
Like a Very Good Rainstorm

EARL F. PALMER

C. S. Lewis the writer broke in upon my life like a very good rainstorm while I was an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley. My first C. S. Lewis book was *The Screwtape Letters*, and this small book has remained one of the most influential books upon my life.

Lewis has a way of asking questions that I want to ask and a way of thinking up stories and analysis to go with the questions that always help me to see more clearly the most important things to see. He is a storyteller who loves stories of the fantastic. I owe him a great debt in helping me grasp the greatest of all stories—the one that is both wonderfully fantastic and yet true.

Lewis never wasted a word, and so I owe him that love of economy of language, too. There is an integrity in his spareness that works on me to keep my words honest.

Finally, I appreciate all those little pieces of the puzzle that have come together to help me understand the man. He was reserved, interior, honest, ruffled, witty, thoughtful, strong-willed, nonstyl-ish in appearance, yet with a face that was arresting and generous. I have wondered if the lad Shasta in *The Horse and His Boy* is not the self-portrait of C. S. Lewis after all.

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