

River of Flowers®

Arriving home with a light shower threatening over my shoulder, and one too many packages in my arms, I pause at the bottom step of my porch to scramble for my keys.

I begin to notice my blooming jasmine plant growing along the chocolate-covered iron handrail to my left.

Quickly grasping my keys, I ascend the stairs, open the door, put down my packages, and turn to give the jasmine my whole attention.

I sit now at the top of my cool terra cotta flagstone stairs and simply look.

My jasmine was planted decades ago from a small spritely sprig, hand-carried and transported by a friend from outside the city.

It rode to me lying on the front seat of her car, wrapped carefully in a wet white paper towel, an orphan twig, speeding toward its unknown new home.

Planted with care, tended intermittently, occasionally ignored all together, it took root and chose life, sending roots deep into the willing earth and simultaneously eagerly reaching for the sun.

Now with the deluge of recent rains, it has burst everywhere in uncountable numbers of sweet white odiferous flowers.

It has wrapped itself around my bannister so securely and lovingly that it has no fear, sending off the occasional wild streamer of a branch, which shoots freely out here and there from the mother-ship of the main plant.

Each night it serenades the occasional passerby with a smell so delicious that encountering this perfumed air, one is transported from self-absorption into an instant flood of sensual delight.

Those streams of pleasant flavors waft upward and outward and interrupt my nightly meditation.

I cannot but get up and look down from my eyrie on the floor above and lean out my window toward the jasmine, appearing all the world like a white river of flowers, cascading down my bannister fearlessly as if bound for a preordained destination.

My imagination impregnates this simple plant with intentionality and wisdom.

The jasmine is enthusiastically itself.

It does not worry. It does not tarry.

It simple grows and blooms and roots and sings its own song.

I can almost hear the music of beauty it creates and offers.

I am unabashedly envious.

I long to bloom and flow like the river of my jasmine.

I long to live with the same simplicity of purpose.

But for now, all that is left for me is my silent worship in the temple of a perfume so alluring and rich that it becomes a balm for my soul, a bracing reminder of the paradox of the fragility and robustness of life itself.

To look with soft eyes at this jasmine plant is to worship beauty, to be able to loosen the shackles of my narrow mind just a bit, so that like the river it so purely mimics, I learn just for a moment how to surrender deeply into the fearlessness of now.

