

泳池里的夏天：光、水花与岸边的喘息

夏天的正午，泳池是一整块被阳光点燃的蓝。光从高处落下来，先在水面碎开，碎成一片晃动的金，再往水底沉，沉成几根缓慢摇摆的光柱。站在池边往下看，池底的光像水草一样活着，它们不生长，却一直在呼吸。整个夏天，我就泡在这样的光里，泡在一种又亮又凉的安静里。

水是有声音的，但那声音不在水面，在水下。潜下去，世界忽然被调低了音量，只剩下自己的心跳，咚，咚，咚，和池壁传来的隐隐的回声。再浮上来，水花炸开，阳光顺着水珠的弧线飞起来，每一颗水珠里都藏着一个小小的、倒过来的夏天。水花落回池面，池面就多了无数个圆，一个追着一个，推向池壁，又碎在池壁上。那些圆像夏天的心跳，看不见，却一直在那里。

游不动的时候，我趴在池边喘气。手臂搭着湿漉漉的池沿，下巴几乎贴到水面，每一次吸气都带着氯气和阳光混在一起的味道，有点刺，又有点干净。喘息未定的那几秒，耳朵里一半是水声，一半是自己的呼吸，忽然就能听清一件事：原来我怕了那么久的水，此刻正托着我。这句话不是谁告诉我的，是水面告诉我的，是每一次蹬腿之后身体自己往前滑的那一小段距离告诉我的。

午后四点，阳光斜过来，整池的水变成半杯蜜、半杯玻璃。孩子们的水花声远了，池面慢慢平下去，光柱重新站直。我坐在岸边，头发上的水一滴一滴落回池里，每一滴都替夏天数了一下时间。那个夏天我学会的其实不是游泳。我学会的是趴在水上，把呼吸交出去；是看见光在水底摇晃，仍然肯把眼睛睁开；是在岸边喘完那口气，然后再次松手，把自己放回那片又亮又深的蓝里去。

Summer in the Pool: Light, Spray and Breath at the Edge

At high summer noon, the pool is a single slab of blue set alight by the sun. Light falls from a height, shatters first on the surface into a trembling field of gold, then sinks toward the bottom into a few slow-swaying columns of brightness. Standing at the edge and looking down, the light on the pool floor lives like seaweed - it never grows, yet it breathes the whole time. All summer I soaked in that kind of light, soaked in a brightness that was also a coolness, a brightness that was also quiet.

Water has a sound, but the sound is not on the surface - it is under it. Slip beneath and the world is suddenly turned down: only my heartbeat remains, thud, thud, thud, and a faint echo travelling through the pool wall. Rise again and the spray bursts; sunlight rides the arcs of the droplets and flies upward, and inside every droplet hides a tiny, upside-down summer. When the spray falls back, the surface gains a thousand circles, each chasing the next toward the wall, each breaking against it. Those circles are the heartbeat of summer - invisible, but always there.

When my arms give out, I lie across the edge and gasp. Forearms on the wet coping, chin nearly touching the water, every breath carrying the sting of chlorine mixed with sunlight - sharp, and yet clean. In those seconds before my breathing

settles, one ear holds the sound of water and the other holds my own breath, and suddenly one thing becomes clear: the water I feared for so long is holding me up right now. No one told me this. The surface told me. The small glide forward my body makes after each kick told me.

At four in the afternoon the sun slants in, and the whole pool turns into half a cup of honey and half a cup of glass. The children's splashing fades, the surface slowly flattens, the columns of light straighten again. I sit on the edge, water dripping from my hair back into the pool, each drop ticking off a moment of summer for me. What I learned that summer was not really swimming. I learned to lie on the water and hand over my breathing; to see light wobbling on the bottom and still be willing to open my eyes; to finish one gasp at the edge, then let go again and put myself back into that bright, deep blue.