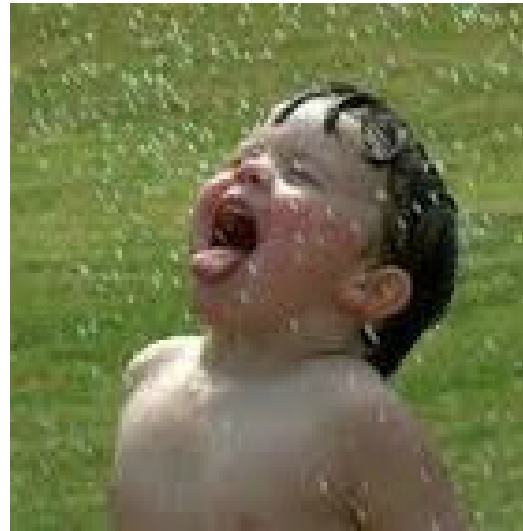
“When we enter the landscape to learn something, we are obligated, I think, to pay attention rather than constantly to pose questions. To approach the land as we would a person, by opening an intelligent conversation. And to stay in one place, to make of that one, long observation a fully dilated experience. We will always be rewarded if we give the land credit for more than we imagine, and if we imagine it as being more complex even than language.” ~ Barry Lopez, The Rediscovery of North America



The Merger of Landscape and Mindscape

In ‘Keepers of the Earth’ Jeanette Armstrong writes: “Our (Okanagan) word for body literally means “the land-dreaming capacity.”...it teaches that emotion or feeling is the capacity whereby community and land intersect in our beings and become part of us. This bond or link is a priority for our individual wholeness or well-being.”

Barry Lopez again: “The interior landscape responds to the character and subtlety of an exterior landscape; the shape of the individual mind is affected by land as it is by genes.”



Re-Indigenization: Creating an internal Sense of Place

Knowing well the ground one stands on, developing an internal Sense of Place serves as effective grounding antidote to chronic stress, anxiety, depression, dis-orientation, some of the serious issues of our time.

What Juhani Pallasmaa calls “re-sensitization of the boundaries of self” is a path, where we re-engage with place, with **nature**, become indigenous through multi-sensory awareness in the body, akin to mindfulness.

Exploring the fifty shades of rain is but one example of being on this path.

I fondly remember the time when **Tim Beatley** had the entire Biophilic Cities Conference on our hands and knees in urban Charlottesville, had us search for a certain species of ant, and other tiny worlds beneath our feet.



"...where on this Earth one goes, what one touches, the patterns one observes in nature – the intricate history of one's life in the land, even life in the city, where wind, the chirp of birds, the line of a falling leaf are known." ~ Barry Lopez



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