

## Puddles

Water not in motion becomes part of a puddle.

Rain is water falling.

Once rain stops falling, the raindrops gather together in dents in the ground.

Smaller ground indentations we call puddles.

Larger ones we call streams, rivers, lakes, oceans.

A lot of raindrops searching for a stopping off point, we call a flood.

Never ending rain emanating from an angry ocean storm we call a hurricane.

Rain spinning in a very wide circle traveling at a rapid speed creates lots of puddles.

Hurricane rain falling onto a wide trail finds ruts in the trail creating puddles.

The location of those puddles is haphazard at best.

A puddle next to mud on the trail next to slick grass next to a puddle next to . . .

Run this trail for, oh say, 26.21 miles, and your legs are exhausted by the end.

Nope. Your legs are exhausted in the first half of that run.

That leg exhaustion leads to slower running.

That slower running leads to much, much, too much time to think.

The reason you have thinking time is because the run is a point-to-point course.

And what do you ponder the slower you run and the further you go slowly?

How slow you are running.

Well, that, and how you've just wasted four months training to run faster, longer.

Mostly, you ponder how slow you are running, with mile after mile to go.

That time taken, dragging yourself to the finish line, is messy.

You want to quit, but no sag wagon is available.

You consider crying in frustration, but no one cares.

You turn to anger, but that doesn't make you faster.

So, you resign yourself to getting the damned thing done.

The mud you are plodding through, sliding over, and slipping in has some character.

It has soil, silt, loam, and water.

Mud eventually dries.

Some mud become rock.

Some mud, heavy with nutrients, nurture a seed through growth.

Turns out, you have a seed of an idea brewing in your brain.

You realize again, you are the kid looking for the pony in the horse manure pile.

Even in the wet pile.

It's not the pony you are seeking.

You may be miserable and getting slower by the mile, but that's the now.

What about the not right now.

Yeah, you can't see your shoes for the mud or your steps for the slipping.

But you can envision another day, any day other than today.

There will be some time to recover from today's long run.

That recovery won't be as long as today's less than pleasant experience.

There are days in a runner's life that are not ideal.

This is one of those days.

Or is it?

What are you going to do with today?

You know you're going to run.

You know you're going to race.

You know the run will come before the race.

But the race will come.

Crossing the finish line at the end of too long a morning, you know you're soaked.

You also know when you'll race another marathon – 10 weeks later.

The training will be adjusted – lots more easy miles with faster workouts.

You have a plan.

You have your pony.

There may be more rain, leading to more puddles, but none of that will include mud.