

Diane's Blog
6.2.2010

The Soggy Pacific Northwest

Even folks who never complain about the weather in our corner of the country are grumbling. The weathermen are saying this is one of the wettest Mays ever, with over four inches of rain.

But I'm not one of those people who never complain about the rain. I grouse plenty. I kvetch. I fret. I gripe and sigh. I'm one of those people who delay errands for another day, standing at the window like the kids in *The Cat in the Hat*, saying to myself: I don't really need to run to the grocery store, I'll pull something from the freezer or scavenge through the pantry to create a meal. I'll find something fun to do inside and leave the soggy, bone-chilling, guaranteed-bad-hair day to everyone else.

This is a good climate to be a writer! During these stretches, I get my sunshine from the bright light of my big Apple monitor. I may gaze out my study window and see raindrops, gray skies, and puddles, but when I turn back to my keyboard, my screensaver treats me to images of my children mugging for the camera on a crisp, sunny day in Istanbul. I see that sunshine and imagine the possibilities – and then I write.

My editor and I were discussing recently how little TV we each watch. He is busy reading and I'm busy cooking and writing. As a freelance writer I dictate my own hours, and they are odd. I try to have a rhythm but it is hard to capture and quantify. What about always. What I do isn't really a job, (though I get paid for it). It is a passion. And when you are passionate about something, you live it, breathe it, discuss it, eat it, and for me, cook and write about it.

My husband and I were just in New York City for our daughter's college graduation. I was planning and booking our dinner reservations and thinking about where we would have lunch. She begged me not to plan the entire trip around food. Really? Why not? We'll find plenty of great activities to do between meals, but good meals are not to be missed. Can you imagine wasting calories on mediocre food?

It was warm and gloriously sunny in New York, a welcome respite from Portland's weather – until the day of the big graduation ceremony. And then it rained. For nearly three hours we sat outside in the cold rain, tucked under an umbrella, part of the canopy of umbrellas that surrounded us. We could hear, but not really see, the graduation ceremony.

Waiting for the ceremony to start, I was busy writing. I texted my daughter to say: We are in row five under the big black umbrella. See us? I wrote a memo with tasting notes about the previous night's dinner, and then I e-mailed a friend back home, grumbling about the soggy weather—just can't escape it this time of year.