

Tashie Bhuiyan. *Right as Rain*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR), 336 pp. eISBN: 9780374393915.



Some novels come in like a flood; they grow slowly. They build like a thunderstorm and finally reveal their truth in a deluge. One of these novels is *Right as Rain* (2026) by Tashie Bhuiyan, who brings not just a story, but also a tone, an ambiance, and a cloud of sadness that seems to hover over the shoulders of its protagonist. The novel combines magical realism with a modern juvenile love story. Bhuiyan develops her themes of the novel skillfully through an exploration of emotion and identity. The novel deals with depression, self-discovery and the often over-looked dimensions of mental health. Her prose is personal, ambient, painfully real, and magical, with diasporic sensitivity and psychological perceptiveness.

It is the right time for a novel, too. While mental health discussions in South Asia are becoming more commonplace, it is still not openly discussed,

especially among adolescents. The youth continue to endure the winds and tides within themselves without being noticed and validated. *Right as Rain* is not just a narrative arc; in this context, it is a space of reflection and identification. This review explores the book's artistry, themes, structure, and cultural relevance and preserves the emotional aspects that make the novel an unforgettable read.

Tashie Bhuiyan is a Bangladeshi-American author who often writes about the internal worlds of South Asian teenage girls who are juxtaposing inner and outer worlds of identity, intergenerational tensions, cultural differences, and a longing for self-definition. Her previous works have been instrumental in the multicultural young adult (YA) narrative, but her theme-driven story is a spin-off of that. The novel is based on Bhuiyan's ongoing efforts in mental-health advocacy, as well as cultural issues regarding happiness. Informative and imaginative portrayals of mental-health problems are hardly prevalent in South Asian literature, and her idea to make the novel available to South Asian readers who function as cultural outreach further attests to her intention to directly appeal to their audience when adolescent mental-health issues are becoming prevalent in the region. The narrative of the novel revolves around Megh Rashid, who has an atmosphere of unspoken expectations, managed emotions, and an implied call to action in a family. These are common life experiences for many youths in South Asian immigrant families. The cloud in story is used to represent her sadness, as well as, perhaps even more importantly, the sadness of the people as a whole. Bhuiyan's cultural sensitivity is therefore blended with her imagination and, in turn, gives voice to the struggles of her characters that are not easily expressed.

In this novel, Megh Rashid is a Bengali-American young girl who is growing up in an emotionally charged and volatile New York family. A literal rain cloud is always there, hanging over her when she is sad, raining on her as she moves from room to room, from home to school, and from thought to thought but it is one of the manifestations of the depression that she cannot escape. As she is driven to her emotional breaking point by a toxic house in New York, she starts imagining a future out of her home in California. Megh desperately hopes there will be enough space to breathe and room for her to get to California, which is warm and open. However, leaving from house is a very difficult decision. She must take certain family responsibilities and the complex cultural obligations as an immigrant child. Furthermore, she fears of failing her parent's expectations and abandoning the only life she has ever known. Though her parents are described as antagonists, they are portrayed as the emotional rigidity and misunderstanding that many immigrant families experience. Love exists within the family but it is not expressed openly and spoken. Bhuiyan depicts their

internalised cultural norms in their response—achievement, fear of failure, discomfort with feeling vulnerable, and resisting being emotionally strong. The tensions build up quietly without being realised by either side, but they can be felt keenly by both parties.

Beyond the complex dynamics of the Rashid household, Bhuiyan introduces a counter-narrative of support through a friend who is calm and patient yet comes to Megh's aid during tough moments. More importantly, he does not attempt to "save" her; in fact, it is an outright rejection of the YA stereotype of romantic love as a cure-all. His presence provides validation of companionship without any expectation and pressure. It is a friend, a witness, a warning, and a load. At the same time, the magical realism does not distract us from the experience of Megh but points out to us the truth of the emotion.

The story has three parts. Megh's emotional suffocation, her silent despair, and the heavy psychological situation of her family are an unspoken guilt and trauma. The journey explores her progression towards relief, understanding, and meaning, including an increasing need to escape the confines of New York. The novel emphasizes personal growth not as a singular breakthrough, but as a journey by incremental successes in facing and accepting her problems. The sections should build up one from another, but not take an abrupt narrative shift—from one section to another without a big switch from one environment to another. Like healing, growth is non-linear, uneven, and imperfect—as is the growth of Bhuiyan, out of the roots of Megh. The narration is in the first-person viewpoint, thus putting the reader right into the consciousness of Megh. This psychic interiority manifests itself in the rain cloud. She expresses her feelings in such a way that the cloud drifts above her, low and heavy, as if it knew every secret she tried to hide. It is a visual metaphor for the novel's state of carrying the nagging emotional weight and guilt. Bhuiyan portrays depression not so much as a dramatic breakdown but rather a simple and quiet overwhelming that is slow and cyclical. One of the greatest strengths of the novel is its refusal to frame healing as a quick remedy. Instead, Bhuiyan represents resilience as a quiet, gradual process which is a series of small internal shifts rather than a sudden, on-time transformation. The idea of healing is not about getting rid of pain; it is about living with pain patiently and kindly. Though Megh embodies the silent struggle of adolescent depression, she is the "good daughter" and "doing everything to be a good girl" at school but the taboo on showing emotion in the culture gives a very puzzling "psychological landscape." As a South Asian daughter, Bhuiyan is calling into question the idea that vulnerability equals weakness. Rather, she believes that vulnerability is a lonely act of courage. This

is backed up by the romantic subplot; rather than acting as a savior, the boy offers validation through his consistent presence and attentive listening.

Another aspect of the novel that is unique and intriguing in an artistic sense is its geographical symbolism. California is synonymous with radiance, emancipation, and expansion of emotion, and New York with mass, pressure, and heaviness. New York is metaphorically presented here as a suffocating, toxic, and stressful location. The same juxtaposition is present in Megh, where the desire to run away and the need to deal with pain coexist; she desires to escape her pain; yet hopes to find healing within her own world.

Right as Rain is a realistic magical book with both structure and location. Both genres are contained within the framework of a modern YA novel. The story and style of the work are grounded but symbolically rich. The common themes of coming of age, identity, and a sweet love interest in YA fiction are further emphasised by the metaphor of the novel. The cloud is employed as a metaphor to enrich the emotions and psychologies of the excerpts. Bhuiyan's prose is always one that is empathetic, imaginative, inclusive, and symbolically layered.

Overall, *Right as Rain* is a heart-wrenching and colorful novel, which deals with the chaos of adolescence and the dialogue that happen between culture and mental health. It is sensual without being melodramatic, overly serious or cliched, and over-reflective or obtrusive. Bhuiyan shows that healing is not a linear process and neat or tidy; that resilience emerges from the still moments of recognition. This is a very realistic and caring portrait of mental illness—something sorely needed. *Right as Rain* is a significant book that resonates with South Asian readers looking for visibility and understanding. It is a narrative that echoes with them.

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