

EVENING STORM

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An evening thunder-storm is sweeping with majestic invincibility up our valley. In the vanguard of the blue-black thunderclouds comes the wind, probing first in little gusty outriders, but soon sweeping by impatiently in tree-shaking flying columns, one after another.

I have learned -- and you may smile tolerantly at my childlikeness -- I have learned to make the impetuous wind attend to a whim of mine.

Our windows are double-paned, set in horizontally. By arranging the outer and inner sashes just right, I space them like organ pipes which catch the wind as it rushes by, and play the songs, always in minor key, the wind sings. And because some of the windows are different sizes, I get varying pitches. I may yet learn to tune them so that they harmonize.

I discovered the enchantment of those sad songs in early childhood. I vividly remember snuggling in my bed of a cold, stormy winter's morning, bewitched by the bitter-sweet emotions aroused by the plaintive wailing of the wind sweeping around the eaves.

Now comes the rain, fitful at first, but growing in strength until it drums on the roof. And then, after awhile, glory fills the valley. The clouds move up between the mountains, revealing the sun, just about to drop behind the western peaks, a golden globe in a golden sky. And the pelting rain-drops become liquid gold, and the underside of the clouds catch the fading rays, and are transformed into a vast, golden fleece, more lovely than any Jason could have dreamed of.

Occasionally, a jagged shaft of lightning hurls from the clouds and stabs at the mountain's breast, followed by the hoarse growling of thunder.

And now the pageant reaches its climax. I am at the center of a magnificent double rainbow, reaching half-way up the sky, with one of its ends set in the valley above me, and the other below. A many-splendored gateway into God's tomorrow we may not pass through just yet!

Then the sun slips behind the mountain, and the rainbow fades, and is gone. And the golden rain slowly turns to a pewter grey and drifts forlornly up the valley. The trees and grass now seem to have a kind of fluorescent greenness as the dimming sky gathers up the light, and the darkness leisurely moves in to take its turn ruling our little valley.

And the stars straggle out, and a stillness broods over the valley, and all is peace.