

spring/break



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Quelle Presse Literary Pamphlet #5

Discontent

It is best to float in a pool on something made of plastic. All critical thought vanishes. Even the previous thought that floating was lazy or silly or dumb. If it is very hot, it is good. Skin burns and that is good. Everything is annihilated by floating. Want, hope, desire, discontent. There exists some discontent because of the heat, but the water is cool and discontent can be adjusted.

It occurs to a person that whatever is done may not be done well. At least by the person who does it. Other people have been known to succeed at the tasks the person now feels unable to perform, but the person does not know if it is possible to really do these tasks personally. This is a gender neutral problem the person experiences.

It is only that, in the environment where the person remarks the ineptitude, the person has already come so far in pursuit of this performance of tasks. The person has even received certain commendations about prior achievements related to the tasks. But the tasks continue to the point where the person cannot be certain about getting better or even getting worse at the tasks. Except when the person is floating in this pool.

In the pool one is always surrounded by tasks one is or isn't capable of performing, but the tasks vanish in the glinting sunlight. Unless the task is the removal of all leaves that come to float also in the pool. This is a task almost anyone can do. With hands, with feet, but also with utensils. The person's favorite utensil for removal of leaves and even small insects which have lit upon the pool's glimmering surface is a long pole with a wide net. The task of removing items from the pool is infinite and satisfying. The person knows success in the removal of items.

The times when the person watches another person move on legs around the pool to remove the items does not diminish the first person's sense of adequacy. Two people can work together in different ways. The first person prefers to float while the other person is determined to use two legs. Neither person feels a zealousness about the method for removing items. They could even switch positions happily, though they never do. Happily, they never do.

Father's Day

At dinner with my Lebanese family, walking home beside the Lebanese father of my first husband, I make a gesture of reaching out behind his back to pull him closer, to avoid the edge of a sidewalk cut out around a plant and its soil, thank you, and the sensation that all I've ever wanted in a father was to reach that moment of mutual assistance, as he carried my leftover dinner, and I prevented his falling.